

Hampstead and Westminster Hockey Club

Newsletter September 2009

Keeping Vice Presidents and Friends in the know

Welcome

This is the fourth in our series of revamped Newsletters and marks the start of the 2009/10 playing season, coinciding with the 115th anniversary of the Club's establishment. The new playing surface is scheduled for completion in early September and allowing for the short extension of time and teething problems, perhaps the first competitive hockey match to be played on it may well be the second HWHC Memorial Match, more details of which can be found later in this Newsletter.

Installing the new surface and contributing handsomely towards its cost has secured the Club another 10 year tenure at the Ground, which is extremely pleasing news, given the increasing competition for its use from other sports and users in the locality. A substantial vote of thanks for this is owed to the Club Chairman Oz Rankin, as it was seen as a task to break any back and insurmountable but it has been achieved, against considerable odds.

There is still a further instalment to be paid and the fund-raising continues, which is made more difficult by the current downturn. Oz may still come to pay you a visit!

The Club has also appointed Todd Williams as its new coach in succession to Soma Singh. There are significant changes to the rules of the game and we shall try to cover these aspects in the Newsletter

In their Memory

Noel Cardoza

Noel died in July and several Club stalwarts attended his funeral, including Colin Greenhalgh, Richard Shaw, David Austin-Jones, Berry Bermingham, John Chaumeton and Frank Lockhart,

Colin Greenhalgh recalls that Noel joined the club in 1955 – in the Brondesbury days – and he was an outstandingly talented player, amongst the best half-dozen the Club has had in its illustrious history. He had been there-or-thereabouts for All-India and a triallist for the Pakistan Olympic team at the time of their world domination (1948).

He was a tower of strength for our 1st XI for about 10 years, until he married and moved to South London and played, for a short time, for Cheam. During his playing years with us, he was the 1st XI Captain in the 1959-60 and 1960-61 seasons (and a Committee Member for longer than that).

He was elected a Vice-President in 2001, and he continued to support club functions when he was fit enough (such as the annual VP's Dinner), despite his failing health.

Noel didn't restrict his hockey activities to Hampstead. He played, too, for Middlesex and for various 'occasional' and 'social' sides. (I, myself, often played with him in a mixed hockey team – the Chameleons – in the 1950's/60's). He was always charming company, tolerant of us 'novice' players, always fond of good conversation and a laugh.

Coaching Report

Todd Williams has spared the Newsletter a few minutes in a busy pre-season schedule.

Pre-season has started well for HWHC with both good numbers and some more than handy new additions. It is clear that the benefit of the club retaining its Premier League status (for the tenth season) is now starting to yield rewards, with new players arriving from Loughborough and Bath (Universities) and Southgate (relegated) providing as much depth and strength to the squad as I've seen.

In saying that however, the focus is now very much on ensuring both the 1's AND 2's are at peak strength and as prepared as well as they can be. The primary reason for this is that with the new "auto-play" rule where you can take your own free hit, the game is now so much quicker and whereas hockey fitness used to be a balance between aerobic and anaerobic fitness, it is now more about sprint and recovery and resting players through interchange.

That means of course that the old days of bench players maybe getting 10 minutes if someone was knocked unconscious are well and truly over and the expectation is that all field players on the bench will get significant amounts of game time.

This then means that if our CH gets injured one week then his replacement will effectively come from the 2's and not from the bench, which means these guys have to be ready and properly prepared to step up. 2's Captain Jamie Edington and I have discussed this at length and we will be doing our utmost to ensure players are properly managed across both teams.

The flip side to this however is that all players who want to play 1's will be expected to play 2's if they are not selected and the commitment to this will be required as part of our initial squad selection. Simply, if it means we lose some good players who go off and play 1's elsewhere then so be it, at least we know we will have the people who are prepared to do the best for the club.

Because of the new rules, we have organised a host of practice games including Scotland U/21 (won 7-1), Bromley and Beckenham, Canterbury, Old Loughts and then a pre-season tour for 3 games against the two top French club teams in early September to really fine tune what we are doing. After that we'll finally be back at the fantastic new pitch and facilities at Paddington Rec, and making sure we are as used to the new surface as we can be to maximise our home advantage.

As I said, we've got a number of new players but with the squad at currently around 35, I won't make any announcements or bold predictions. I can tell you though that, as ever, we are pleased to have some international quality in the ranks with the arrival of Jaime González-Laguillo from the very strong Club de Campo, who represented Spain at U/21 level and also that we're delighted to welcome back Andrew Cornick from Surbiton.

Obviously these guys will add both quality and depth to the group and their experience will be of great support to our Captain, Dan Fox who incidentally has performed very well for England over the summer and whilst just missing out on the European Championships is still very much at the start of his international career and well and truly in the Olympic mix.

Finally, I'd just like to say that it's great to be back.

Soma Singh

The Newsletter wants to record its appreciation of the significant contribution to the Club's playing prowess by Soma Singh as Club Coach and, in particular, his work with the Men's 1's for a second period under his stewardship (news of the start of his first stint appears later in this Newsletter). Soma's love of the game is evident and his frequent exhortation that it need not be complicated, however much it may have frustrated him (as much as coaches all over the world) when his players did not follow advice and recommendations. Soma put considerable effort into forging alliances with academic institutions close to PRG and to set up scholarships to enable top quality players to join us. His work with the Junior section was also bearing fruit and friends were being won in that area, which has never been the easiest to achieve.

The Men's 1's also needs to thank Rob Turner for many years of unstinting support, not just as a skipper of the team when enjoying success in the National League but latterly as a knowledgeable and astute assistant coach and Susie Turner for her role as Team Manager for last season, when, with her disarming smile and common sense, she successfully organised the team and quickly won respect on the Premier League circuit.

England Duty

As reported in the previous Newsletter and mentioned earlier by Todd Williams, Dan Fox has been selected by England in a series of matches that led to the team selection for the European Championships. Dan's aim is to participate in the Olympic Games and there is every incentive to achieve that. Whilst he may have narrowly missed out on selection for the Championships there has still been time to win eight caps.

Dan is also a cricketer, who not long back once shared a 408 run partnership for the third wicket with Salil Oberoi for Oxford in the Varsity Match at Fenner's scoring 184 (100 in 173 minutes off 155 balls, 12x4), his partner eventually making 247, breaking a 74 year old record and enabling Oxford to declare on 610 for 5 that eclipsed Cambridge's total of 604 in 2002.

National League

European Qualification

Incentive for fifth place and better

On 21 August 2009, England Hockey announced changes to the way the Men's England Hockey League (EHL) Premier Division winners and teams qualifying for Europe will be determined.

The revised Premier Division format stems from a proposal put to the England Hockey Board by the Men's Premier Hockey League Forum, a group comprising representatives from the Men's Premier Division clubs.

At the end of the regular 2009-2010 season, the team finishing top of the League will receive an automatic place in the Euro Hockey League as England's third ranked team. They can improve on this ranking, and compete to be crowned EHL Champions, in a subsequent play-off tournament.

After 18 matches, the top five teams in the Men's EHL Premier Division will play off for the Championship title and a place in Europe. The team winning the play-off tournament will be crowned England Hockey League Champions and will be England's first ranked team in the Euro Hockey League for the subsequent season. The play-off final runners-up will be England's second ranked team in the Euro Hockey League. In the event that the team already qualified for the Euro Hockey League finishes in the top two in the play-off tournament, there will be a third place play-off to determine England's third ranked team to participate in the Euro Hockey League.

Play Off Tournament

The tournament will be structured as follows:

Match 1: EHL 4 (fourth placed team) v EHL 5 (fifth placed team)

Match 2: EHL 1 v Winner of Match 1

Match 3: EHL 2 v EHL 3

Match 4: Loser of Match 2 v Loser of Match 3

(This match will determine England's third ranked Euro Hockey League participant. The match will only be required if EHL 1 wins Match 2)

Match 5: Winner of Match 2 v Winner of Match 3

(This match will determine who is crowned England Hockey League Champions and consequently, England's first and second ranked teams in the Euro Hockey League)

Details such as dates, the finalised match schedule and venues will be confirmed shortly.

In the absence of a representative forum for clubs in the Women's Premier Division, England Hockey continues to consult with clubs in the division on the adoption of a similar structure with a decision to be reached prior to the start of the 2009-2010 season.

Registered Players

From the 2009-2010 season, the maximum number of players a club can register is to be increased from 27 to 30 to ensure that teams can register sufficient players to include cover for players who are on international duty. This regulation will apply across all Divisions in the EHL.

National League Fixture List

These are the H&W fixtures in the Premier Division for the 2009/10 season. The dates in bold represent a Saturday fixture, as part of the new structure agreed by the EHL. The League's Administrators have deliberately developed what they proudly call a symmetry to the list, by which, in our case, we play Reading first and then last at the end of the season, in March 2010. Early season trips to Bowdon (Manchester's SW suburbs) and then to newly promoted Exeter University will mean plenty of miles travelled.

20 Sep	Reading (a)
26 Sep	Surbiton (h)
3 Oct	Bowdon (a)
10 Oct	Exeter Univ (a)
18 Oct	East Grinstead (h)
24 Oct	Beeston (a)
8 Nov	Loughborough (h)
15 Nov	Cannock (a)
21 Nov	Brooklands (h)
29 Nov	Surbiton (a)
7 Feb	Bowdon (h)
14 Feb	Exeter Univ (h)
21 Feb	East Grinstead (a)
28 Feb	Beeston (h)
6 Mar	Loughborough (a)
14 Mar	Cannock (h)
20 Mar	Brooklands (a)
28 Mar	Reading (h)

Our teams

Men's 1st XI

Dan Fox has been appointed the Men's 1st XI captain, in succession to Welsh international Ed Bevan, who was forced to miss the last few matches of last season's Premier League campaign, with a leg injury, which left him the frustration of watching from the sidelines as far away as Loughborough and Cannock, to name but two.

In addition to Andy (*Sparrow*) Cornick's return to H&W colours after a season with Surbiton, Jordache Rawson has already enlisted with the National League registrars to join us from Southgate, who returned to Division 1 at the end of the season and who are now to be coached by former South African goalie (and past National League opponent) Chris Hibbert and his father, in succession to John Shaw.

Men's 2nd XI

Another successful season is hoped for, under returning skipper Jamie Edington in a highly competitive League, in which H&W has regularly appeared in not less than the top three (and frequently winners or runners-up).

The season starts with these fixtures:

26 Sep	Indian Gymkhana (h)	1030h
3 Oct	Richmond (a)	1500h
10 Oct	Guildford (h)	1030h
17 Oct	Old Georgians (a)	1330h
24 Oct	Canterbury (h)	1330h
31 Oct	Reading (a)	

Men's 3rd XI

The London League Div 1 season starts as follows::

26 Sep	Wimbledon 2's (h)
3 Oct	Chelmsford (a)
10 Oct	Oxford Univ (h)
17 Oct	Old Loughtonians (h)
24 Oct	Wimbledon 3's (h)
31 Oct	Reading (a)

Zak Hond XI

The London League Div 2 season starts with these fixtures:

26 Sep	Indian Gymkhana 3 (a)
3 Oct	Richmond Griffins (h)
10 Oct	Guildford 3 (a)
17 Oct	London Wayfarers Heavies (h)
24 Oct	St Albans 2 (a)
31 Oct	Richmond 2A (h)

Men's 4th XI

In the London League Division 3 the first fixtures are:

26 Sep	Reading Refills (a)
3 Oct	H&W 5 th XI (h)
10 Oct	Teddington Saplings (a)
17 Oct	Old Loughtonians 3 (h)
24 Oct	St Albans Senators (a)
31 Oct	Reading 3 (h)

Men's Hammers XI

In London League Division 4 these are the first fixtures:

26 Sep	H&W 6 th XI (h)
3 Oct	Richmond (a)
10 Oct	Oxford Univ 3 (h)
17 Oct	Wimbledon 5 (a)
24 Oct	St Albans 4 (h)

Men's 6th XI

The season starts with these fixtures in the same Division 4:

26 Sep	H&W Hammers (h)
3 Oct	London Wayfarers 4 (h)
10 Oct	PHC Chiswick (a)
17 Oct	Wimbledon 4 (h)
24 Oct	Bromley & Beckenham 3 (a)
31 Oct	Richmond Deerstalkers (a)

Men's Thirsts XI

In London League Division 7 the season starts with these fixtures:

26 Sep	Indian Gymkhana 4 (h)
3 Oct	Tulse Hill & Dulwich Saracens (a)
10 Oct	Southgate Goblets (h)
17 Oct	PHC Chiswick 5 (h)
24 Oct	Richmond Redoubtable (a)
31 Oct	Tulse Hill & Dulwich Royals (h)

Men's Spaniards XI

The London League Division 6 season starts with these fixtures:

26 Sep	HAC Sutlers (a)
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10 Oct	London Wayfarers (a)
17 Oct	Old Loughtonians (h)
24 Oct	Reading Rovers (a)
31 Oct	Reading Rascals (h)

Men's Veterans XI

In the London Veterans League 1, the season starts with these fixtures:

26 Sep	Maidenhead (h)
3 Oct	Richmond (a)
10 Oct	Old Kingstonians (h)
17 Oct	Old Georgians (a)
24 Oct	Woking (h)
31 Oct	Reading Rustlers (a)

Men's Super Veterans XI

The London Hockey League Supervets League starts with these fixtures:

26 Sep	Indian Gymkhana (a)
3 Oct	Richmond Rogues (h)
10 Oct	Staines (a)
17 Oct	Old Loughtonians (h)
24 Oct	St Albans Centurions (a)
31 Oct	Tring (h)

Women's 1st XI

Another season beckons in Division 1 of the South League. The Women are looking to improve on last season's fifth and consolidate, prior to a push into top place and the National League. If this can be achieved this year all well and good! A scheduled friendly against Barnes Hounslow Ealing should by now have taken place.

26 Sep	Reading (h)
3 Oct	Harrow (a)
10 Oct	Southampton (h)
17 Oct	Havant (a)
24 Oct	Surbiton (a)
7 Nov	Oxford Hawks (h)

Women's 2nd XI

The 2's were undefeated champions of the Middlesex Premier League last season and for the second year enjoyed the best playing record in the Club. Their initial fixtures in the South Club's League Division 3A (with further travelling necessary this season) are:

26 Sep	Wycombe (a)
3 Oct	Banbury (h)
10 Oct	Staines (a)
17 Oct	Bracknell (a)
24 Oct	Teddington 2 (h)
7 Nov	Oxford Hawks 2 (a)

Women's 3rd XI

The 3rds XI take over custody of the Middlesex Women's Premier League, with the following fixtures:

3 Oct	PHC Chiswick (a)
10 Oct	Eastcote 3 (h)
17 Oct	Mill Hill (a)
24 Oct	Eastcote 2 (h)
7 Nov	Hendon 1

Women's 4th XI

In Middlesex Division 1 the first few games are:

3 Oct	Staines 4 (h)
10 Oct	Sunbury 2 (h)
17 Oct	Staines 3 (a)
24 Oct	Imperial Medicals 1 (h)
7 Nov	Harrow 2

Women's 5th XI

In Middlesex Division 2, the fixture list looks like this:

3 Oct	Aces 1 (a)
10 Oct	Winchmore Hill & Enfield 2 (h)
17 Oct	Southgate 4 (a)
24 Oct	Teddington 4 (h)
7 Nov	Gymkhana 1 (a)

Women's 6th XI

The season starts in Middlesex Division 3, with these fixtures:

3 Oct	Southgate 5 (a)
10 Oct	Hendon 2 (a)
17 Oct	Teddington 3 (h)
24 Oct	Staines 5 (a)
7 Nov	Mill Hill 2 (h)

Women's 7th XI

The 7's are determined to climb Middlesex Division 4 and start that campaign as follows:

26 Sep	PHC Chiswick 5 (h)
3 Oct	West Hampstead 6 (a)
10 Oct	Winchmore Hill & Enfield 3 (a)
17 Oct	Ashford (Middx) 3 (a)
24 Oct	Harrow 3 (h)
7 Nov	Old Uxonians (h)

Rule Changes

David (Tex) Lane has with other leading Umpires produced a helpful summary of the recent rule changes that will affect all players, officials and spectators that are summarised below. The likely effects are already being accounted for in pre-season training, as Todd Williams has pointed out.

Area of Major Change

The definition of a shot has been changed. Until now a shot had to be going towards the goal. Under the new rules, a shot is a shot if the player's intention is to score, even if the shot is misdirected and is not going towards the goal. This has implications when considering whether balls lifted from a hit from within the circle are allowed or not.

Players can now "self-pass" from almost all restarts of play, where the taker is now allowed to play the ball again.

Restarts to the attacking team within the 23 metres area cannot be played directly into the circle by the taker (and there are additional restrictions covering when it can be played into the circle following a self-pass).

The "Self-Pass"

A player taking many types of restart is now allowed to be the next player to play the ball. This is called a self-pass.

The self-pass cannot be used at a penalty corner nor, obviously, at a penalty stroke.

The self-pass does not have to move one metre before it is played again by the taker. The ball must still move a metre before it is played by any other player from the same team as the taker.

The rules state that “the action of taking the free hit and of next playing the ball must be two separate actions”. If the taker simply approaches the ball and carries the ball off in a “contact dribble” (where the stick and the ball remain in contact) the free hit has not been taken and should be taken again.

Because there is no minimum distance that a self-pass has to travel, players have more options for aerial passes from a restart. Players can also now make a short self-pass and then play an aerial pass immediately.

The taking of the hit and the aerial pass must be two distinct actions. A player cannot take a free hit and make an aerial pass all in one movement.

This change should make aerial passes far safer from free hits as it should be far easier to get the ball up and high above any other players before they have a chance to come within 5 metres.

Location of Restarts

The rules still say that a free hit is to be taken close to the offence, where “close to” means within playing distance of where the offence occurred and with no significant advantage gained.

The rules state that the location from which a free hit is taken must be more precise inside the 23 metres area.

Stationary Ball at Restarts

The rules continue to state the ball must be stationary for all restarts.

Restarts with Players within 5 Metres

The FIH guidance is that restarts need not be delayed if there are players within 5 metres who, according to the rules, should not be - **providing they are not attempting to play the ball or influence play**. This obviously includes opponents and, if the restart is within the attacking 23 metres area, team-mates of the person taking the restart.

The new rules mean that all restarts (free hits, sideline balls, corners) can be taken much more quickly than before, as they can be taken by the first player to get to the ball without waiting for supporting team-mates. Because the restarts can be taken more quickly, there are likely to be more situations - all over the pitch - where a player is in a position to take a restart when opposing players are within 5 metres.

Opponents still within 5 metres when the restart is taken must not interfere with the play until they have moved 5 metres away from where the restart was taken, or the ball has moved 5 metres.

Umpires have been advised to be very firm to ensure that opponents do not interfere with restarts and to punish offenders accordingly. Within the attacking 23 metres area, an opponent preventing a restart would normally be punished by the award of a penalty corner, in addition to the appropriate personal penalty.

Attacking Free Hits within the 23 metres area

The ball cannot be played directly into the circle from an attacking restart within the 23 metres area. Additionally, if the restart is taken as a self-pass, it cannot be played into the circle until it has travelled 5 metres in any direction, or has been played by another player. This applies to side-line restarts and corners as well as free hits.

Attacking Free Hits - Travelling 5 metres

The 2009 Rules and the associated FIH Umpires Briefing makes it clear that travelling 5 metres means in any direction.

By way of example, if an attacker takes a restart as a self-pass within the 23 metres area and dribbles the ball 2.5 metres to the left and then 2.5 metres to the right, the ball is back where it started but can now be played into the circle as it has travelled 5 metres.

Attacking Free Hits - Playing the Ball into the Circle

It is not an offence to hit the ball towards the circle, only if the ball actually enters the circle (without being touched by another player etc).

Attacking Free Hits - Near to the 23 metres line

If a free hit is taken inside the 23 metres area and the player chooses to take a self-pass and carry the ball outside the 23 metres area, the requirements of the free hit are still in action (ie, the ball still has to travel 5 metres before it can be played into the circle by that player if no-one else plays it).

There is now a potential advantage for an attacking team taking a free hit outside the 23 metres area instead of inside it (as that means they can play the ball directly into the circle and that their team-mates can be within 5 metres of the free hit).

Attacking Free Hits - Players' Positions

The optimum places for players to stand at free hits will change as a result of the new rules. It is hard to predict all of the implications.

In the past, the optimum place for defenders to "ring" any attacking restart was just outside the circle so that any accidental infringement by them only resulted in a free hit and not a penalty corner.

The optimum place is now just inside the circle as this will mean that if the ball reaches them directly, they will be awarded a free hit as the ball cannot be played directly into the circle. This position means that there is no chance of an accidental touch before the ball enters the circle, which would make the ball entering the circle legal.

However, as soon as an attacker comes close to them, their optimal position changes to being alongside or in front of the attacker. This is particularly true as the attacker is likely to be looking for a slight deflection into the circle following a hard hit towards them. The last place a defender wants to be now is just inside the circle where any deflection on to their feet may result in a penalty corner.

These changes may result in more "scrimmaging" on the edge of the circle. In some circumstances, defending teams may make no attempt to "defend the circle" as they have done historically. As the ball cannot be played quickly into the circle, defenders may just have one player ready to tackle the taker if they use a self-pass but not to have a "ring" of players as has been the case in the past.

Attacking Free Hits - 5 metres around the circle

For attacking free hits that are awarded within 5 metres of the circle, the free hit must be moved to "the nearest point at least 5 metres from the circle".

The new rules make it very difficult to take a quick free hit if the free hit is awarded just outside the circle (ie, within the 5 metre zone). The taker has to take the ball 5 metres away from the circle to take the free hit, which will inevitably slow the play and allow defenders some time to get into position.

Attacking Free Hits - "Corner of the Pitch" Restarts

The options for taking free hits and other restarts for the attacking side that are wide on the pitch and close to the back-line are now more limited than before.

For a number of years the first attacking option for most restarts in this area has been to hit the ball directly into the circle to an unmarked colleague or into a crowded circle in an attempt to get a deflection towards goal. This is no longer an option as the ball cannot be played into the circle directly. As a result, attacking teams will be looking for other options and methods of play in these areas.

This is one of the areas of the pitch where restarts are likely to be taken far more quickly than before. It will often be that the first attacker to the ball will take a quick self-pass to get the ball back into play as quickly as possible rather than wait for a “set piece” scenario where the attacking options can be limited.

It also means that there will be more passes backwards from these areas to rebuild an attack.

Restarts for the attack in the corner of the pitch are not as good an attacking opportunity as they used to be.

Advantage or Not?

The new rules will require all umpires to rethink their understanding of advantage. What has changed with the self-pass is that players can now take the free hit quickly, without necessarily waiting for supporting team mates. As a result, a quickly awarded free hit when the player has control of the ball will give the player the option of taking a self-pass and effectively continuing with the same passage of play if **they** choose to.

For the last few years umpires have been actively encouraged to look for situations where advantage can be played, rather than stopping the game by penalising an offence. This is still the case but awarding a free hit quickly may be the best “advantage” for the team more often than it has been in the past.

2009 Memorial Game

The Borrett/Flasjner Memorial Game (HWHC v Legends) will be played this year on **Sunday 20 September**. The starting time will be 12.00. We are hoping that the Carlton can then provide players spectators and stalwarts with remarkable sustenance afterwards. It may well be a case of unwrapping the new pitch and, if so, what better way to mark the event.

The event is in memory of stalwart club members whose lives were cut tragically short and to remember, in particular, the significant contributions to the Club’s prosperity and general well-being of Norman Borrett and Wendy Flajsner but also John McDougall, who died a decade ago and Sam Taylor, the successful and very popular Men’s 1st XI Manager in the early days of our participation in the National League.

Where are they now?

A few names from the past are evoked by news of the Memorial Game. These are the selected teams for the top three elevens in March 1982, for the Richmond games.

1st XI

Wilmot Waugh Viji Borrett Chapman Benwara Rawal Guest McDougall Laven Stanyard

2nd XI

Edyvean Catley Delaney Mason Banting Osborne Jones Boorman Flack Fawley Smith H

3rd XI

Marshall Hale Taverner Nickson Coleman Woodgate Chitra Tipping Hillel Smith G Charalam

Pitch Replacement

In the early Summer, the Club exchanged contracts with the City of Westminster for a new 10 year tenure at PRG. This coincided with the agreement to install at joint expense the new playing surface. The new pitch is a Polytan Megaturf pitch, manufactured in Germany. It is an FIH Global Standard water based surface used for internationals. It is used in the German national stadium and was employed for the World Cup in 2006.

This news was a considerable relief, following colossal effort from Club officers, who are now obviously excited, as the new pitch was on plan for work to start on 20 July and was to be finished by the end of August. Odd to relate but the work is almost to programme. The field lines were due to be stitched in immediately after the August Bank Holiday. This despite discovering that the shock pad and parts of the undersurface were also in need of repair or replacement that has led to increased expenditure that the Club has to share with Westminster. So, all should be ready for the new season. As for the other pitch....

Tiger Turf

Readers may recollect the Club's voyage of discovery with the installation by the City of Westminster of a Tiger Turf surface on the non-water based (and original) Caged Pitch at PRG. Initially its use was not supported by the Middlesex County Hockey Umpires and it was rejected by the London League on the basis that any injuries were not insured.

This was a significant blow, with its increased numbers of teams, the Club was looking for more pitches, rather than fewer! These hurdles have since been overcome as the official statement emphasises and as an introduction to the difficulties facing hockey generally, as traditional nylon surfaces wear out quicker, we set it out below and then explore the issues.

Tiger Turf Announcement

"Hampstead and Westminster Hockey Club took their time choosing their new hockey surface - TigerTurf Challenger. They are confident that it has given them the edge over their rivals and are delighted they made the right choice.

And they have more good reason to celebrate their decision after the surface became only the second, third generation surface to pass an FIH field test to underline TigerTurf's status as market leader.

The state-of-the-art hockey facility is used by clubs and schools around the country and Hampstead and Westminster can compete against their rivals on an FIH certified field - following rigorous testing.

Challenger test results were even more impressive than in the laboratory, according to the FIH results. Its unique texturised fibres ensure smooth, non-directional ball roll that surpasses all criteria and expectation.

Passing the tests with ease, two years after it was installed, proves that Challenger will continue to perform everyday throughout its lifetime.

Steve Hewitt, TigerTurf's Sales and Marketing Director said: "We are delighted that our surface has produced such fantastic results in the FIH testing."

"We have always known that our multi-use range is the strongest in the market and Challenger is further endorsement of that."

"We take great pride in the Challenger surface after all the development work we have put into it over the years and we are sure that all players at the club will benefit from being able to play their competitive hockey matches on it in the future."

Background

There are approximately 900 sand-filled or sand-dressed and 50 water-based hockey pitches in England. Most have been installed in the past 10-15 years. Many of the sand-filled or sand-dressed pitches are investments representing partnerships. They involve arrangements made between clubs, schools and local authorities. A considerable number of these pitches are used for multisport activity, including hockey, football, rugby and tennis. In most cases hockey is not the dominant user.

3G Pitches

In recent years a 'third generation' of artificial turf pitch has been developed. These are known as 3G or long pile turf pitches (due to the length of the turf). They have been adopted by the football community for amateur competition and, in some instances internationally for professional football.

Throughout 2006 and 2007 England Hockey (EH) received an increasing number of reports of hockey pitches being replaced with new 3G turf and it became clear that EH needed to reconsider its policy so as to ensure that our policy going forward is robust enough to sit within the ever- changing facility landscape. EH estimates that there are 1,000 hockey pitches in England, of which, it has been reported, more than 100 sand-filled hockey pitches in schools and local authorities have been replaced with 3G turf in the last 20 months alone.

The vast majority of these 100 pitches will **not** meet FIH Testing Standards. The FA and Football Foundation also informed EH that they are investing huge sums of money in developing more of these pitches over the next few years. EH therefore estimates that working at the current rate of attrition hockey will have approximately 50% or more of its hockey facility stock at risk by 2013.

Until 2007, the FIH and EH stated that these surfaces were **not** approved for hockey. The FIH have since via their approved testing laboratories certified five long pile turf pitches in England as *FIH approved for hockey*. It is anticipated that there will be more long pile turf pitches approved by the FIH. This certification follows on-site testing and pitches that have been certified generally have a turf length ranging from 35-40mm. It is highly unlikely that turf lengths beyond 40mm will meet the FIH performance standards. The turf length of water based, sand dressed and sand filled pitches are typically 12- 25mm.

Until 1 August 2009 EH did not permit long pile turf pitches to be used for any competition at any level but in view of the changing hockey 'facility landscape' the Board of EH commissioned extensive research in November 2008. The research was undertaken over six months by a reputable FIH approved testing laboratory and involved laboratory and pitch based performance testing..

England Hockey's 3G Pitch Policy – 1st August 2009

From 1st August 2009 EH has permitted the use of some long pile turf pitches for some competitive hockey. It recognises that with appropriate maintenance, some FIH approved long pile turf as a playing surface is preferable to poorly maintained grass or synthetic turf pitches. It y also acknowledges that with appropriate levels of maintenance, some long pile turf is appropriate for young players being introduced to hockey in schools and in community programmes or activities.

From the 1st August 2009 EH introduced a system of pitch categorization that will clearly identify three levels within the current FIH testing parameters.

The categories identify the pitches that are suitable for hockey playing and specific levels of competition. The following categories only will apply:

EH Category 1

Water based and sand-dressed surfaces approved within the FIH Global/National parameters.

EH Category 2

Sand-filled (sand-based) surfaces within the FIH National parameter.

EH Category 3

Long pile (3G) surfaces that are categorised by FIH as satisfying their 'National' performance parameter. Such approved by the FIH. The certification shall be based on on-site testing.

From 1 August 2009 EH has agreed to permit the use of EH Category 3 surfaces for

local and regional league competition (excepting regional premierships divisions, for example, the division that directly feed the National League). However the playing surface is characterised by a slower surface speed, poor and sometimes unpredictable levels of consistency and modern hockey skills are much more difficult to execute.

It is strongly recommended that England Hockey League Premier Division fixtures are played on Category 1 pitches.

Category 3 pitches cannot be used for (amongst others) any England Hockey Knock-Out Competition, international training and matches, the England Hockey League (all Divisions), Regional Premier Division and BUCS Premier League fixtures.

VP Dinner

Locked on the horns of a dilemma over timing, Nick Coleman has announced that this year's VP Dinner will be held at the East India Club on **31 October 2009**, with dinner at 8.00pm preceded by drinks as usual from, say, 7.00pm. This is with considerable thanks to Alan Kurtz, who wields influence at the Club and we are grateful to him for his assistance in securing the reservation. This the first Dinner convened on a Saturday, as opposed to a weekday (usually hitherto a Friday) and it is hoped this might prove more convenient for those who need to travel from afar to join us. More information will follow once detailed arrangements have been confirmed.

The address is 16 St James's Square London SW1Y 4LH; telephone 020 7930 1000.

www.eastindiaclub.co.uk

To recollect, East India Club was founded in the middle of the 19th century. Its original members were 'the servants of the East India Company and Commissioned Officers of Her Majesty's Army and Navy'. The legacy of those early members, home on furlough from far flung lands, continues today. As a private club, it is only open to members and their guests.

Since those early days, the club has amalgamated with the Devonshire, the Sports and the Public Schools clubs, and also welcomed members of the Eccentric Club. The amalgam has been a happy one, possibly because together, as their titles suggest, the component parts reflect the very best diversity of English tradition.

Club Chairman Oz Rankin regrets that he will be unavailable to attend but hopes to persuade a deputy to report on the achievements of the summer and indeed since the last Dinner. There is no National League hockey that weekend, which could mean that restraint will be at a minimum, both from would-be players and spectators, who will not now be distracted.

Website

Visitors to the site will see that it has undergone its promised transformation over the summer and that whilst it is not yet fully functional, it is much refreshed by the changes made. There are plans to add more material and to secure access to greater sections of the site by password to members and friends. This will help make more secure match reports and general membership information.

The Members' section has a separate page allocated to the Vice Presidents that we hope to be able to update frequently once it is running on full capacity. The last Newsletter is available there and it is hoped this edition too will be able to follow it.

It is also hoped to add photographs and other scanned material when resources allow, so please search your attic and have anything of interest available to be despatched.

From the Annals

10 Years Ago

Men's 1's under Soma Singh

Hampstead open their new season in the English Hockey League Men's Division Two with a long trip to play newly promoted Formby, located between Liverpool and Southport on Sunday 26th September at 1.00pm.

The team has been in extended pre-season training under new player coach Soma Singh, former Great Britain and England player who has joined in the close season from Southgate. It won the abbreviated Hampstead & Westminster Challenge earlier in September beating both Surbiton and Indian Gymkhana, both of whom play in higher divisions in the English League.

The team is hoping to be at full strength for Sunday's clash under the captaincy this season of Rob Turner. The line up includes a number of new faces, among them South African Craig Carolan and England Under 21 player Matt Hetherington, who has joined from St Albans. Another former England Under 21 player Tom Matthews has also joined from Oxford University, now having graduated.

Much is hoped for from other new comers Simon Moffatt and Bruno Solaun, a young Spaniard who has come to London to study.

Last season's player coach Rob Thompson has been persuaded to play for another season and is eager to add to his current tally of 139 National League goals (and fifth in the All Time League standings). Dan Williams has also declined to quit and although unavailable for the first game, has worked his way into the squad, probably to play at the back of the defence.

The close season highlight however was the England Under 21 cap awarded to Mikey Williamson, who went on to play matches against Holland, Germany, Poland and South Korea. Mike will be away for part of the season, studying in Switzerland as part of a sandwich course at Imperial College but hopes to be back for the games in 2000.

20 Years Ago

Selection Panel?

Selection was a problem for the Men's section but not the Ladies. It was felt necessary to introduce more fluidity into team selection but this could give rise to organisational problems. It was agreed to set up a selection panel, consisting of the club coach, 1st XI captain and three or four experienced players, who will be expected to watch all sides in the club and select teams. Ultimately, in case of disputes the Club Captain would have the final word. R Chapman will speak to Messrs Waugh, Watson, Fletcher, Stanyard and H Roberts to see if they are interested in talking this role.

With the exception of the 1st XI captain, no captains would be appointed until the beginning of the season. It was felt that the Monday night session should be limited to the production of team sheets, since the questions of selection should have been clarified by the selection panel beforehand.

30 Years Ago

"The Ball is on our piece of soggy turf"

Pitch problems and HWHC appear inseparable. Even artificial surfaces do not guarantee an end to the problem as current experiences indicate over the Tiger Turf installation on the first caged pitch. However, these are no match for the difficulties encountered at Hornsey (nor, indeed, it has to be said, before then). Richard Chapman had his administrative hands full even in those days, as the following excerpts testify.

Drainage of the Pitches

No drains have been installed to remove water from the playing area. The compacted clay topsoil would not allow water to percolate to drains even if we had them. In short, drainage is non-existent.

Background

The present pitches were re-laid in 1971/2. For costs reasons, pipe drains and sand were omitted from the work. With hindsight, this was a mistake but HHC were then tenants of the Hornsey Club and were to some extent hamstrung by Hornsey's ailing financial position. In lieu of the pipe drains the Groundsman was provided with a tractor in order to mole drain the pitches annually. The tractor, that we still have, was not suitable for mole draining and the good intentions lapsed. The pitches have not been mole-drained since 1973.

Solution

The Hornsey Club Ground Committee commissioned a report from an independent fee charging organisation the Sports Turf Research Council (Bingleys) the terms of reference being to provide a long term solution to the drainage problem. Bingleys were asked to report on the ideal method and less expensive alternatives.

Method A (Ideal)

Plough up the pitches insert pipe drains, reconstitute the top soil with several hundred tons of sand. Cost £10,000. Result: perfect

Method B

Insert pipe drains Insert 2inch wide slits (sand) at intervals of two feet. Cost £6,000 per pitch. Result: Very good pitches, when the sand has settled and the slits have been rolled out.

Method C

Insert pipe drains. Insert a less dense mesh of narrower slits. Cost £4,500 per pitch. Result: Good pitches but repeated sand slitting would be required in the future.

Choice

The Ground Committee favours Method B. Apart from being costly, Method A includes an element of cost for levelling the pitches, which already have good levels (that is, they do not undulate). Also, Method A puts the pitches out of use for at least one season. Method B causes less disruption to the season but the playing surface will be poor until settling has occurred and been corrected. Method C is a *half baked* version of Method B to be adopted only if we cannot afford Method B.

The Ground Committee favours doing the job in two parts; pitch 1 in October and pitch 2 in April. This makes the overall cost slightly higher than if both pitches were done at the same time.

The Hockey Committee has given the go-ahead for the work under Method B to start in October on the pitch nearest the pavilion.

Drain Supper

The Drain Committee would like to thank all who attended the Supper at Pizza on the Park on 29th June. Allowing for a comically unfunny comic, we hope that those who came, saw and enjoyed themselves. Approximately £400 profit was raised towards the Drainage Fund, thanks to the gifts and donations of many members, past and present, the lavish generosity of Peter Boizot and several acts of inebriated auctioneering and cheque signing largesse during the night. It was a pleasure to see so many senior faces again, including Mike Patton *Lust and Glory* and disregarding the fund raising aspect, we hope to run a Club Supper as an annual ongoing event.

At the moment the sponsored Marathon and Drain Supper have realised approximately £2,000

Pitch Problems

In July 1979 the Committee concluded:

- Permission should be granted for drainage work to begin in October on the Pavilion Pitch
- The Secretary was instructed to book shale pitches each week at Highgate Wood School Creighton North and Inderwick Road, if possible. Haringey Council were having an inter-departmental disagreement over who had responsibility for Highgate Wood.

- We had been unable to book any other grass pitch.
- We agreed not to use Picketts Lock in the future
- On the fixture card we would put shale for all non-grass home pitches. All opposition would come to the clubhouse and be escorted to the pitch. This would be the responsibility of the home captain.
- If both grass pitches are unfit, we would use either Creighton North (now that they have been resurfaced) or Inderwick Road for London League matches
- The Committee reaffirmed the commitment to run seven teams but would review the situation at the end of the season.

Dave Teale commented:

The full minutes are sent to members for two main reasons. First, the decisions reached affect you all. Secondly, I want all members to be aware of how the Club is run and to have more say themselves.

The worst clubs are this run by a few individuals and where players seem to be forever huddling in corners moaning about one thing after another. I wish to encourage those of you who want to contribute in any way to the club but perhaps as yet have not been given the scope or incentive to come forward with your ideas.

Under Brian Owles, the club changed from an unhappy state to a united one. However the club can still progress further with success on and off the field.

Finally for those who have been reading the bulletin over the past three years will realise that my typing have not improved one bit....

M H Tennent

Harry Tennent was mentioned in the Club's annals in relation to the Annual Dinner that had been instituted in the early 1900's and that was generally held at the Trocadero. The 1906 menu card is replicated in Colin Greenhalgh's *Club History* in which Colin queried whether he may have helped with the arrangements for the entertainment or could he have been anticipating the role of the famous impresario? He was Honorary Secretary of the Hockey Association at the time and one of his appearances for the Club was on its southern tour in April 1907. This included a game against Folkestone and may well have formed part of the very first Folkestone Festival.

As mentioned in our earlier Newsletter, Ian Hayward has dug a little deeper and established that Henry (Harry) Moncrieff Tennent was one of the Umpires in the 1908 Oxford and Cambridge Hockey Match and one of the main chroniclers of the early Varsity Matches, which had started in 1890.

Born in 1879, Harry Tennent was at school at Blackheath Collegiate College. At a time when organised sport was expanding at schools and universities, he came on the scene as a versatile athlete. He played rugby football and was in the College cricket XI. In addition to playing fives and racquets, he is credited with starting the College hockey team.

He went up to Wadham College Oxford in 1897 and was in the University hockey team for four years, being Secretary in 1899 and Captain in 1900 when a half blues for hockey were awarded at Oxford. Cambridge granted half blues in 1894.

He played cricket occasionally for Wadham and also continued his interest in fives and racquets. On top of all this activity, he became President of the Oxford University Dramatics Society (OUDS) where his lifelong interest in the theatre took root.

Tennent went down in the summer of 1901 and at once took an active role in expanding organisation of hockey. He began by establishing the Oxford University Occasionals Hockey Club (still playing in 2009) in 1901 and became its Secretary until 1909. By 1913, the Club had 400 members and was organised on similar lines to the Oxford University Authentics (cricket)

Club. Cambridge University's counterpart was the Cambridge University Wanderers Hockey Club, formed in 1904 (and still playing in 2009). Harry Tennent was made an honorary member.

Tennent was a regular member of the Blackheath Hockey Club, becoming its Captain. He was also an occasional member of the Hampstead Hockey Club for tours and Easter Hockey Festivals.

He played for the South on many occasions and was Secretary of the Hockey Association until 1909. Even in these early days of the organisation, the Association was laying the foundation of its resolute opposition against any sort of "league", an opposition continued until 1957.

Harry Tennent was also on the Olympic Hockey Board and arranged all the hockey part of the Olympic programme in London in 1908 besides filling the post of Chairman of the new International Hockey Board. He was Captain of the Kent County Hockey Team from 1903 to 1910. As a member of the Worplesdon Club, he found time and energy to play golf.

All this activity in the sporting field was going on as Harry Tennent was developing his business career. In his early years he was connected with the Board of Agriculture. He then moved and joined Broadwood Pianos of which he was sub-manager in 1923 a job which suited his musical talents and interests.

But the main part of his life was the running of H.M. Tennent Limited, which he built up to be the most successful impresario business in London's West End for three decades.

In March 1929, Harry Tennent and Hugh (Binkie) Beaumont met for lunch at Verrey's Restaurant in Regent Street. Tennent engaged Beaumont as his assistant to help in booking shows for Moss Empires. They set up on their own in 1936 at the Globe Theatre (previously the Hicks Theatre, now the Gielgud) in Shaftesbury Avenue, where their organisation set exacting standards for their theatre presentations for 30 years. Kitty Black joined as a secretary in 1937 and remembers Tennent as a tall grey haired figure with horned rimmed glasses. He held himself extremely erect and strode around the small office like an ex-guardsman. He was the Managing Director of the Drury Lane Theatre and had been responsible for launching Ivor Novello on his incredible string of successes there. "Glamorous Nights", "Careless Rapture", "Crest of the Wave" and "Dancing Years".

Their best loved and remembered production was brought to a premature end when War broke out in September 1939 and the Government closed down temporarily all the theatres. It was "The Importance of being Earnest" with Edith Evans as a triumphant Lady Bracknell and a cast to die for in John Gielgud, Jack Hawkins, Margaret Rutherford, Peggy Ashcroft and Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies. It opened on 14 August 1939 to rave reviews.

The organisation was to suffer an unexpected blow. At midday on 10 June 1941, Harry collapsed on the steps of the United Universities Club, Whitcomb Street, where he went to lunch each day and was rushed to hospital. He was diagnosed with an aneurism and by 8pm he was dead at the age of 62. Nothing had prepared the staff for the shock of losing their Managing Director. He was the soul of courtesy, kindness personified. His relationship with his staff coloured the entire firm's operations. He trusted everyone and relied completely on their good sense and co-operation. Binkie Beaumont took charge of the business at the age of 32 until he died in March 1973, having been associated with the classic production of "My Fair Lady" in 1958 at Drury Lane and "West Side Story" at Her Majesty's

Next Letter

Whilst there is recent pressure to issue interim news at Christmas, the next main edition will report the end of the season in April or May 2010. If you have any news or views, please send by e-mail to ian.smith@otb.uk.com or mail@velwell.eclipse.co.uk

If it is fit to print, it will be!