

LACROSSE



THE JOURNAL OF
THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND LACROSSE ASSOCIATION

No. 74

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1937

[PUBLISHED
FORTNIGHTLY]

CLUB HISTORIES—No. 3.

Hampstead Lacrosse Club

Hampstead, who are the oldest existing club in the South, was established in season 1882/3. Alan Paul, who had played up North, was the prime mover, and he it was who introduced Frank Nichols, who became Captain in 1885/6 and continued as such until 1892. Nichols played for the first team for twenty years, and for the second up to the outbreak of War 1914.

The club played on the cricket ground at Parliament Hill Fields, which was then private property; the changing rooms consisted of two red tiled covered cow sheds, the washing water came from a pump outside, and the "bar" was a two-gallon jar of beer from the "Bull & Last."

In the early nineties the L.C.C. took over Parliament Hill Fields, and the sheds went, apart from one which still remains; the club thereupon changed at the aforementioned "Bull & Last."

With one exception Hampstead played here until 1906, and since then for many reasons have had to change grounds from time to time.

Lacrosse was flourishing as a game in the North of London and was very popular—the ground on Saturdays was roped round and it was not unusual to find at important games the ropes lined two or three deep.

Not only was the game popular to the spectators but other clubs sprang up, in 1894, the Havelock, near Gospel Oak, in 1896, the Highgate, and in the following year the Willoughby Club, which still exists.

It is interesting here to recall that in the eighties and early nineties Hampstead were playing such clubs as Dulwich, Clapton (winner of the Flags for many years), Cricklewood, West London, Snaresbrook, Blackheath, Molesey, Leys School, Old Leysians and Cambridge University. Others were, Barnet, Croydon, Clapham, St. Paul's School, Hornsey, Brompton, West Herts, University College, Dartmouth Park and Woodford. All these clubs with the exception of Cambridge University are now defunct, having died away or not having been resuscitated after the War.

Hampstead always had a doughty defence, and for the first twenty or twenty-five years Davies, Paul,

Forrest, W. G. Chapman and Vin Gilbey were stalwarts of the team.

The attack were ably led by Frank Nichols supported by such as Dace, Green, H. Cave, G. S. Gilbey not forgetting Gerald Mayatt.

Vincent Gilbey was the first club man to play for the South and afterwards together with Johnson, played for England against Wales; the latter also played versus Canada in the Olympic Games of 1908, Gilbey in this game being reserve.

The Great War took its toll from Hampstead to the tune of eight playing members, amongst whom were C. S. Davis and N. Krahn.

POST-WAR THE BEST PERIOD.

Hampstead were on the up-grade just before the War, when that player, who appeared for the South as recently ago as last March, viz :- Norman Pearson, began playing for the club. After the War, they combined with West London and Finchley for a season, but in 1920 the club started on its own again, and then followed the most successful period in its history, for of the seventeen Flag Finals since the War, the club has appeared in ten and have won in 1924 and 1937.

As will be appreciated by a glance at the date of formation, the club reached its Jubilee in 1933, and although membership fluctuates considerably, there is no reason why the oldest existing Southern club should not continue to thrive for many years to come.

CLUB HISTORY, No. 4

appearing in our next issue

LEE