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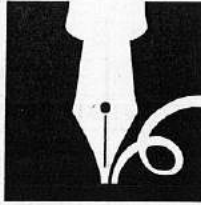
HAMPSTEAD & WESTMINSTER HOCKEY CLUB

Journal Vol 2.

APRIL 17, 1996

INTRODUCTION

This is the second of our Newsletters and perhaps earlier than envisaged. The National League Play-Offs and notice of the AGM brings this edition forward. Any excuse however for



the one and the same (except that it's markedly different, of course!). Incidentally, this month's edition features a snapshot (and mention) of the LX Club, including H&W's own **Guy Mayers**, currently skipper of the Spaniard's XI. Fourthly, the Foreign Office in London has at the third attempt finally confirmed that **Sam Hatfield** is still stationed with the British Embassy in Lagos.

We'll persevere in trying to get this to you somehow, Sam: apparently it's supposed to be quicker by way of the Diplomatic Bag.

NEWS of OLD MEMBERS

The response to our first Edition was initially encouraging. First to the 'phone was **Hugh Wickham**, who had just had a round of golf with **Neil Cardoza** and both are reported well and in good spirits. **Colin Greenhalgh** was being side-tracked by his daughter's impending wedding and hence, he suggested, the need for some preliminary redecoration around the house. Still, he found time to provide useful comments and give suggestions for the type of information which the more senior Old Members might be seeking in order to stay in touch today.

Cyril Flajsner had just managed for the umpteenth time this winter to dig himself out of his driveway in New Jersey to get to the post, with welcome news of the whereabouts of some previously elusive, but comparatively recent, Old Members. This has been a record winter for snowfall in some parts of the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area, welcome(?) news indeed for current Committee members **Nick Cowley** and **Graham Tomkinson**, just off to these parts on temporary work assignments, packing summer clothes!

Envelopes addressed to **Adrian Arnold** and **Alastair Vartan** have been returned without a forwarding address and if anyone can help in tracing them, please let us know. It was thought that the same fate would befall **Brian Guest**, but Cyril's letter has him traced to Hong Kong, where it is understood contemporary **Mark Ramsey** will shortly be headed. **Mike Carnill** has often been present this year supporting the Men's 1st XI at Paddington and is still playing, now with Southgate's Vets: he may know more about current happenings at the Club than many existing members but we have added his name to the List anyway.

Bob Hale has also written: he claims to have hung up his stick after paying for Stirling, now having moved to Southport: he promises to look up the Carlton upon his next trip to the Smoke.

Finally, several apologies are called for: first to **Brian Beaumont-Owles** for the misspelling of his name in the List: quite an appropriate anagram, however! Secondly, with an equal degree of grovelling, to the several former Ladies' members were inadvertently missed (we are advised that it would be imprudent to describe them as "Old Women") when their husbands' names *were* included. To be honest, we had to start somewhere and "nowt were deliberate". These we have now "conjoined" in the hope of avoiding future embarrassments. Thirdly, the revamp of Hockey Digest, warmly applauded in the last edition, has also spread to its name, unfortunately not spotted in sufficient time: so, if you hear the name **Hockey Sport**, you will now know that this is

ON THE PITCH

NATIONAL LEAGUE

As readers of the national sports press will doubtless have seen, **Men's 1st XI** avoided the automatic relegation suffered by Olton and Richmond (in spite of Sean Kerly's inclusion but dearth of goals). In the Play-Offs (or if you want to be PC, the Inter League Tournament) H&W joined Bromley, who surprisingly (to some) dropped to fourth from the foot of the table during the final stages of the season. In the final League game, H&W lost to Isca 1-3 and then had to wait an hour for the result of the Richmond game, which was a draw (and therefore secured interim safety). A Special Report on the Play-Offs follows.

SOUTH LEAGUE

The **Women's 1st XI** still have one match to finish in the South League Division 1, to be squeezed in amidst Club Day. Hopefully, this should mean some support (at last) as they take on Winchmore Hill in the very last game of the League season. All other teams have finished their matches. It is reckoned that a shortage of umpires led to this game being left outstanding, as it had no real bearing on the final placings. The 1st XI were placed third, behind leaders West Witney, followed by Dulwich. For those wanting an idea of the team's itinerary this year, the League comprises 9 teams and the League standings (in mid-March) were Dulwich, West Witney, H&W, Southampton, Winchester, City of Portsmouth, Winchmore Hill, Hendon and Camberley.

The Women now claim to know the M3 like the proverbial backs of their hands!

PIZZA EXPRESS LONDON LEAGUE

It was Colin Greenhalgh's suggestion that the London League, still sponsored by Pizza Express, needed greater explanation, especially perhaps to those Old Members who fondly recollect the traditional block fixtures that used to predominate but which today are sadly a thing of the past.

It no longer comprises just two Leagues (for 1st and 2nd XIs). Currently, it is "split" into several divisions, a Premier & Division 1, then 3A & 3B; 4A & 4B; 5A, 5B & 5C.

PREMIER DIVISION

The Premier includes the second selected teams of Surbiton, Bromley, Reading, Hounslow, Old Loughtonians, Richmond, Teddington, Southgate, H&W, St Albans,

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Wimbledon and Oxford University. This has relegation to Division 1 for the bottom two. The list above sets out the League positions in mid-March. Division 1 comprises the "rest" of what would have been the London League 2 of yesteryear, namely (and again in mid-March seriatim) Beckenham, Guildford, Maidenhead, Slough, Purley, OKs, Blackheath, Dulwich, Spencer and Tulse Hill.

Thus, it will be evident that H&W is in heady company in the Premier, among a preponderance of National League Div 1 junior teams. This year they amassed the estimated 23 points required for safety a little more easily than last year and look likely to be joined next year by promotion hopefuls Beckenham and probably Guildford.

LEAGUE 3A

The Men's 3rd XI are in London League 3A, that is, the upper echelon of third-selected sides. Again, by reference to mid-March results, the standings were as follows: Reading, Bromley, St Albans, Wimbledon, Surbiton, Richmond, Hounslow, H&W, Teddington, Maidenhead, Old Loughtonians and Dulwich. As with the Premier, there is also relegation for the bottom two clubs. Those in Division 3B are Spencer, Southgate, Slough, Guildford, Oxford University, Blackheath, Purley, Tulse Hill, OKs and Beckenham (and, once again, in that mid-March order).

LEAGUE 4A

The Men's 4th XI is placed in mid-table of League 4A, which comprises St Albans, Richmond, Surbiton, Southgate Wimbledon, H&W, Teddington, Hounslow, Reading and Bromley.

LEAGUES 5A, 5B & 5C

The Men's 5th XI compete in Division 5A, the Men's 6th XI in Division 5B and the Men's 7th XI in Division 5C. As team "labels" become harder to grade at this level, it is tough to assess the relative playing strengths of the teams but in Division 5A, H&W are competing with the likes of the fifth selected sides from Richmond, St Albans, Surbiton, Old Louts., Reading, Wimbledon, Teddington, Bromley, Hounslow, Southgate and Tulse Hill.

Division 5B contains some sixth-selected sides, with two from St Albans (who therefore have to play inter-club as a league fixture!) and a few fifth-selected teams. Similarly, Division 5C (which, to remind you, includes the Men's 7th XI) contains what appears predominantly to be sixth-selected sides but to tell the difference between XIs called, say, Teddington Saplings, or Oaks, (or even Acorns, Twigs and Leaves perhaps?) requires a greater degree of insider knowledge (or perhaps arboricultural or silvicultural skills) than the *Journal* can muster.

The comforting conclusion of the London League season is that no H&W team has suffered relegation. The 2nd XI deserve special credit and the 7th XI will, in large part, point to the contribution made by the late Sam Taylor, still deeply missed both on and off the field. Some, however, ask why we were not better than generally mid-table: would more comprehensive training help? Is there a real wish to compete at the top?

VETERANS

More informed news was promised of the Veterans XI upon Chris Elliott's return. Peeling him away from rehearsals (as compere of the Awards Ceremony (*see below*)) has proved impossible, mistaking the *Journal's* correspondent with that of Hockey Sport, when asked for a report! Maybe he was too busy practising his statutory joke for the Dinner? However, we can reveal that the Vets' dominant goal machine Pat Coy won the Men's Golden Sticks this year. So, other news will have to follow (at least that ought to mean that there will be something to fill the third Edition).

MIDDLESEX LEAGUE

Greater in-depth coverage of the progress achieved by the Womens' teams, too, was always proposed for the next edition (their playing season extends longer generally than the Mens') but briefly the 3rd XI did secure promotion to the Middlesex League Division 2. More anon (to adopt a *Nick Colemanism*, if we may!)

PLAY-OFFS

The Inter League Tournament was held at the newly opened National Stadium at Milton Keynes (for those still to go, located at the junction of Silbury Boulevard and Grafton Gate (hard by the Abbey National Building) and very close to the BR station) on 12-14th April. Regrettably for H&W, this was slap bang in the middle of the Club Annual Dinner, the plans for which were already well in advance when details of the Play-Offs were announced.

The opening game was against Lewes, runners-up in the South League (to Oxford Hawks) and a team that had caused a few problems earlier in the season in the 3rd round of the HA Cup, when H&W squeezed a 2-1 win at PRG.

HAMPSTEAD & WESTMINSTER 0-0 LEWES

Friday 12th April

On a cold, grey and damp early afternoon, H&W opened their Play-Off campaign against Lewes. Peter Boizot had not long before arrived from Atlanta where he had inspected the albeit incomplete but comparatively austere facilities surrounding the pitch which presently resembles a building site and where the pre-Olympic Tournament was being held (not without its controversy). With his healthy tan, he was probably wondering why he was freezing his socks off here! The 1st XI were also greeted by a prodigal Dan Williams upon his return to the UK after travelling abroad and giving all the appearance of wanting to play then and there.

Lewes began brightly as H&W had their by now customary slow start. However, as the side settled, the first two short corners came their way but Dave Dixon's shots were blocked. Then a penalty stroke was awarded in their favour but Rob Bloomer's flick had little pace and regrettably went wide of the left post. Lewes came back but only moved into H&W's circle twice during the first quarter. They were awarded their own short corner after 25 minutes, after a long speculative pass was collected by their right wing who eventually played the ball off Gulsh Mandair after holding it for an age against the edge of the circle and the goal line. The

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resultant shot was deflected wide. The half ended with H&W generally in control but without unduly pressuring the opposition's defence.

At the tea-stand, where most of the 15 or so spectators were trying to thaw out, the general consensus was that H&W should already have sewn the game up and that Lewes were fortunate still to be in there.

There was little change to the pattern in the second half, with H&W controlling the midfield, where Greg Pierce was increasingly dominant, creating space and time and launching attacks to both sides of the pitch. Any pressure at the back was being absorbed by Derek Stone and Gulsh Mandair, both having steady games.

H&W's best chance from open play saw Kevin Gallen run in at pace in an inside left channel and with Sean Rowland advancing from his goal, Kev's pacy reverse-stick flick was pushed away with the goalkeeper's left hand but over his right shoulder. Up front, Nigel Land and Lindsay Troy were busily prominent (the latter was so eager to close down Lewes' free hits that he earned himself a green card). However, H&W were still finding it difficult to create real chances: lack of goals has been a problem all season and probably explains the current predicament and today was no exception.

With 20 minutes left, Lewes' shot from a short corner was disallowed for lifting and shortly afterwards, at the other end, another Dave Dixon effort was blocked as Lewes' men on the line were quickly out.

H&W pressed on and with 10 minutes to go, worked a 3-2 numeric advantage going forward but Kevin Gallen's shot was wide. The game's excitement virtually ended with 3 minutes to go (the stadium clock gave up the ghost, too) as H&W's last right sided attack was saved by Rowlands. Running out of time, stalemate ensued, with H&W the more frustrated, having by common consent, displayed the greater skill and artistry but without reward and again betraying a lack of ideas or execution in the opposing circle.

HAMPSTEAD & W 4-2 IPSWICH

(Dixon 13, Crowley 29, Varnish 41, Steijnem 62)

Saturday 13th April

With snow still on the verges approaching MK for an ungodly early start at 9.00am (and an entry fee of £8.00 for the privilege) it did not bode well. H&W, in their alternative red strip, took on the navy blue of Ipswich, this year's clear winners of the East League. Loyal H&W spectators (including an extremely bronzed Harry Watson) were quickly banished from pitch-side to the stand, as the team feared further criticism of (and possible retribution from) the officials for alleged "bench abuse", said to have occurred during Friday's game.

As this game settled, both teams seemed evenly matched with a strong right side bias to Ipswich's speedy attacks. However, after 13 minutes, after a strong run by Nigel Land, dissent from Ipswich led to a free hit being "upgraded" to the award of a short corner. Up stepped Dave Dixon (hailed by the tannoy announcer as our "corner specialist") who drove the ball in for a 1-0 lead. Neither side then dominated but H&W kept pressing: Kev Gallen to such an extent that he suffered a

green card on tackling back. H&W's defence stayed firm under any pressure, with Derek Stone and Gulsh Mandair again both composed and strong. After 22 minutes, Ipswich earned a short corner and, with a double decoy left, had a clear firm shot which went just wide, although Marcus Rudler had the goal well-covered. Again the majority of the attacks were along the right, utilising the speed of the Ipswich winger.

On 22 minutes, Nigel Land drove hard down the left for a free hit: the ball was quickly moved to the middle, where Mark Crowley forced his way in, reminiscent of an old-fashioned centre-forward, to crash it home for 2-0.

With three minutes to go in the half, some stick niggles led to a yellow card for Paul Varnish. Appearing uncertain, H&W drew back, tried to retain possession but let Ipswich's Bailey weave his way in for a right sided shot, which made it 2-1 at the half and a disappointment to H&W.

Paul's banishment lasted for a full 10 minutes of the second half (thus 13 minutes in total) but then H&W continued to press forward, with Nigel Land and Paul himself now prominent and with Mark Crowley taking up good positions on the right. In the 41st minute a stick chop led to an H&W short corner. On came the newly-tagged "special team". The push from the stop took the ball further into the circle than anticipated and Dave Dixon's shot was parried. However, Paul Varnish got a stick to it for the "finishing touch" (so said the tannoy) and 3-1.

Curtain and Crowley continued to press, wide on each wing and men were getting forward: one attack saw four men forward but the centre hit from the right eluded them all (and all defenders, too). In the 62nd minute, Ipswich pulled one back from their leading scorer, Cooke, whose shot from inside right bobbed at least twice before crossing the line, much to Marcus Rudler's frustration.

At 3-2 the Ipswich contingent became suddenly excited, possibly anticipating another quick goal? This did come but at the other end. H&W won a corner. The stick stop and push was again a little rapid but Dave Dixon managed to hold the ball to push it right to Kev Gallen, whose shot was saved but Jean Paul Stijnem was on hand to guide the ball in for 4-2.

H&W then took control but had to concentrate to do it after Paul Varnish again secured a yellow card and another sit-down but for reasons which remained a little mysterious to those in the stand (but what do they know about the rules anyway?). In response, H&W played attractive short pass possession hockey, masterminded by Greg Pierce, who was probably as surprised as anyone to find himself open up the left wing in the final minute for a cross that was so nearly a fifth goal, followed by the infernal hooter, to end the game. Smiles all around, with a Sunday afternoon decider thought to be in prospect against Warrington for one of the two immediate places in the National League.

"GOALPOST DEJA-VU?"

HAMPSTEAD & W 1-1 WARRINGTON

(Varnish 58)

Sunday 14th April

H&W suffered the huge disappointment of hitting the post after a short corner routine with 16 seconds left on the clock and ending up with a draw on Sunday afternoon. This handed

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the automatic NHL promotion spot to Lewes, despite remaining unbeaten and conceding fewer goals. It means that the 1st XI must return to the National Stadium on 27th April for the so-called cross-over games for the final places in next season's National League Division 2. There they will meet Oxford Hawks, who finished third in the other pool, after Bromley had retained their NHL standing, greatly assisted by the 9-1 win against Weston super Mare.

Thoughts turned to the dramatic Surbiton game 5 years ago: 1-0 up and no Play-Offs, the London League title there for the grabs and the infamous intervention of the goalpost, which otherwise would probably have finished the game, which also ended up a 1-1 draw.

With news of the earlier 3-3 draw between Ipswich and Lewes, hopes were high and H&W were quickly into their stride, despite an early third minute green card for Rob Turner. Two minutes later saw Kev Gallen's dive in the circle trying to get on the end of a cross from the far left. Our first short corner resulted from a weaving left side run but the shot was disallowed for a moving ball.

At the other end, a strong left wing cross was deflected off Derek Stone's stick but in the air and a short corner awarded. On came Warrington's leading League scorer, Tim Rothwell. His shot hit Marcus Rudler amidships, bent him double and then prostrate, requiring attention from Kate Stubbs, oblivious to the crowd's (well, the vociferous but small Hampstead contingent) sartorial exhortations that the maker's label was protruding from the back of her sweatshirt! Sensibly, she ignored all the rumpus.

Paul Varnish then fell foul of the umpire and attracted another yellow card which resulted in a loss of Hampstead's composure and an increasing threat from, in particular Warrington's Latif and his close controlled stickwork, bringing the best out of the left side of the H&W defence.

On 23 minutes, the second Warrington short corner saw Rothwell's appearance at the top of the circle again and this time he made it 1-0. On 26 minutes, Warrington were awarded a penalty stroke after a hooked stick in the circle. Marcus Rudler in the Hampstead goal took his time to prepare (too much time, said the umpire, brandishing a green card). However, the push was high (too high) and hit the crossbar, so 1-0 it remained much to the relief of tension in some parts of the stand, at least.

Back to a full compliment at the start of the second half, H&W kept the game tight. Kev Gallen received a green card but Yates of Warrington was yellow-carded after a heavy challenge. Hampstead then stepped up the pace and probed left and right. Paul Varnish saw a snap shot go across the goal face at close range. Marcus Rudler then pulled off a good save diving to his left at a short corner in the 45th minute, as Warrington again concentrated their attacks through Latif. This was more than rebuffed with firm, low tackling (right out of the coaching manual) including several well executed on the reverse.

As the pressure mounted, Paul Varnish found himself clear on the left, rounded the defence and as the goalie came out, calmly waited the requisite but agonising (to the

spectators) millisecond before (apparently) nonchalantly flicking the ball over him for a well deserved 1-1.

Mark Crowley then began proverbially to run his socks off and take the game right to Warrington with a series of strong runs along the right with mesmeric control and setting up short corners. There were three awarded in the final two minutes and on the last, Dave Dixon managed to keep control as he manoeuvred for what seemed an eternity, made the smallest of spaces and cracked in a shot but all we were left with was the resonant "ping" of ball on metal and, alas, the draw.

Alex Ferguson might have said that his team cannot treat the fans the way Manchester United did on Saturday at Southampton and leave them in a state of nervous exhaustion. What about H&W? You get thrills a plenty: just recollect the HA Cup game against Thames Poly at Hornsey, the subsequent match against Gore Court with the succession of flicks, the Surbiton game mentioned earlier and the Neston HA Cup success at PRG. It takes nerves of steel!

ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER

This year's Dinner was once again held at London Zoo on Saturday 13th April. In spite of the Play-Offs and the absence of the Men's 1st XI squad, some 170 attended. As is now customary, the Club Awards were also made, with this year's poignant special first award of the Sam Taylor Memorial Trophy, accepted by Jenny Taylor in Sam's honour and recognising his immense contribution to H&W. The Trophy, kindly donated by Stan Elgar, is to be awarded for special long-term service to the Club. The Barnard Cup was this year awarded to the Women's 3rd XI. A Woodpecker Trophy (now awarded to the Club Person of the Year - after consultation with Morley Pecker) was awarded to Chris Elliott, after some ten years of captainship of the Vets without complaint and with much good humour.

Also welcomed to the Dinner were Melinda and Richard James, who have now moved to the Wirral. In recognition of Melinda's long term commitment to the establishment of the Women's Section and Richard's arduous stint as Men's Club Captain and their combined general stewardship of the Club, both have been conferred with Honorary Life Membership.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Club's AGM will be held on Thursday 23rd May 1996 at 7.30pm (sharp) at the Carlton Tavern, 33a Carlton Vale, London NW6 by the kind invitation of Peter Boizot. For those unfamiliar with the territory, it is located by the north gate of PRG (adjacent to the car-park entrance) and close to the junction of Carlton Vale with Kilburn Park Road.

NEXT EDITION

OK, OK, Promises, promises! We *will* get to talk to Tony Elliott next time around and try to fill you in with more news of the Women's teams and, we gather, another Westminster Challenge in September. We might even have heard from the Veterans, too!