
OLD CREIGHTONIANS' HOCKEY CLUB (1930 -)

THE history of the Old Boys' Hockey Section can be conveniently divided into two parts—before, and after, the war. In recalling those far-off pre-war days we must rely entirely upon the memory of the people concerned, as written records of the period suffered an obscure fate during the War. So, if one or two names are omitted, please bear with us in our attempt to compile what can only be a general picture.

In the year 1925 there flourished a Hockey Club known as Neasden Hockey Club, supported largely by Old Boys of Kilburn Grammar School. When this Club ceased to exist, the Old Boys gathered together, and led by Tommy Townsend, Harry Burns, Jack Burton, Teddy Potts and others, our own Hockey Club was started.

The Club first played at a ground in Kingsbury and fixtures included Royal Sovereign Pencil and Watneys Brewery, a popular fixture this latter, when half-time lemons were replaced by the home side's valuable product.

As the Club gradually grew and established itself, there were many changes of ground. After Kingsbury came a ground near the Great West Road, and then a few weeks at Stanmore, where the first game was abandoned at half-time in order to save "life and limb," such was the state of the pitch. However, from Stanmore, our Club, two teams by then, moved to a R.A.F. pitch at Uxbridge, where they stayed until 1935 when expansion of the R.A.F. caused another move to Uxbridge Cricket Club, and then it was that the Club became a power in the land of men's Hockey.

Having entered into a seven years' agreement, the Cricket Club installed adequate drainage which helped to provide us with one of the finest pitches in the London area, and coupled with a steady flow of good quality recruits and coached by England International Alan Stuart (History Master at K.G.S.), the future looked bright indeed. A second pitch became available, and in the final season before the War, the Club was fielding four Saturday sides, all wearing the Club colours, Gold Shirts faced with Blue, Blue Shorts and Red Stockings.

Some names of the pre-war era have already been mentioned, others such as Geoffrey Freeman, George and Eric Haywood, Cliff Lawrence, Martin Freeman, Joey Joel, Reggie Reed, Peter Breen, Bassett and Don Woodman, are just a few who played their part in this history. Some are still with us, but more of that anon.

Then the War. For the first season one team was fielded, and even until December, 1940, games were played, but then came the inevitable, and the Club closed down. Members were scattered all over the

world. No less than eleven playing members made the supreme sacrifice, including Alan Stuart. He was one of the finest Hockey Internationals ever, and his death was a very sad blow to all who knew this charming man and brilliant Hockey player.

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October, 1946, saw the revival of the Club with one pitch at Uxbridge, and one team, consisting of some veterans like Burns, Burton, Lawrence, Bowley, and including newcomers Stan Taylor, Gordon Machen, Laury Israel and skippered by Teddy Potts.

The School no longer played Hockey, and with only one team, costs rose alarmingly, so that younger members, even if available, found it an expensive game. Gradually, however, the task of rebuilding what had been lost was pushed forward in face of almost insurmountable difficulties. Pre-war members came back, coaching was arranged, and a new Second Eleven was started. Eventually the School re-started Hockey, and once more younger members came our way. A new style of Hockey was introduced by new members who had learnt to play in India during the War. David Lafrencis, Louis Lonstan and Bob Morley introduced the brilliant stickwork of the Indian type game to our Senior side, and are most nobly and indeed brilliantly filling our need for first-class forwards, and so overcome the dearth caused by a ten-year gap in Hockey tuition at School.

The 1950-51 Season saw the beginning of the third eleven, and in 1952-53 the first fourth eleven, and our membership had now risen to about 55 members, but expenses were crippling. Considerable effort behind the scenes had been going on for some time to find more suitable accommodation nearer London, and by a stroke of fortune contact was established with the Shepherds Bush Cricket Club, whose ground at East Acton has excellent facilities and two small but well surfaced pitches. Although it was rather sad in many ways to leave the scene of our former triumphs, our duty was clear, and on the 3rd October, 1953, we opened at our new ground with a convincing win over Southgate Adelaide H.C. by 6 goals to 2, the third eleven winning by 9 goals to nil. This has been a great uplift to the Club, but it must not be thought that our difficulties are over. We are in most urgent need of new members of any standard.

Before concluding, mention must be made of our annual trips to Worthing for the Easter Hockey Festival. These are the highspots of the Hockey season. The Tournament was discovered by accident by some of our members before the war, when it was quite unknown in our area, and the following year a team from the O.C.'s, together with their ladies, made the first trip to the delightful South Coast resort.

Teams have been sent regularly each year since, and the Festival has become one of the biggest in the country with a long waiting list of Clubs wishing to participate. Our success at the Tournament has varied, but our enjoyment has always increased.

This, then, is the history of the Club. The names, places and events have come and gone. Jack Burton, Cliff Lawrence, Eric Bowley, Eric Haywood are still with us, playing or umpiring, as is Martin Freeman, our President, Teddy Potts still appears at the A.G.M., Paul Huish and Alan George play or umpire with equal

facility. Of the post-war newcomers, Stan Taylor, Alan Lewis, Gordon Machen, Ron Jinks and Ron Jeffries are taking their place in the story of the Club, and joining the older members in their love for the elegant game.

May the writer take this opportunity of wishing the very best of good fortune to any old member or associate of the Hockey Club who might chance to read these few words, and to apologise to any who may not have their names recorded, and to assure them all, and indeed everyone, of a most warm welcome at our new ground in East Acton Lane, London, W.3, at any time.