

Welcome

This is the 13th in our series of revamped Newsletters. It is an interim version, designed to bring up to date the news from the end of the season, lest it is stale for next September. Then we shall hope to review, albeit in abbreviated form, the forthcoming 2014/15 season, a century after the momentous decision that the Club could not fulfil its fixtures owing to the war.

At the outset, we have some extremely sad news to impart

Oli Thomas

It was with great sadness that the club learned of the death of Oli Thomas on 26 April 2014, while serving his country in southern Afghanistan.

L/Cpl Thomas, an Army reservist from 3 Military Intelligence Battalion, was based in London. The Lynx aircraft in which he was flying with four others from RAF Odiham in Hampshire went down in the Takhta Pul district of Kandahar, some 30 miles from the Pakistan border on what the MoD said was a routine flight, close to Kandahar airfield.

He was a researcher for Roger Williams, the MP for Brecon and Radnorshire.

Oli joined HWHC in September 2012 and soon became a stalwart member of the Hammers XI. The team paid its own respects with the following:

“It is a great credit to Oli that he quickly established himself as an integral part both of his team and of the club as a whole. On the pitch, Oli was a fine, if somewhat exotic, player. The nutmeg, lifted twirl and sideline keeper chip were never far from the top of his box of tricks. Both on the field and off it, he was always first to put his hand up to volunteer to help his team, his club and his friends.

But more than anything, Oli was a great guy to be around. A massive personality. Full of fun. A brilliant raconteur. A natural wit. A warm and caring man. He made us all look forward to our weekends a little bit more. We all dearly loved Oli. We will miss him. The hole that Oli's death leaves in the Hammers, in HWHC and in the hearts of his many friends here is unfillable.

It is fitting that in what turned out to be his last game for the Hammers, Oli's peers made him captain for the day to mark his departure for Afghanistan. Oli led the team to a dramatic comeback, scoring the vital goal himself.

The thoughts of us all are with his partner Laura, his family and all of his friends at this incredibly difficult time”.

Roger Williams MP also paid tribute to his researcher in the House of Commons, praising his character and service.

He said, “He was an outstanding young man who was so well-liked and held in such high regard by everyone who knew him and worked with him. The loss bears particularly heavily on his parents and family and, indeed, on his friends who grew up with him in Brecon and Kington.

Later he added, “Not only was it a pleasure to work alongside Oli for many years, but I consider it a privilege to have been able to call him a friend.

“We were all so proud of him when he first joined the Army Reserves. His integrity and strength of character made him a perfect ambassador for our country.

“Oli's family have so much to be proud of in their son. Our thoughts are with them at this particularly difficult time. We will all miss him dearly.”

Memorial Match

This news of Oli's death makes more poignant next season's memorial match. This is to be held at 2.30pm on Sunday 7 September 2014 at Paddington Recreation Ground. Jerry Stanyard will

be organising the Legends' team and already has interest from leading players from a few years back, new recruits to the fixture.

International News

We send hearty congratulations to Dan Fox on his selection for the England squad for the World Cup next month in the Netherlands. Dan is pleased that Bobby Crutchley has not followed what was perceived to be a developing trend (in light of the recent football World Cup selections) for aging defenders to be left at home!

The squad comprises

- 1 - George Pinner – Beeston - Goalkeeper
- 2 - James Bailey – Reading - Goalkeeper
- 6 - Henry Weir – Wimbledon - Midfield
- 7 - Ashley Jackson - East Grinstead - Midfield/Forward
- 8 - Simon Mantell – Reading - Forward
- 9 - Harry Martin – Beeston - Midfield
- 11 - Alastair Brogdon – Wimbledon - Forward
- 12 - Michael Hoare – Wimbledon - Defender
- 16 - Adam Dixon – Beeston - Defender/Midfield
- 18 - Barry Middleton – Holcombe - Midfield/Forward
- 20 - Dan Shingles – Reading - Midfield
- 21 - Tim Whiteman – Beeston - Midfield/Defender
- 22 - David Condon - East Grinstead - Midfield
- 23 - Tom Carson – Reading - Forward
- 24 - Iain Lewers - East Grinstead - Defender
- 26 - Nick Catlin – Reading - Midfield/Forward
- 27 - Dan Fox – Holcombe - Defender
- 28 - Mark Gleghorne – East Grinstead - Forward

President's Day

The revival of President's Day was held at Paddington Recreation Ground on 12 April 2014. preceded by a Vice Presidents' and past players' Dinner at Brown's in St Martin's Lane.

Club President Richard Sykes welcomed members, past members, friends of the Club and visitors to the weekend, aimed at "bringing together current and former players as well as friends and families. A weekend to celebrate everything that our club means to all of us and a weekend to strengthen individual links such that everyone feels they belong to HWHC.

Why is this important? Because, at the time that we celebrate the 30th anniversary of women's hockey at HWHC, the women's 1s' first ever appearance in the National Cup Final and the continuing presence of our men's 1s within the Premier Division of the National League, we recognise the need to put the club on to a more sustainable footing.

So, show your ongoing commitment to the club in whatever way you can. Become a social member, volunteer to help the club, be open to being approached for donations and / or support our social events and our teams. Just let us know how you can make a difference".

Oz Rankin, the Chairman of the club added:

"The club has enjoyed a fantastic season on the pitch. The women have deservedly achieved excellent results during the season, not least in reaching the EH Cup Final, but were tremendously unlucky in not being promoted to National League.

The Men's 1s continue to develop and still aspire to a top four finish. We hope to announce a new coach soon to build on these ambitions. The club's finances though very much need a boost. We need to raise funds for replacement of both pitches, as well as needing ongoing support for our 1s programmes and junior section.

Both pitches are owned by Westminster Council. But we contribute to the water based pitch in order to maintain it for top level hockey and to obtain security of tenure over both pitches. Under the Agreement with Westminster, the club is required to put funds aside regularly for the water base replacement.

In addition the Tiger Turf 3G pitch is reaching the end of its life. We need to make a contribution in order to ensure it is not simply replaced with a 3G pitch again and that we have a good enough pitch that we can use fully across the club when there are droughts.

The juniors section has thrived under the fantastic work of Alex Whitelaw. We are looking for contributions to enhance the coaching programme and to enable concerted marketing into schools in order to help us grow further.

The club has enjoyed a real step change in junior section this season and we want to build on Alex's excellent progress.

Thank you for any support you can provide to Hampstead and Westminster Hockey Club".

Nicky Palmer, HWHC Fundraising Officer (nicky.nipalmer@gmail.com) also wanted to explain fund raising issues.

In summer 2013, I was appointed as HWHC fundraising officer to do battle with a legacy pitch fund deficit which was due to reach £70,000 by the end of the 2013/14 season.

Over the last year, the club has rallied in true HWHC spirit to rise to this fundraising challenge. I am proud to say that so far the efforts of our teams have raised a fantastic £6,000. HWHC have been teeing off, quizzing, racing Mo Farah, playing musical bingo, painting faces, selling mugs, baking, tackling their parents in the name of Christmas, spotting the ball (with future events planned for the off season).

When you add the teams' achievement so far to generous donations from individuals as well as companies such as Microsoft and Barclays through charity matched funding schemes, we have amassed £26,000 this season. This is a very positive story but there is still a long way to go. And this is where you come in!

We as a club would be grateful for anything you can do to help us hit our £70,000 target. This could be by anything from buying tickets for our ladies' 3s raffle this weekend, attending one of our upcoming events or simply spreading the word!

Of course, donations are always more than welcome. If you would like to make a donation to support the club then please contact me at the email address listed below, I am in the process of setting up an online HWHC pitch fund page which will make donating even easier.

You can find monthly fundraising updates on the club website which will help you keep track of how we are getting on. If you have any questions about fundraising in general or inspired ideas as to what else we should be doing then please do not hesitate to contact me (*details above*).

Junior Section

Alex Whitelaw, leading the HWHC Juniors, reported that

"HWHC has been working hard this season to attract junior players to the club. We have welcomed up to 50 players every week at our Sunday morning training sessions and fielded teams in the U8, U10, U12 and U15 age groups.

Our U10 and U12 boys and U12 girls made their debut at the National In2Hockey Championships and had close results to seasoned junior sides Southgate and Teddington. We have enjoyed victories against local sides West Hampstead and Ealing and the children continue to improve as they play more matches together.

The inaugural parent and child Christmas charity match raised £500 for the pitch fund. It saw players ranging from age 5 to 55 take to the pitch together. Going forward, we shall be

representing the City of Westminster at the London Youth Games in June and look forward to growing the junior section of the club next season.

For more information on the Juniors, please email youth@hwhc.co.uk

On the pitch

First up on the caged pitch on Saturday were the Supervets. They took on the LX England Masters side in tracksuits that rivalled our own (from the bygone days in terms of retro chic). The game was a glorious celebration of hockey (so said the roving reporter) with the Supervets running out 3-2 winners.

Always tough to follow in these footsteps, the Women's team of current and past members (including some further examples of retro chic skirts and shirts), stepped out keen to show the gathering crowd what they were made of. The teams included a mix of players, so it was not a case of *them v us* but rather a celebration of all things hockey and in particular our Women's 30th birthday. Fittingly, the final score was 1-1, with much fun had by all.

The cross bar challenge was up next. Sadly, no-one was able to flick the ball from the half way line actually to hit the cross bar. Therefore all monies remained in the pitch fundraising kitty. Perhaps more work is needed on this at training?

Last but not least was the current Men's 1s team playing an invitational side gathered together by Dan Fox, featuring a glittering array of past (and some present!) HWHC talent. It was good to see amongst others, Adam the Gapper in goal and the return of Mike Williamson (well supported by his family, as usual), Andy Cornick (playing at Oxted currently) and Stephane Vehrle-Smith (now a playing colleague of Dan's at Holcombe and hoping to represent Brasil in the Olympic Games) all reasonably recent Men's 1 players. Will Naylor swapped sides for the day as a hardy perennial, having been enlisted for the visitors.

Sadly Dan had suffered an ankle niggle in the preceding international at Reading in the second game against Ireland and was advised by the England set-up to rest it. But Dan was joined on the coaching bench by equally injured Dave Cooper and Neil Hamilton, in case inside knowledge were needed of the Men's 1's strategies and strengths.

A high scoring game ensued, which was cut short (some allege) because they all got a bit tired. The Men's 1s ran out 9-6 winners in the end, but some say 8-6 but which side scored more is open to question. There was a cracking shot from Andy Cornick for one of the visiting team's goals that will remain long in the memory.

All teams then retired to the Carlton for teas and to await the arrival of the Men's teams from the London League finals. The Women's 3's raffle was a roaring success (mainly due to the inebriation of those to whom Lou Gelling was selling tickets) with Dave Cooper (Christian Louboutin wallet) and Neil Hamilton (a box of soaps) particularly enjoying their prizes. The standard Carlton time-warp then took over, with many initially claiming they had other places to go but many finding they were still there well into the early hours.

London League Cups

Five of our teams qualified for the finals: an unprecedented achievement, driving some to recollect the days of the Club's first London League cup Final appearance in the early 1980's at Haberdasher's School, when the Hampstead 3rd XI, under Nick Coleman, reached the final only to be narrowly beaten by Beckenham (as they then were!)

Premier Division Cup

H&W 2 v Surbiton 2

Division 2 Cup

Reading 2A v H&W Zak Hond

Division 4 Cup

H&W 6 v Richmond Lions

Division 6 Cup

H&W Hammers v Kings and Alleyn's 4

Division 7 Cup

H&W Spaniards v Wimbledon 6

The Spaniards were up first, but sadly went down 2-0 against Wimbledon. The Hammers had one of the toughest fixtures of the day against the only home side of the day. K&A had the support to show for it, as the Hammers went down 3-2 in a close battle right to the end.

The Men's 6s were able to turn the results around to bring home the first little cup of the day with a 4-1 win over Richmond Lions.



The Zak Hond added to the silverware (silver plated at least!) with a 4-3 win over Reading 2A.



The final game of the London League season saw the Men's 2s taking on Surbiton 2s for the Premier Division cup. A close fixture was won by Surbiton after the game went to penalty strokes.

Women's National Cup

Undoubtedly the most important game of the season was left to the very end. The Women's 1s' remarkable voyage to the Cup Final as a regional league team, landed them at Beeston's ground at the Highfields Centre in Nottingham, to meet Surbiton.

Hampstead & Westminster had become the first team from outside the National League to reach the Cup Final. They came up against newly crowned Investec Women's Premier League

Champions. The two clubs had actually met in last season's Men's Cup Final, which Surbiton won at Wakefield by a score of 3-1.

The Women's remarkable achievement of reaching the final came after they beat Surbiton's league counterparts University of Birmingham. Surbiton were looking to add the cup to their league title for the first time, having lost in the final twice in the last two years.

The game coincided with the Club Annual Dinner that evening. Arrangements were therefore made a little more complex than usual. A train full of supporters left St Pancras at midday, with many already suited and booted with Dinner suits, prepared to catch the first train back from Nottingham after the game in order to arrive in time for the Dinner. After all, H&W had a reputation to enhance for their support of their teams in national Cup finals!

Sadly Surbiton proved too strong for the 1's and ended a remarkable season for them, by adding the Women's Cup to their League title in a comfortable 7-1 victory against what was described as "a battling Hampstead & Westminster side".

Surbiton got off to a flying start with Jenna Woolven lifting the ball over the advancing keeper after good work from Georgie Twigg after just two minutes. The lead was doubled shortly after when Rebecca Herbert was on hand to deflect the ball in from close range from their first short corner.

The 1's defence, with an inspired Sophia Perowne in goal did a good job at keeping the score to 2-0 with Surbiton's Twigg, Sarah Page, Giselle Ansley and Jenna Woolven all going close. Surbiton did however score their third goal on 20 minutes through Ansley who dragged another short corner high into the net.

H&W's first real chance of the game came on 22 minutes. Emma Stocking's close range shot was saved after good work from the lively Kike Lawal. Hampstead then enjoyed a good five minute spell of possession but were unable to create any real chances against a well organised Surbiton defence. The teams went into half time at 3-0.

Surbiton began the second half as they started the first. Georgie Twigg put her name on the score sheet with a Penalty Stroke on 38 minutes. On 41 minutes, Hampstead received their first penalty corner of the match which led to their only goal. Annebeth Witjenburg converted after a double save from the Surbiton keeper.

This forced Surbiton to raise their game, adding a further two goals to their tally in as many minutes through a second Georgie Twigg stroke and Vanessa Roberts' strike. As fatigue set in, a scrappy ten minutes followed which saw three yellow cards. With five minutes remaining, Surbiton managed a seventh goal through Sophie Fisher-Norton.

Nonetheless, what a splendid achievement by the H&W team!

[EHL Men's Premier League](#)

The four top ranked teams entered the League Championship

Results

East Grinstead 6 Surbiton 2
Beeston 4 Reading 2

3/4 Play off

Surbiton 1 Reading 1 [Surbiton won 3-2 in a shoot out]

Final

East Grinstead 1 Beeston 1 [Beeston won 3-1 in a shoot out]

How did the Men's 1's season compare with others? Consistent comes to mind!

[Past League positions](#)

2009/10 = 6th 23 points
2010/11 = 6th 24 points
2011/12 = 7th 23 points

2012/13 = 7th 22 points

2013/14 = 7th 21 points

Past League Winners

1999-00	Canterbury	Cannock (runners up)
2000-01	Reading	Surbiton
2001-02	Reading	Surbiton
2002-03	Reading	Loughborough Univ
2003-04	Cannock	Reading
2004-05	Cannock	Reading
2005-06	Cannock	Surbiton
2006-07	Reading	Cannock
2007-08	Reading	East Grinstead
2008-09	East Grinstead	Reading
2009-10	East Grinstead	Beeston
2010-11	Beeston	East Grinstead
2011-12	Reading	East Grinstead
2012-13	Beeston	Surbiton
2013-14	East Grinstead	Beeston

Next season?

The Men's League Play-Offs featured (as now customary) the top teams from the three conferences and the ninth-place team from the Premier Division, facing each other and vying either for Premier Division status or avoiding relegation.

Conference East champions – Southgate

From Conference East, Southgate were in the running alongside Holcombe but managed to pip them at the post to take the coveted top spot. Southgate boasted both the highest number of goals scored in the Conference and the least conceded. Goalkeeper Chris Hibbert, who has been staunchly defending Southgate's goal for ten years and was in his final season for them was hoping to see his team promoted back into the top flight after only one season away.

Conference North champions – Brooklands MU

Brooklands MU topped the table in style, three points ahead of their closest competitors and six points ahead two weeks before the league ended. This guaranteed their place in the play-offs. They are no strangers to finals weekend, having participated four times since 2007. Top scorer Peter Flanagan was hoping to fire home a few more penalty corners.

Conference Westh champions - Cardiff & Met

Cardiff were the Conference West's representative for a second consecutive year. Their presence was decided in the final weekend through a close win at Havant. Had they drawn or lost they could have been overtaken by Team Bath Buccaneers, who had been two points down and nipping at Cardiff & Met's heels for weeks. Their approach takes the form of a very solid defence having conceded just 16 goals during the season and none since the League restarted in February, a feat unmatched by any other side in the entire League.

Premier Division ninth place – Sheffield Hallam

Sheffield Hallam finished ninth in the Premier Division. They had been trailing for much of the season but a final weekend switch with Loughborough Students handed them a lifeline and a chance to remain in the division. They narrowly avoided finishing tenth and being automatically relegated. As they were only promoted last season, they went into the play-offs to prove that they still belong in the Premier Division.

Results

Southgate 1 Cardiff & Met 0

Brooklands MU 3 Sheffield Hallam 3

Sheffield Hallam 0 Southgate 3

Cardiff 1 Brooklands MU 2

Southgate 1 Brooklands MU 3

Sheffield Hallam 2 Cardiff & Met 5

Newly promoted, therefore, are Southgate and Brooklands MU, neither strangers to the Premier League.

Brooklands MU	3	2	1	0	8	5	7pts
Southgate	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
Cardiff & Met	3	1	0	2	6	5	3
Sheffield Hallam	3	0	1	2	5	11	1

EHL Conference Relegation

Brighton & Hove	2	2	0	0	8	4	6
Isca	2	1	0	1	5	5	3
Khalsa	2	0	0	2	4	8	0

Regional League Winners

The Regional League winners gain automatic promotion to the National League, displacing the last place team in each Conference (St Albans, West Bridgford and Havant) as well as Isca and Khalsa, following Brighton & Hove's success in the Conference Relegation tournament, *above*.

However, Whitchurch will play in next season's Conference West, as the University of Exeter already has a team in that league and the current rules prevent two sides from the same club competing in the National League at the one time.

Next season will therefore see a return, amongst others, of stalwarts Barford Tigers and Doncaster. West Herts, based in Watford (and past winners of the EHA Trophy in three consecutive seasons from 1995 to 1997) are the only club that will be new to the [outdoor] National League set-up.

East League

West Herts

South League

Chichester

Midlands League

Barford Tigers

Northern League

Doncaster

West League

Whitchurch

Fair Play

Overall, total cards in the season across the National League were

Premier League	101 yellow	1 red
East Conference	107 yellow	1 red
West Conference	124 yellow	
North Conference	164 yellow	1 red

Taking into account the severity of a red card, this last season's Fair Play standings were:-

Premier Division

Beeston	4
Reading	7
Canterbury	8
Wimbledon	11
Loughborough Univ	11
Hampstead & W	12
Sheffield Hallam	13
Cannock	13

Surbiton	14
East Grinstead	8 + 1 red

Just for comparison, in 2011/12, Hampstead were top of the Fair Play League, jointly with Cannock (with five yellow cards in the season). In 2012/3, Hampstead were third, with six yellow cards

Player Voting

There is now a National League equivalent of football's PFA Awards at the end of the season, with peer voting to select the best rated players in each League. These were the results (and we salute Dan Fox and Andy Cornick).

Premier Division

George Pinner - Beeston
Iain Lewers - East Grinstead
Tim Whiteman - Beeston
Andy Bull - East Grinstead
Mike Hoare - Wimbledon
Adam Dixon - Beeston
Kwan Browne - Canterbury
Nick Catlin - Reading
Sam Ward - Beeston
Dave Beckett - Cannock
Matt Daly - Surbiton

Conference East

Chris Hibbert - Southgate
Rick Gay - Southgate
Dan Fox - Holcombe
Elliot Smith - Cambridge City
George Farrant - Old Loughtonians
Jonty Robinson - Southgate
Andy Cornick - Oxted
Barry Middleton - Holcombe
Chris Seddon - Teddington
Danny Hall - Holcombe
Jack Hardy - Richmond

Conference North

Rob Turner - Bowdon
Peter Flanagan - Brooklands MU
Zac Brazel - Bowdon
David Brough - Olton & WW
Tom Brickman - University of Durham
Oliver Stoddart - Wakefield
Phil Dutoy - Brooklands MU
Alex Humphreys - Bowdon
Sam Driver - University of Durham
David Flanagan - Brooklands MU
David Harris - Khalsa

Conference West

Simon Mason - Guildford
Will Pearce - Cheltenham
Henry Eriksson - Cardiff & Met
Oliver Clarke - University of Exeter
Will Byas - Birmingham University
Robert Wilson - Fareham
Liam Brignull - Cardiff & Met

Warren D'Souza - Indian Gymkhana
 Nick Cooper - University of Exeter
 Tejinder Hanpsal - Indian Gymkhana
 Tim Davenport - Team Bath Buccaneers

European Hockey League 2014

The European Hockey League (EHL) is now regarded as the pinnacle of club hockey in Europe and the tournament that the players aspire to. It has been likened to the UEFA Champions League in football. It was created in 2007-8 when it merged with and replaced the EuroHockey Club Champions Cup and the European Cup II (ie the Cup Winners Cup).

The EHL has been noted for its recent innovations that in large part have been introduced into world hockey. These include the *self-pass* rule, the two minutes' suspension for a green card, the penalty shoot-out, instead of penalty flicks (to decide a stalemate), the playing of the ball above shoulder height, if not dangerous and the playing of four quarters to a match as opposed to two halves

The recent prize money (largely funded by Dutch based banks) has also been a considerable draw, with G20,00 to the winners, G10,000 for second place and G5,000 for third.

This season's results were:-

Venue: Lille

Group A [25.10.13]

Rotterdam 4 Lille 1
 Rotterdam 4 Reading 1
 Reading 3 Lille 0

Group B [25.10.13]

Rot Weiss Köln 5 SC Stroital Brest 1
 Kampong 14 SC Stroital Brest 0
 Rot Weiss Köln 2 Kampong 4

Group C [25.10.13]

Ulenhorst Mülheim 3 AZS Poznanska 0
 Waterloo Ducks 3 AZS Poznanska 0
 Waterloo Ducks 3 Ulenhorst Mülheim 1

Venue: Barcelona

Group D [11.10.13]

Beeston 3 Cardiff & Met 1
 Harvestehuder 9 Cardiff 1
 Harvestehuder 3 Beeston 2

Group E [11.10.13]

Surbiton 5 SV Arminen 0
 Racing Club de Polo 3 SV Arminen 1
 Racing Club de Polo 3 Surbiton 0

Group F [11.10.13]

Dinamo Kazan 1 Club de Campo Madrid 1
 KHC Dragons 1 Club de Campo Madrid 2
 Dinamo Kazan 0 KHC Dragons 3

Group G [11.10.13]

Oranje Zwart 8 Kelburne 0
 WKS Grunwald 1 Oranje Z 4
 WKS Grunwald 4 Kelburne 1

Group H [25.10.13]

St Germain 3 Dinamo Elektrostal 3
 RC Bruxelles 6 Dinamo Elektrostal 2
 St Germain 1 RC Bruxelles 3

KO16

16 April 2014

Club de Campo Madrid	5 – 0	St Germain HC
Harvestehuder THC	1 – 0	Ulenhorst Mülheim
Rotterdam	6 – 1	WKS Grunwald Posnan
Kampomg	2 – 2	KHC Dragons

17 April 2014

Real Club de Polo	4 – 2	Reading
R C Bruxelles	2 – 2	Rot Weiss Köln
Waterloo Ducks	4 – 3	Beeston
Oranje Zwart	3 – 1	Surbiton

KO8

18 April 2014

Club de Campo Madrid	1 – 4	Harvestehuder THC
Waterloo Ducks	2 – 4	R C Bruxelles
Rotterdam	0 – 1	KHC Dragons
Oranje Zwart	0 – 0	Real Club de Polo

KO4

20 April 2014

Harvestehuder THC	3 – 2	R C Bruxelles
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KHC Dragons 0 – 3 Oranje Zwart

3/4

21 April 2014

R C Bruxelles 1 – 2 KHC Dragons

FINAL

21 April 2014

Harvestehuder THC 2 – 2 Oranje Zwart

[win 3-1 shoot out]

So this season's tournament was won by debut side, Harvestehuder, who won the penalty shoot out. The player of the tournament, the winning goalkeeper Tobias Walter, rather ominously announced afterwards that "We will smash our clubhouse!"

English Clubs' Report

Beeston, Reading and Surbiton were all knocked out in the last 16 stage on 16-17 April, ending their European hopes.

Reading's hopes were crushed as they threw their all at RC Polo de Barcelona. At 3-0 before the break, Reading were in difficulties. They brought it back to 3-2 and chose to bring on an additional field player, discarding their goalkeeper James Bailey. This decision backfired, as RC Polo moved through the defence and brought the final score to 4-2 that sent Reading home.

While Beeston were able to create an even match against the Waterloo Ducks, one goal was enough to make the difference and disappoint another English side. Sam Ward was Beeston's star of the show with a hat-trick. After captain Adam Dixon was taken off the field due to an injury, the Ducks pressed home their advantage, despite having a player yellow-carded for the tackle that removed Dixon.

Like Reading, Beeston also removed their goalkeeper in the dying minutes of the game. But it was not enough to gain that final goal. The game ended 4-3. Beeston therefore also fell out of the competition, leaving Surbiton as the last English side.

With the final match of the day, English sides' hopes rested on Surbiton but were lost as they were unable to overcome the home favourites and hosts of the competition, Oranje Zwart. The Dutch team got an early start but Surbiton equalised shortly afterwards. It looked like they might be able to disappoint the home crowd but the second half proved decisive. Surbiton could not keep up their defence, as Oranje Zwart fired home a penalty corner after a field goal and gained an unassailable lead, ending the game 1-3.

The English sides will now have to wait and see if enough ranking points have been gained in this tournament to maintain England's three men's European places next season.

Ranking Points

Entrance to the competition is based on results in the EHL and the EH Trophy over the past three years, for which ranking points are awarded. These are then ranked or discounted, by 50% for year 2 and 75% for year 3.

National associations with clubs ranking 1-4 may enter three teams, those ranking 5-8 may enter two teams and those ranking 9-12 one team. Each national association may decide how to nominate its team or teams. Additionally to be eligible to play in the EHL, a country must enter two teams in the EHF club competition.

After the 2012-13 tournament in Bloemendaal the ranking points, on 1 June 2013, were as follows (and alongside, for comparison, the rankings for the 2011-12):-

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Netherlands	47,251 pts	Netherlands
Germany	36,917	Germany
Belgium	34,000	England
England	31,667	Belgium
Spain	24,167	Spain
Russia	16,375	Russia
Poland		France
France		Scotland
Scotland		Ireland
Austria		Poland
Belarus		Belarus
Wales		Austria
Ireland		Italy
Ukraine		Switzerland
Italy		Ukraine
Switzerland		Wales
Czech Republic		Czech Republic

Past Winners

2007-8	UHC Hamburg
2008-9	Bloemendaal
2009-10	UHC Hamburg
2010-11	HGC
2011-12	UHC Hamburg
2012-13	Bloemendaal

Controversy?

Jeremy Gucassoff, the Racing Club de Bruxelles goalkeeper, is said to have exploited a loophole in the FIH rule that allowed him to swap his normal hockey stick for an improvised longer version, dubbed the 'hockey broom', on a penalty stroke or shoot-out.

Racing knocked out East Grinstead at the EuroHockey Club Champion Indoors tournament in February after Gucassoff saved a last-minute penalty stroke. At the EHL tournament, his longer stick again played a crucial role in Racing reaching the semi-finals, when he saved three times in the KO16 stage shoot-out.

He will play in England's group when the World Cup starts in The Hague on 31 May. Other international goalkeepers could follow Gucassoff's ploy.

There are suggestions that the FIH should think seriously about maximum stick length in order to nip something in the bud before it becomes a problem. East Grinstead's manager is reported to have said that, "bearing in mind the outrageous nature of the height of the stick and the clear benefit, he has been astute enough to make use of the ruling".

At the European Indoors tournament, officials cleared Gucassoff's stick and East Grinstead's appeal was not upheld. Currently, FIH rules refer only to a stick's shape and dimension. They do stipulate that the total weight should not exceed 737 grams. An average stick weighs around 580g, and although Gucassoff's longer version has yet to exceed the rules, some say that they never see a set of scales at a hockey tournament.

The swapped stick is seen by many as a clear and distinct advantage. It is thought to be absurd not to have a maximum length, compared at least with the fine details of the sport in many other areas.

The FIH's officials' manager has said that there will be weighing scales at the World Cup, but the use of longer sticks "is something that [the FIH] will be continuing to monitor. Provided that the stick is able to pass through the 51mm stick ring, does not exceed the maximum 25mm bow and does not exceed 737g, the stick is considered legal," he added.

Postscript

The FIH has since announced the addition of a regulation affecting the stick lengths that is to come into effect at the Hockey World Cup to be held in the Netherlands from 31 May until 15 June.

The regulation limits the maximum stick length to 105cms. It is to be applied as a Regulation until the FIH Rules Committee has considered the matter further before its possible incorporation in the next edition of the Rules of Hockey.

This follows goal keepers changing to a longer stick in order to defend a shoot-out, witnessed at recent tournaments. The FIH President, Leandro Negre, has met the chairmen of the Rules and the Competitions Committees in order to reach a solution.

"Together with the Rules and Competitions Committees we have decided that there is an immediate need for this regulation," he said. "This also means that we believe in maintaining the spirit of the game".

Player News

H&W's Men's 1 international recruit for last season, Richard Smith, who joined from Royal Racing Club in Belgium, discovered before the last season began that what was thought to be tendonitis in his left knee, suffered during the European Championships in 2013, was in fact something far more serious.

He was advised not to play. He considered the options. It was discovered that there was bone bruising underneath a large area of damaged articular cartilage in his knee. He had several options to consider for the surgery he now required.

He opted for the MACI technique. This effectively transplants new cartilage into the damaged knee. But Richard did not know the long-term prognosis, as the technique is relatively recent and there was no detailed research from successful patients to fall back on.

"The surgeon described it as like 'laying a new bit of lawn' and that you can't really trample on it until you're ready to handle it."

It was a two-stage operation. First a combination of cartilage and stem cells were collected. These were sent to a laboratory in Europe. They were then "harvested" for 10 weeks. Richard returned for open knee surgery in January of this year, when the graft, complete with healthy membrane cells, were inserted.

Richard is likely to be out of action for a year, He hopes to return to playing in 2015.

"It has made it an interesting year," he admitted. "I was looking forward to the challenge after returning from Belgium and being involved at Hampstead. But I have got involved in other ways, like helping with training and the future plans of the club."

To take his mind off the road to recovery, his surgeon recommended taking up an office role. So, Richard is now working at sports data company Two Circles. They won Agency of the Year at last week's BT Sport Industry.

Richard still plans to travel to The Hague for the opening weekend of the World Cup to support the team. After the tournament, he will begin core work to regain his strength. At the end of the summer he will be aiming to take up running and push on with the next stages of his rehabilitation.

Richard added that, "It's just a case of getting back to playing. But in terms of having the experience of playing at London 2012, then Rio is on the radar. There is no guarantee but the timescales are such that I shall hopefully have a chance to be back to my best before Rio. Having been through all of this, I would be delighted to be able to achieve that."

Coaching

Richard has referred to helping H&W with its future plans. This has included the appointment of a new coach for the Men's 1's, following the decision of Tom Kavanagh to retire from the post at the end of this season.

The call for a new coach was widely advertised in the hockey world and several good candidates approached the club with an expression of interest. Initial interviews were under way at the time of the President's Day. Once there is further news on that front we shall try to bring it to you.

Interview

The National League matchday programme interview of 15 or so years ago continues its revival for the Newsletter.

Last season saw two Canadian internationals playing for H&W, each with a non-vinyl long playing record. Before returning home at the end of the season DJ (or David Jameson) offered us an insight.

DJ hails from North Vancouver and lives in Vancouver BC. He studied at the University of British Columbia as a geographer and played for the UBC Thunderbirds. His mother was an international hockey player too, so it should come as little surprise that, in addition, David's sister, Steph, is also a current Canada player

He made his international debut in October 2002 when Canada played Belgium in Brussels and has gone on to earn 192 caps. He won a silver medal at the Pan American Games in 2003 and bettered that with a gold medal in 2007 that he lists as his proudest moment in the game.

As a youngster, David was rescued from baseball because he said that he was too slow for it but in those days it had a priority on his time and attention.



DJ is seen standing between players 13 and 14 in this photograph from Exeter University in pre-season

How old were you when you first took up hockey?

I have had a stick in my hand since I was about 3 years old. I would hit a ball around with my older sister on the sidelines of my mom's games.

In your first competitive game, which teams were involved and what was the score?

My first competitive game would have been when I was about 8. It would have been between my team the Vancouver Green Hawks against the Vancouver Black Hawks. I am not sure what the score is but the Green Hawks always won!

In what position did you play on the pitch?

I would have been playing forward in my early days.

Of which clubs have you been a member?

Vancouver Hawks Hockey Club, University of British Columbia, Old Aquinas Reds (Perth), TG Frankenthal (Germany), Hampstead and Westminster Hockey Club

Who is the best player you have played alongside in your team?

The best player I have ever played alongside with Team Canada would be Rob Short.

Who is the best opponent you have faced?

Teun de Nooijer. The man has incredible skills!

Who is the best hockey player you have seen in action?

See above!

Which is the best hockey game you have watched?

India v. Pakistan at the 2010 World Cup in New Delhi. The crowd was huge and extremely loud throughout the entire match.

What is the most amusing incident you have witnessed on a hockey pitch?

During a game versus the Netherlands a teammate, who will remain unnamed, inadvertently had two of Teun de Nooijer's teeth lodged in the top of his head in a 50/50 tackle. Mr. de Nooijer was not a happy man!

Which other sports take your interest?

I like a lot of other sports. My favourites are rock climbing, golf, ice hockey and baseball.

Which team's football result do you look for first?

Seattle Seahawks!

From yesteryear

90 Years ago

An extract from *Hockey World*...

B. G. Lampard-Vachell, who captained the Welsh Hockey XI for two years, and of the Hampstead H.C. stood as Conservative candidate for the Wednesbury Division (Staffs). He was not successful, but he polled 17,832 votes, reducing the Labour majority from 1,019 to 338.

Hockey World had earlier included a profile of the Parliamentary candidate

B G LAMPARD-VACHELL, well known in London hockey circles by virtue of his being a member of the Hampstead H.C., is a Welshman by parentage, and since the Welsh H.A. has always looked well after its Anglo-Welsh hockey players this leading full-back has been right in the front rank for his country in recent seasons.

Mr Lampard-Vachell first played for the Gloucestershire County eleven in 1911, 1912, 1913 and 1914. He also took part in the Cambridge University Freshmen's match in 1913, while he was given a place in two of the 'Varsity trial games in 1913-14.

He toured in Germany and Denmark with Mr. A. E. Y. Terrestrial's eleven of Oxford and Cambridge Wanderers during the Easter of 1914 – then war broke out, and the big hiatus continued until the season 1919-20 when Mr Lampard-Vachell was given a trial in the Cambridge

University Seniors' match. He also took part in the 'Varsity trials in season 1920-21. His form warranted him getting his "Blue", but unfortunately for himself, it was found that he had exceeded the residential limit at Cambridge and he was not qualified, though he was certainly the best full-back at Cambridge that year.

Joining the Hampstead H.C. in season 1921-22, the Welsh International has continued his membership up to this date. In the seasons of 1920-21, 1921-22, 1922-23 he played for the Glamorganshire County teams, and in 1919-20 season he received his first "calls" for his country and played against England and Scotland. Since that time, Mr Lampard-Vachell has played in all the Internationals for Wales, and last season he was honoured with the captaincy of the teams. Well set up, of fine physique, very dashing in his play, fast on the ball and a sound and judicious hitter, the Welsh International has developed his game until he is undoubtedly one of the leading full-backs in the four countries.

*On the field he wears pince-nez, yet this little handicap does not hinder him in the least. He tackles with rare judgment and recovers rapidly if beaten by a forward, being tolerably speedy. He hits the ball clearly, is good in his passes, and it is a real treat to see him playing alongside such a master of back-play as J.H. Bennett for the Hampstead H.C., from whom Mr. Lampard-Vachell would probably admit that he had gained much in his improvement in recent years by watching the English International in his methods *and tactics*.*

Competition

What goes on here? (Answers in the next edition...)



Next edition

This will feature a review of the next season. More immediate current news of the club can be always be obtained via the website on Facebook or by following it on Twitter (@HandWHC),

If you have any news or views, please send by e-mail to mail@velwell.eclipse.co.uk.

If it is fit to print, it will be!