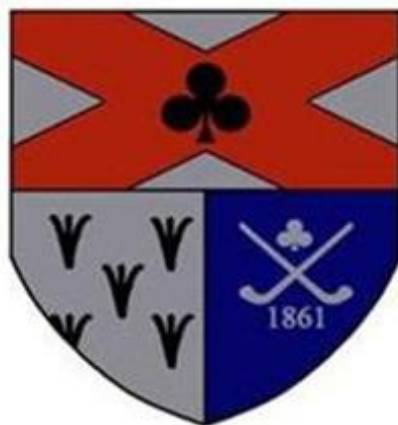


Blackheath Hockey Club



1861-2011

150th Anniversary



A Subjective History

of

Blackheath H.C.

by

John Bartlett

Abetted by

John Harrington, & Paul Hodgson

Blackheath -

The name is recorded in 1166 as *Blachehedfeld* and means the 'dark coloured' heathland'. It refers to the open space that was the meeting place of the ancient hundred of Blackheath - that stretch of grassland saddling the boundary between Greenwich and Lewisham which has long been a meeting place and sporting venue for the Men of Kent.

The Romans built Watling Street along the crest of the Heath to speed passage from The Kent Coast to London. From 1011-1013 The Danes, moored their ships in Greenwich and, unable to book into The Clarendon Hotel*, camped on The Heath. From this base they laid waste to the surrounding area; pillaged London; and besieged Canterbury, capturing and murdering Archbishop Alfege.

During The Peasant's Revolt of 1381 The Heath saw John Ball preaching revolution, while Wat Tyler massed his forces before marching on London; murdering the Archbishop of Canterbury and confronting the teenage Richard II at Smithfield. Tyler did not profit from his efforts as he was stabbed in the neck by The Lord Mayor of London for his arrogant attitude to Bill King*, and died in Barts hospital where his wound was mysteriously lengthened, which had the effect of removing his head just a few inches above the shoulders!

69 years later, learning nothing from Tyler's failure, Jack Cade and his followers camped on Blackheath in 1450 before marching on London; murdering The Archbishop of Canterbury; and rebelling against Henry VI. Subsequently Cade shared Tyler's fate, this time at the hands of the Sheriff of Kent. Are you starting to see a pattern here? Still to this day rebels and politicians alike insist on ignoring the lessons of history.

The following years saw a strange lack of applicants for the Archbishopric of Canterbury and an absence of revolting peasants gathering on Blackheath until in 1608, when the courtiers of James I (VI of Scotland) - who were inhabiting Greenwich Palace - started playing golf on The Heath after their Masonic meetings and founded the oldest English Golf Club.

Students of History may care to speculate on the fact that Cromwell, in an attempt to ensure the success of his regicide, took the precaution of abolishing bishops in 1649 although not before beheading Archbishop William Laud in 1645. It may be argued that this was the cause of the eventual failure of the Commonwealth; the restoration of Charles II; and the appointment of William Juxon as Archbishop in 1660. The discerning revolutionary will soon appreciate that if he wishes his rebellion to succeed on no account should he begin by topping The Archbishop of Canterbury.

With stagecoaches crossing The Heath along Watling Street en route to North Kent and the Channel ports, it became a notorious haunt of highwaymen during the 17th century. As reported in Walford's 'Old and New London' (1878), *"In past times it was planted with gibbets, on which the bleaching bones of men who had dared to ask for some extension of liberty, or who doubted the infallibility of Kings, were left year after year to dangle in the wind"* – a further example of how the Men of Blackheath have jealously protected the reputation of that much respected President and Life Member - William King*



A windmill, Blackheath
by John Sell Cotman 1809

Apart from the odd low-flying kite the golfers had things pretty much to themselves until the 1730s when cricket started being played on The Heath by the Blackheath Montpelier Club.

Then, in the middle of the 19th Century the Old Boys of Blackheath Proprietary School started playing hockey and football on The Heath and created The Blackheath Football and Hockey Club. The minute book of 1861 in the Hockey Club's possession, records that on 23rd of October 1861 in The Club Room – hired from Mr G. Copping of The Princess of Wales at a cost of £2.0s.0d. for Meetings and the storing of sticks – Colonel Hillyard accepted the Presidency of the Club; recorded G.A.Rayner taking over as Treasurer from Mr. R. O'Neill; increased the sub from 5/- to 7/6; and adjourned to October 30th when a proof of the Rules would be available.

It is apparent that The Club was in existence prior to 1861 as J. Nicholson Smith and P.A. Robson state in the book "Hockey" published in 1899 *"This club was formed not later than the year 1840. Members are still living who were playing at that date"* Nevertheless 1861 is the date our Forebears adopted as The Foundation and it is too late to disagree with them, besides which, in 1940 we were otherwise occupied. Possibly in waiting for 21 years to celebrate our centenary they were compensating for the years from 1914 to 1925 when the Club was dormant – Kaiser Bill and Hitler have a lot to answer for.

During the early 1860s it would appear from the minutes that Hockey was more popular than Football as there were moves to reduce the amount of football played; and for the 1864/65 Season the Hockey section split from the football section which was to become Blackheath Rugby Club. At the AGM on October 1st 1864 it was carried unanimously that *"The Club shall be called The Blackheath Hockey Club"*
"Rule 8 the Club shall meet for play every Wednesday and Saturday the play to commence at 3 o'clock" this was amended to *"that the Club shall meet every Saturday at 3.00 and every Wednesday during the months of October, March and April at 4.00"* Would that the timing of matches were as defined and sensible today.

In more recent years The Heath has played host to funfairs, circuses, firework displays, marathons – or at least their starts – the ubiquitous kites, and a naked Second XI Captain temporarily bonded to the Hare & Billet lamp-post with cling film on his stag. In August 2009 the Climate Camp was held on The Heath, which unfortunately didn't appear to achieve any improvement in the weather.

Blackheath Proprietary School

The Blackheath Proprietary School was established in 1830 to give a sound liberal education similar to the public schools of England. From its inception, it worked towards ensuring it had an educational reputation that would be the equivalent of its public school contemporaries and the school granted an exhibition of £50 per annum every two years to pupils proceeding to Oxford, Cambridge or Dublin Universities.

Blackheath's population had expanded rapidly in the 1820s, hence the timing of the establishment of the school.

The school was founded on joint stock principles and there were originally 100 shares priced at £20 each; proprietorship of a share entitled its owner to send or nominate a boy to the school. From 1831 when it opened it was successful particularly under Reverend Edward Selwyn, an alumnus of Trinity College Cambridge. He was head from 1849 to 1864 and remarkably, in his last three years - when there were more than 200 boys in the school - every boy in the upper sixth won an open scholarship to Oxford or Cambridge. The school also boasted a cadet corps. Although the Proprietary School flourished for much of the nineteenth century, it was later threatened by a number of elements including the diminishing lease on its site, the popularity of boarding schools and the growing availability of day schools nearby; it closed in 1907. The School was situated on a site bounded by Lee Terrace, Lee Road and Lawn Terrace and was described as *"a handsome building after the model of the Propylaeum in Athens"*.



This site was redeveloped in 1937 as Selwyn Court - a four-storey brick built structure of shops and dwellings which, apart from a plaque noting that the site was previously occupied by The School has little to recommend it. In fact it was the replacement of the school buildings by Seymour Court that was the catalyst in the foundation of the Blackheath Society which continues to campaign vigorously for the preservation of the character and quality of the area.

Blackheath Proprietary School c.1900

The Old Boys of the School formed the Old Blackheathians Club which continued the very strong sporting achievements of the school; and its members were responsible for founding Blackheath Hockey and Rugby Clubs as well as being involved in the foundation of the Football Association

The Blackheath Proprietary School Bell

Presented to Blackheath H.C. by Donald McDonald an old boy of the school and an Honorary Life Member of BHC, who was also the father-in-law of Dr. David Hardwick - BHC President from 1981 to 2004. The Bell is used to summon Members to table at Club Dinners



Blackheath Hockey Club the First 100 years

Ardent students of Blackheath Hockey Club's history may recognise large chunks of the following section which have been lifted shamelessly from Paul Hodgson's History written for The Centenary. Your authors have amended certain passages through closer examination of Club Records but are unable to improve on most of the original content.

From the very earliest times it seems to have been one of man's vices to hit a round, oblong or oval object with a stick. The Greeks, the Red Indians, the Celts and the Anglo-Saxons had their own methods which had certain features in common whether the game was called Bandy Ball, Hurley, Hockie or merely consisted of scooping mud at your opponent in lieu of a ball. There is ample evidence that a form of Hockey was played in Feudal times (it was proscribed under Richard II, £20 fine and three years imprisonment for playing), it was a crime to play on Sundays in Cromwell's England and the French called it La Crosse although it was played on the ground.



Forms of the games subsequently known as Hockey and Rugby were being played on The Heath among themselves by members of the Blackheath Hockey and Football Club so it is not surprising that there was a similarity in the early rules of both games. Some of the early rules of The Blackheath Game of Hockey are echoed by those of the game that was to become Rugby Union,

15 players a side; a forerunner of the lineout; making a mark; and an offside rule which related to a player's position entities after earlier attempts to do so in 1862 and 1863.

Ethiopian Hockey

Scrutiny of the early minutes of The Blackheath Hockey Club leaves one with the impression that the Committee in the early 1860s was more concerned with procedure and the end of season athletics meeting than the game of hockey. There are all manner of reports of various Club rules relating to attendance, the introduction of guests, and the times and dates of matches, but rather less about the game itself. When you are playing amongst each other every week there would be no need of discussions about fixtures (and mercifully no leagues or hockey and umpire's associations – Ah happy days).

But there were regular references to matters relating to the rules and these are very significant not only for the history of hockey, but in confirming the place of the Club in that history and the development of the game. On several occasions as part of Club celebrations, games have been played on the Heath replicating those early games of hockey as accurately as possible. In rule changes which were trialed and introduced, and recorded in Club records we can trace the early developments of the game.

Nicholson-Smith and Robson's book "Hockey" reproduces the

BLACKHEATH HOCKEY AND FOOTBALL CLUB RULES OF THE GAME OF HOCKEY

As it was proposed on October 25th 1862 *"....that the Blackheath Hockey Club and Football Club should for the future be the Blackheath Hockey Club and that no football be played."*, it seems very likely that these are the earliest version of the rules.

The rules were:

1. Sides to be chosen as soon as ten members are present, and players' names to be written as chosen, on a paper numbered and headed Red and Blue. Any one coming on the ground after play has commenced, to take the first unappropriated number. Choice of goals to be decided by tossing.
2. The goal – poles to be 10 yards apart and the distance between the goals not less than 200 yards. A flag to be erected half-way.
3. Hit-off to be 50 yards out of goal, the ball to be hit from the ground. No goal can be obtained by first hit-off.
4. A player making a catch can make his mark and retire not more than four paces, and can either hit from the ground or the hand; no opponent to interfere or overstep the mark till the ball has been hit at.
5. No player shall be allowed to loiter within 40 yards of the goal of the opposite side unless the ball be between him and his opponents goal. (In December 1863 this was amended to *"between the halfway flag and the goal of the opposing side"*)

After a goal has been obtained the sides shall change their respective goals, the winning side to hit-off.

7. The ball shall not be taken off the ground so long as it is in play; except it pass by the goal-poles; the striker shall then have the same privilege as in Rule 4.
8. It shall be a goal if the ball pass through the goals, or above the space between them, provided it does not pass over a cross-pole. A goal may be saved by a catch within the poles.
9. The ball shall not be in play when outside the boundary flags, and is then to be tossed on straight by the nearest player, but shall not be in play till it has touched the ground within bounds.

To these we feel justified in adding:

Rule 10 Left handed hitting & throwing of sticks is strictly prohibited

Which although not in their original list was certainly in existence for the 1862/3 Season.

The ball was a cube of solid rubber "not to exceed 7 ozs in weight" which frequently had to be boiled to keep it elastic. Sticks were of oak bent by steam with a flat back, originally both sides of the stick could be used but this was excluded by Rule 10.

The club played on The Heath by the All Saints Church next to Montpelier C.C, and the game started when ten people were present. A sack containing about 35 caps, red one side and blue the other (hence the club colours today) was produced from the "Princess of Wales", and as more people arrived they joined in. Teams consisted of a goalkeeper, two backs, two three quarter backs, three half backs and seven forwards. It is notable that the original rules make no mention of anything like the modern "foot rule". This aspect of the game was clearly under-review. In October 1863, it was proposed that "hands and legs should not be used for stopping the ball at hockey (goal keeper excepted)" but modified to "the foregoing rule hold good at the option of the players" – so it appears that the use of hands and legs was optional! Further experiment followed a decision at the Committee (December 23rd 1865). They were keen in those days but not in any hurry. It was resolved *"that on the first Saturday in every month the game should be played without using hands or legs for stopping the ball Goalkeeper excepted. To commence Nov 1st 1864 (sic). Carried 7 to "*. The experiment ended a year later. The indecision of the committee continued for the next ten years so that while the use of the foot if the stick was in the hand was not forbidden, it was discouraged.

Another development involved the encouragement and legalization of dribbling.

In 1877 the roll-in was introduced to restart the ball from outside the boundary flags.

But overall the aim seemed to be to keep the game going and rules were therefore mainly concerned with also keeping it safe. With a subscription of 7/6d a year the club and its game proved popular. By the end of 1861 there were 89 members and the average until 1875 was over 100.

A club supper was first held in 1863 and a Dinner, 11/- for seven courses, in 1874: matches were played between 15 boys and masters of the Proprietary School and the annual sports meeting at Westcombe Park proved very successful although the 60 yards hop had to be abandoned through lack of competitors. In 1875 a challenge to a match was received from the East Surrey and Sutton Clubs. Both were refused by Blackheath "Our game being so totally at variance with that adopted elsewhere" and for the same reason the club declined to join the first rather short lived Hockey Association.

But difficulties began to arise. As early as 1863 thirteen members had not paid their subscriptions; a Mr Holmwood refused to obey the rules; the Metropolitan Board refused to cut the grass and the Blackheath tent was used as a target by the golfers. "Our committee think we might with reason ask you next season to move your golf hole considering the inconvenience to both clubs and the danger to ours". More important was the fact that in 1875 on membership started to decline until in the 1880's it was down to thirty. For Blackheath the problem was whether to stick to its own rules or join the clubs founding the first Hockey Association.

An exchange of rules took place with East Surrey whose rule number 9 stated "No goal shall be scored if the ball be hit from a distance of more than 15 yards from the nearest goalpost" - the first circle? In the same year an invitation to play the Bristol H.C. was accepted if found possible and two years later, 1877, a game was arranged with Surbiton H.C. but the details of the contest are not recorded.

In common with other clubs the 1880's appear to have been a difficult period. The subscription went up to 10/6d, attendance at the Annual General Meeting was down to 6 in 1886 when there were only 26 members in the club. But the foundation of the Hockey Association in 1886 gave new life for with nine other clubs, mostly from the West, the club founded the National Hockey Union "with the object of playing and extending the Blackheath game".



Hockey about 1864

Although Blackheath's support was crucial to the Union which did well for two or three years, the club did not play many matches and its main connection was the Bristol Hockey Club against whom 16 games were played between 1875 and 1893; each club won 6 games and 4 were drawn. Mr Ashmead who played for Bristol in those days well remembered "Mr Yeoman of Blackheath H.C. who was one of the roughest players with whom I have ever come into contact". However as early as 1890 a movement was started to join the Hockey Association and when the L.C.C. interfered with the ground on the heath the club withdrew from the Union in 1894. The following year the Union was dissolved and the sum of 25/- was passed to the Western Counties Hockey Association. On the 13th September 1894 a meeting was called and opened by Mr H.F. Witherby "for the reconstruction of this club under Association rules". Some old members were present and many new ones, continuity was to be preserved not only in membership but in club colours and in the subscription.

For the next few years the club struggled. Not only did the players have to adapt themselves to some different rules but there was no ground and little money. For the season 1894/95 the club played on the heath, played away or borrowed the Royal Observatory pitch. The following season the Kidbrooke Lawn Tennis club ground in Harvey Road was rented and used until 1914. Use was also made of the XL club pavilion and the ground next door and a groundsman, Puttock, who was paid £4 a month, a sum which was to include the provision of tea. The financial situation was solved by the generosity of individuals who twice provided a guarantee fund of £21 which had to be used. Only 13 games were played in the first season, 3 were won and 10 lost and this was mostly against 3rd XI sides from such clubs as Bromley and Surbiton. However the Hawks 1st XI was played - "Blackheath playing a good uphill game only once managed to get near their opponents goal" - lost 6-0. But things quickly improved. By the following season the club had a 2nd XI which played in "cloth cap (Red and Blue), stockings, knickers and shirts with no braces". The results against other 1st XIs in 1897/8 were - played 29. Won 16. lost 8. Drawn 5. Goals for 84, against 55. In the following year both Cambridge University and Surbiton were beaten. In 1898 a merger was made with the Kidbrooke Hockey Club and four teams were run; a number that was increased to seven (one mid week) at the turn of the century. This healthy state of affairs was due almost entirely to the work of J. Nicholson-Smith and P.A. Robson.



BLACKHEATH H.C. 1894/5

Standing: PA Robson, AM Taylor, AJ Perry, J Nicholson Smith, HC Calthorp,

Seated: JA Thompson, CLYeoman(Capt) ML Rouse,

kneeling: GS Ellis, FM Lintott, NC Dolton

Nicholson-Smith played under Union rules and was largely responsible for the club joining the Hockey Association. He captained the 1st XI, was the first secretary of the Kent H.A. and with P.A. Robson, was responsible for many changes in the H.A. rules. From this time club records are very well kept, photographs, all correspondence, match reports and results all entered in scrapbook form. As Chairman he was responsible for a committee meeting "held on Sat. Dec. 12 in a L. and S.W. railway carriage (no. 900)".

With Robson he not only made Blackheath an effective hockey side well able to hold its own but also did much research into the origins of the game. Both played a considerable role in the development of the game as we know it. They were followed as captain of the First XI by H.M. Tennant who was from Oxford University, Hon. Sec. of the Hockey Association. These three assisted by the patronage (and occasionally the presence on the field) of S. Cristopherson turned the club into a flourishing concern. Seven of the Cristopherson family (four of whom were members) played in a match against the club in 1896 when S. Cristopherson became a Vice President. That the club was flourishing up to 1914 is certain. By 1898 eleven members had played for Kent and one loses count thereafter, Raikes, Beasley and later W.F. Smith (who afterwards played for Beckenham) all got international caps. A tour of the Midlands took place from the beginning of the century and in 1913 the club went to Folkestone where they played the Racing Club de France and Berlin. A club dinner at the Holborn restaurant was well attended; for 5/- (wines and cigars extra) the menu ran :

Hors D'Oeuvres.

Soup. Sicilienne. Consomme Imperatrice.

Fish. Turbot and Lobster sauce. Whitebait.

Entrees. Grenadin of Veal aux legumes. Spring Chicken.

Removes. Rib of beef and Horse radish sauce. Quarter of lamb and mince sauce.

Roast. Duckling and watercress.

Sweets. Various. Cheese and Coffee.

Further proof of the enterprise of these men is afforded by the construction of a new pavilion for £85, and the draining of one of the pitches for £6.10.0. The new pavilion was completed in 1909 and paid for with the help of H.M. Tennant who arranged concerts and other entertainment to raise the money. A brake was employed to carry visiting teams from the Blackheath station to the ground and the Blackheath Ladies Club, founded in 1896, played to the outbreak of the war and presumably added to the amenities.



Blackheath Ladies 1896 with J. Nicholson Smith

Play ceased during the 1914-18 war and after it the club probably took longer than any other London club to get started. It was not until 13 October 1925 that the first general meeting was held. The prime movers were again Robson and Nicholson-Smith who both played in the first season. Robson stuck to tradition, if not rule whereby, if you got your feet or body in the way he just hit you with the stick. They were helped by the Rev. Canon F.H. Gillingham (the cricketer) who became the first Captain of the Club and J.A.W. Griffiths who was secretary from 1925 until his death in 1929. He also captained the first XI which played in the first season 1925/26, 13 games on the Strathedene House school ground in Harvey Road. The next season got properly underway with a weak but full fixture list under the captaincy of A.D.S. Pasley. The club was singularly fortunate in the men who joined at this time. Apart from the secretary the new Captain ran the first XI until 1934 when he became Captain of the Club until 1952. He also ran the second XI until 1939. His record of service is equalled by that of R.K. Keller M.C. who joined in 1926, was Vice Captain of the first XI until 1931, was Team Secretary for 21 years from 1930 to 1951 when he became publicity officer, was Captain of the newly created 5th XI in 1957 a detailed portrait of Roy and his importance to Blackheath is in the People section.



BLACKHEATH FIRST XI 1897

standing: L Godfrey, AM Dolton, AM Taylor, AW Stewart,
AG Hubbard, PE Puttock(referee) *sitting:* PA Robson, J
Nicholson Smith (capt), AW Lewis, LH Browning;
front: CJK Coles, GH Martell.

The main problem facing the new officers was where to play. From 1926/27 use was made of the Brooklands ground in Blackheath Park, but though the surface was very good - it was rented from Chiesmans in Southwood Road, New Eltham - the first match there was disastrous. On arrival an open drain was discovered which stretched across the ground creating a hazard even for long jump artists - local rules had to be employed. The next week there was a ridge requiring the vertical technique. No changing accommodation led the club back to the pre-war ground in Harvey Road which was rented from A.G. Harvey in 1929 making use of some huts (pre-war) and the XL club pavilion. There was no lease and no security of tenure apart from a gentleman's agreement with Mr. Harvey.

In the 1930's the club slowly came into its own once more. It took until 1934 to get a strong fixture list but by that time Dulwich, Hampstead, Old Kingstonians, Surbiton, Teddington, Bromley, Richmond and Oxford University were being played. Three XIs were run in 1928 (one playing on the heath "adjoining the Hare and Billet") and by 1935 there were six XIs and over 70 playing members. Changing accommodation remained the great difficulty - in one season use had to be made of a member's house and garden (Dr Haydon-Jones), the club therefore decided to build its own pavilion which was ready by 1934 at a cost of £443. The final repayments on this sum were paid out of money from the War Damage Commission as the pavilion was destroyed in 1940. The pre-war years were good. The club dinner of 1934 did £4 worth of damage to crockery in Anderton's Hotel; and the team at the Worthing Festival sounds familiar - "the team was not a strong one but was socially a great success" - three were lost and one drawn. In 1936 the club dinner was presided over by S. Christopherson "and no less than six past England captains sat down under him"; the club usually won more than it lost, in 1937/38 the results were; Played 142. Won 83. Drawn 36. Lost 23. Goals for - 501 and against 306. The good results were due to the Captains, Pasley and M.E.A. Robson (a son), and to Albert Angear who first played for Wales in 1934 and was still playing hockey in 1958 when he became Captain of the third XI. But the results of the club as well as its very survival after the 1939/45 war were in large measure the work of H.J. Robins. Joining in 1928 by 1936 he had scored 324 goals, Captain of the 1st XI for 18 years from 1936 - 1954 when he became Captain of the Club, he saw Blackheath through a most difficult period which lasted until their arrival at Forest Hill in 1952.



BLACKHEATH FIRST XI 1936-37

standing: Mr Johns (Groundsman)
J. Yates, P.A. Robson, P. Gibson,
A. Podger, T. Blackett, T. Barrett,
Revd. Wadhams;

seated: T. Williams, A. Angear, J. Robins,
D. Haydn-Jones, J. Paul.

At the outbreak of the war the secretary J.A.W. Griffiths died and negotiations for the renewal of the ground appeared to be failing. In spite of this a side was run continuously throughout the war. For the season 1939/40 the R.A.F. took over the pavilion (for 11/6 a week) and a Cooks Depot dug trenches on the second XI pitch leaving the use of one. In the Blitz the pavilion was destroyed and the ground rendered useless by bombing and so for the following season the Woolwich Polytechnic ground was used, sixteen games in all being played. The next year saw the club playing in the Royal Naval College ground and the introduction of many guest players as it was proving hard to raise a side. From 1942 to 1945 play was resumed on the Harvey ground but the lease was not renewed at the end of the war so use was made once again of the College ground and two teams were run in 1945/46. To keep the club alive and a side in the field in the war was an act of faith as well as a considerable administrative feat. H.D. Greenwood (the new secretary who bore the brunt), D. Haydn-Jones and H.C. Care, the treasurer, all deserve mention.

The club had need of its good officers from 1945. The search for a new ground led it away from Blackheath for the first time to share with the Sidcup C.C. Fixture list apart things did not look too bright for the future as the pavilion was highly unsatisfactory, having no lighting, heating or hot water, the bar arrangements were poor and the pitches just de-requisitioned from the Army. A lot of self-help, a club draw, individual donations and finally money from the War Damage Commission enabled debts to be paid off, extensions made and electricity brought to the pavilion. The next year the boiler burst and the roof burnt. As it proved difficult to get a reasonable lease negotiations were opened with Forest Hill C.C. who were getting underway once more and eventually an offer of a six year lease for the 1952/53 season was accepted and the move made. Three pitches and a better pavilion making a better prospect for the future.



BLACKHEATH FIRST XI 1949/50 at Sidcup
Cox, Hale, Felliott, Guy, Goodridge, Stuart, Keller;
Withers, Angear, Robins(Capt) Sloane, Cole.

For all that has gone before it is possible that the years after the club arrived at Forest Hill were one of its most successful periods, for they included, the foundation of the 1961 club in 1956, which not only raised funds for the Centenary celebrations but provided a means of linking past and present members. Out of a membership of eighty, fifty-eight were non playing members. Those years included the purchase of the ground a joint effort with the Forest Hill C.C., so that for the first time in its history Blackheath had a permanent base of its own. The ground cost £8,250 for which grants of £3,250 and loans of £800 were obtained. Of the balance of £4,200 Blackheath raised £2,300 and Forest Hill the remainder. The purchase was completed in 1959. The years included a period when the standard of hockey was high and the results good.

Once again it was the officers of the club to whom it was indebted. Fortunate in its choice of President in 1945, General Sir Leslie Hollis K.C.B., K.B.E. who played in the inter war years, there is little doubt that the main credit for survival at Sidcup and endeavour at Forest Hill was due to the secretary J.F.S. Halliwell. Joining in the same season as the President, 1931/32, he was one of those who kept the club going in the war years; as secretary from 1945 to 1961.

Joe Halliwell kept the club alive at Sidcup, founded the 1861 Club, was largely responsible for Blackheath's share in the negotiations for the buying of the ground and tendered his resignation annually. Without his persistence, optimism and clear sightedness the club would not be in its present promising position. Joe, John Webber, who played a vital role in all relations with Forest Hill and Chaired the Joint Club throughout the 60s; and Bill King, were principally responsible for the establishment of the Club at Rubens Street.



BLACKHEATH FIRST XI 1956 at Forest Hill

Standing: L.Poole, L.Schmitt, J.Breen, R.Tilford, R.Cheesley, R.Goodwin, R.Mash;
Seated: M.Nicholson, A.Angear, D.Sloane, P.Clarke, G.Collis.

The playing strength and the ability of the teams has also improved following the arrival at Forest Hill. R.H. Nutall and R.Sutton both achieved International caps. Five teams were run from 1955, six from 1958 as well as the Outcasts Sunday XI and the number of new members had to be limited. Good relations with London House have proved of infinite value, for a steady stream of New Zealanders, Australians and South Africans have enriched the club. For two or more seasons representatives of Belgium, Germany, France, Pakistan as well as the normal contingent of English, Anglo/Indians, Scots, Welsh and the inevitable Irish have played: stretching a point or two, in one first XI match there were representatives of eight different nations. The responsibility for keeping this together, indeed for getting them together, and turning them into a team and a club has largely been down to Paddy Sloane the Captain of the Club at that time. His reward as Blackheath's foremost ambassador in Hockey was to escort a reinforced first XI to Brussels one Whitsun, where his own performance on the field surprised even himself and a new Entente Cordiale was cemented. It was his further privilege to wine and dine the officers and the first XI on St. Patrick's night 1961 for defeating both Universities.



Blackheath 1st XI 1959/60

Mash, Cheesley, Hodgson, Smith, Breen, Nuttall E.;
Nuttall R., Angear, Sloane, Clarke, Mackay

Over a hundred years the club played on at least nine different grounds, built two and a half pavilions, reconstituted itself three times and finally bought its own ground and premises.

The last 50 years

The Centenary Season 1961-62 was an outstanding success. Driven by Joe Halliwell and supported by all Members past and present, the highlight was a Dinner at The Grocers Hall. 254 Members and Guests attended, including the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Louis Mountbatten, The Presidents of the H.A. and F.I.H. and Presidents of International and Regional Hockey Associations, Club Presidents, Press and Umpires. The Loving Cup was presented by Members of the 1861 as a memento of the occasion and has been used at Club Dinners ever since.



We are assured that the following actually occurred: A VIP area had been arranged for various dignitaries to meet The Duke of Norfolk for a drink before the Dinner and John Barlow was on guard duty to make sure that none of the other ranks slipped in. A distinguished looking gentleman sought entry and was asked by John who he was – "Lord Louis Mountbatten was the reply" "Oh come on" said John "stop pissing about who are you really?" It was of course The Noble Lord himself.

Companion events were an 1861 costume match which was held at Rubens Street and a game against a Hockey Association Team.

After the 1961/2 Season Blackheath maintained its position in the middle ranks of the 17 Clubs and 3 Universities which comprised the Sunday Telegraph Table, which was referred to by those clubs not in it as "The London Closed Shop". Block fixtures involved 6 Blackheath teams playing 6 teams from the opposing Club, 3 at home, 3 away, all on grass at 2.30. Blackheath provided the 2 Kent full-backs – Johnny Breen and Malcolm Creasy - and Kent won the County Championship in 1964 and 1965. The First XI was captained by Bob Cheesley and then Jimmy Threlfall, The Clubs were all linked with Cricket Clubs as the outfields were generally big enough for three pitches and hockey did not tear up the grass as much as rugby or football. This meant that the Hockey season ran from October to Easter and it was all very convenient, very convivial and very comfortable..

In the 1970s hockey in general started to get restive, The London Closed Shop was criticised as all players of a reasonable standard and not living too far from the Metropolis were sucked into The Telegraph League Clubs who enjoyed a protected status irrespective of their results. There was a clamour for more competition as it was argued that the system in place restricted development and would never produce players who could compete at international level. Shale pitches started to become available and were used for training and when the grass was unfit.

To answer the demand for more competition the Counties introduced knockout cups open to all teams in the County Association and played on a Sunday. The Kent Cup's inaugural season was 1969/70 and in August 1970 at The Medway Festival on The Nore Command Ground, Blackheath captained by Paul Aspin, beat a strongly fancied Beckenham side in the Final, 3-2 by a golden goal scored by Ross Bailey in extra time. It was a magnificent performance against the hot favourites Beckenham who had two England players – Basil Christianson and Alan Page – in their side. Peter Machin's unique contribution to this victory must be recorded – he roughed up Basil early on in the game and Basil spent the rest of the match trying to whack Peter rather than concentrating on his role as Beckenham's playmaker.



1970 Kent Cup Champions

Blackheath v Beckenham

Won 3-2 after extra time (Bailey 2, Watson) (full time 2-2)

Mark Watson, Charles Angear, Robin Davis, Carlos Mascarenhas, Joe Faria, Paul Aspin (Capt);
Ken Plummer, Albert De Souza (Vice Captain) Ross Bailey, Bob Marshall, Peter Machin.

The Blackheath cake was triumphantly iced by the fact that Roy Keller was Kent President at the time and had the difficult job of trying to appear neutral when he presented Paul Aspin with The Frank Mason Cup.

The Club reached the finals in the two following years but were defeated by Bromley in 1971 and Beckenham in 1972.

Albert De Souza took over the captaincy for the 1970/71 season and organised a Blackheath team to attend the St Germain en Laye Tournament in Paris during Whitsun 1971. The H.A. were looking for a Club side to represent England in an International Club Competition. Houslow and Southgate were otherwise occupied so Albert grabbed the chance with both hands. This was Blackheath's major attempt to ruin the Entente Cordiale. The trouble started when we landed in Paris and Hal Rehling had an Indian passport and no visa. After an hour's argument with Immigration we were allowed in; were taken to various homes by our hosts and Ian Milne finished up sharing a bed with a girl he'd never met before!

The next morning a number of us discovered the St Germain Club Bistro, and celebrated the discovery by copious sampling of their wine cellar before the first game, which resulted in Rui wandering around in a daze for the first half before being substituted. That evening Ian Milne and Rui incited a student riot in Paris with whistles, while the Robertsons, Bartletts and Jacksons were barricaded in Le Consolat restaurant in Montmartre; and Giles missed the last train home. We won the tournament and Rui formed a close attachment with the girl who was subsequently to become his wife. That we failed in our attempt to sour relationships with our Gallic neighbours had much to do with the barrels of Beaujolais that our hosts produced for the end of Tournament dance. The whole exercise was ample illustration of Albert's peerless organisational abilities.



Blackheath XI Champions International Tournament - Paris May 1971

Jackson, Maltman, Dosaj, Mascarenhas, Watson,
Milne, Conlon;

Angear J, Saldanha R, De Souza, Saldanha G,
Fernandez

Also Played: Rehling H, Bartlett, Robertson,
Holmes.

Also attended Bill & Betty King, and Mesdames
Bartlett, Robertson, Jackson, and Miller. (A. Bartlett
pre natal) Arthur, Mrs and Susan Dickinson.

The Supporters *from the right:*
standing Bill King, Trevor Holmes, Ian
 Robertson, 3 French people who can't
 understand what's going on
seated Betty King, Mrs JB, Janet Jackson,
 Susan Dickinson;
front Jean Robertson, Janet Miller,
extreme left the future Mrs Saldanha



For the 1971 season Albert started to build the teams that had much success over the following decade. Two people came into the side who were to have a significant effect on the future success of the Club – Colin Couves and David Hallworth.

Colin fresh from his County Championship medal with Surrey, was a fixture in the team for over a decade and played in the 1977 team that swept all before it. He and Rui ran the team between then from 1974 to 1978. He was one of four Blackheath players who played in the 1975 Kent team that won the County Championship. The others were David Hallworth, Chris Glenny and Rui Saldanha.

During our time at the Club Rui, has been the best player. We never saw Albert Angear in his pomp so cannot compare them. Rui captained the First XI, played for Kent, England and Great Britain, served behind the bar, got locked out by his wife and slept in Brad Rehling's bed.

David Hallworth, a Welsh International, was introduced to the Club by Charles Angear. David was a fitness fanatic, he trained incessantly and was regularly heavily bandaged and always carrying a niggles of one sort or another. Some of us tried to curb his excesses by persuading him to adopt the Bartlett/Snashall training and dietary methods but he would have none of it. David was a speedy left winger and very keen on indoor hockey. Through his enthusiastic leadership we had indoor training every week and 3 squads competing in The Crystal Palace, Orpington and Northfleet Leagues. This degree of commitment was rewarded in 1977 when Blackheath won the National Indoor Championship at Crystal Palace. There are a number of indelible memories of that evening, Marshall turning up late to be greeted with: "Slack marking at Heathrow" from Hal Rehling; Imtiaz dragging us back from the dead in the Final; Ian Robertson being too excited to light his pipe; and Brian Brown having the foresight to bring the bar keys with him so that we could hold a midnight celebration of our triumph.



1977 Blackheath – National Indoor
 Champions

Taylor(Asst. Mgr), Couves, Shahid,
 Bevan, Imtiaz, Glenny, Newby,
 Avtar,

Wallace, Saldanha, Bentley,
 Poetschke, Hallworth (Capt. & Mgr.)

For some reason The Kent Cup was not as well organised during the 1976/77 Season as it was to become in later years. This meant that the final was delayed until mid summer when it was arranged at Orpington. The finalists were Blackheath and Beckenham and it proved to be the most one sided affair until we beat Folkestone 9-0 in 1983. In 1977 we thrashed Beckenham 1-0 – I know it doesn't sound like a thrashing but I was there and it was. We have searched high and low but don't think a picture was ever taken of the team, however it was:

Cant, Couves C, Kalsi P; Newby, Wallace, Avar, Shahid, Saldanha, Remy, Imtiaz, Hallworth sub Glenly.

A bad Achilles injury curtailed Albert's playing career around 1975, but in 1978 he took on the role of managing the First XI and built up the team that was rated with Slough, Hounslow and Southgate who were dominating hockey at that time. Blackheath won the Kent Cup in 1983 and again in 1984.



Albert with The Cup, and the team plus The Sponsor and umpires Peter Brown and Brian Miller, following Blackheath's 9-0 victory over Folkestone in the Final at Marden in 1983.

Rear: Abreo, Kaka

3rd Row: Shahid, Watson, Rehling, Daved, Sponsor.

2nd Row: Brian Miller, Shearman, Butt, Peter Brown

Front: Albert De Souza, Tony De Souza, Imtiaz, Polu Kalsi, Nym Kalsi

In 1984 and 1985 The Club had very successful runs in the National Cup Competition, finishing as runners-up on both occasions. In the early rounds in 1984 there were enjoyable coach trips away to Chesterfield, and Pickwick although an infuriating final was lost to East Grinstead to the only goal, after they had been completely dominated for 69 of the 70 minutes, and having beaten Hounslow in a thrilling match the day before.



1983-4 Blackheath Team Runners-up in the National Cup - Willesden

Nazareth, Kalsi P., Abreo, Imtiaz (Capt), Kaka, Couves (Coach) Rehling, Butt B. Chada, Kalsi N., De Souza (Manager) Butt W. Daved.

kneeling: Shahid, Kalsi M. Shearman, Patel, Watson.

In 1985 we were beaten 2-1 in the final by a star-studded Southgate team, and managed to finish runners up in the London league.

This talented group broke up at the end of 1985 and it is only now that one realises the extent of Albert's achievement during those years in keeping this volatile bunch together and creating the success it did.

The rest of the Club had also developed during this period adding a 7th team of old stagers - 'Blackheath Dynamo' in 1977 which developed into The Veterans XI in 1980. Captained by John Harrington and subsequently organised by Jack Rose, it proved a suitable vehicle for the likes of Jimmy Threlfall, Ian Robertson and Danny Deveney to play out their reclining years – a function it fulfils to this day.



The Veterans early 80s
from left: Millard, Arnett, Threlfall, Harries, Hayter, Deveney, Turpin, New, King, Sev De Souza

In 1981 the long awaited and much welcomed recreation of Blackheath Ladies H.C. was made possible by the initiative and enthusiasm of Carol Elliott, Lorna Dean, Jenny Titmus, Carol Bostridge, Janet Gainey, Sue Cleall, Sue Griffin and many others. Within 4 seasons they were running three teams; a 2A XI was added for the 1987/88 season, and a 3A XI in 1991. In 1995 a more traditionally numbered set up from 1 to 4 was established. Regrettably, we cannot find any pictures of the early Ladies teams so we are showing The Founding Ladies 20 years on at Lorna's 50th Birthday:

Rear: Carol Bevan, Carol Elliott, Janet Gainey, Jenny Titmus, Gerry, Eileen O'Malley,
Front: Inez Connolly, Sue Cleall, Sue Griffin, Lorna Dean.



Hockey had enjoyed a surge in popularity following the Olympic bronze medal in 84 and by our 125th Anniversary in 1986, Blackheath were running 8 Men's Teams having introduced the 4A XI in 1985.

The World Cup Silver in 1986 and Olympic Gold in 1988 brought further interest with the result that at the practice match we had an excess of members and Steve Blowers was asked to run a 9th side. Fixtures were found and that notable creation "The Heathens" was added to our portfolio.

1986 saw our 125th Anniversary and a rampant Club determined to enjoy itself. The First event was a Dinner in November 1986 where over 200 Members and Guests dined at Imperial College. Phil Appleyard President of the H.A. proposed the toast of The Club and Roger Dakin insulted us on behalf of the Guests.

In March we organised a Day on The Heath commencing with a buffet lunch in The Princess of Wales and a costume match played on the site of our original pitch by All Saints Church in costume and to Rules as close to those of 1861 as we could get.

In April we held a Club Weekend at Rubens Street comprising First XI and Veterans Tournaments involving Blackheath and our immediate neighbours Bromley, Beckenham and Tulse Hill, and all other teams in the Club playing teams from Old Kingstonians, Surbiton, Hawks, Maidenhead, Cheam and Hounslow. There were also matches for the 4 Ladies XIs, under 14 and under 16 games against Bromley and finally the First XI played Kent.



125th Anniversary Celebrations

A collection of ancients gather in the beer garden at the Princess of Wales.

From left: Snashall, Hardwick, Sev De Souza, Maltman, Brian Brown, Harrington, Deveney, Clive Morris

Recumbent: Ian and Murray Robertson

The assembled throng enjoying the buffet generously provided by Whitbreads in The conservatory of the P. o. W.



After luncheon the party gather outside our 1861 pavilion before moving onto The Heath. John Harrington is flanked by The Mayors of Lewisham and Greenwich with Phil Appleyard President of the H.A. Neville Mirov is on the extreme left, behind John Carr who is displaying the rear of the trousers whose stitching was to prove insufficiently robust for his exertions during the game



The Red Caps celebrate their victory over the Blues.

Goldsmith, Cant, Williams. Vardy, Kalsi P, Morris, Clarke, Machin, Hardwick, Hayter

Kneeling Hallworth, Kalsi N, Farage, De Souza, Reeves, Carr.

In 1988 Blackheath were playing in the London League, with some success although never quite enough to make it into the newly formed National League. Well enough, however, to win one of Peter Boizot's Team of the Month Awards which resulted in dinner at Peter's restaurant - Kettners - for the First XI and those hangers on lucky enough to get in on the act.



Rear: Rehling, Choda, Moat, Haines S, Haines M, JB,
Front: Ainley, Colclough, Peter Boizot, Kalsi N, Lippard, Beard, Kalsi P(Capt).

In 1988 Great Britain won Gold in Seoul and everyone started rushing about determined to change the cosy set up that had brought Gold, Silver and Bronze medals over the preceding 4 years. The Game needed to be more competitive; we needed a National Stadium; Hockey needed National Leagues! The results of this panic are plain to see, The HA went bankrupt; National Stadium was a disaster; and The League structure has seen the death of some Clubs, the merging of others and the weakening of many. The net result is a massive reduction in the number of people playing hockey, there are half as many Clubs in Kent as there were 30 years ago – some progress.

Blackheath as befits the founding father of the game has maintained the inclusive policy of enjoying the game win or lose, and has progressed with occasional surges of success and a few reverses. In the 80s, Blackheath created a healthy youth squad which had under 14 and under 16 teams playing in the Kent Youth Leagues. In 1990 Blackheath won the under 16 Championship of Kent and the graduates of the Youth squad have formed the backbone of the teams of the last 20 years.

However, in 1995 the last throes of the old guard manifested themselves in an outstanding performance in the Kent Veterans Cup. After an adventurous path through the qualifying rounds skipper Couves led the team out at Lloyds Bank on the 9th of April 1995 against Bromley. We won through a solitary goal from Tony De Sousa but only the herculean efforts of Stuart Port in the Bromley goal prevented a deluge, We do not use this word lightly, we were awesome! Our old friends were magnanimous in defeat even to the extent of John Bluett sharing his champagne with us.



KENT VETERANS CUP FINAL 1995
Blackheath 1 Bromley 0

Rear: Elliott, Brown, Bartlett, Gill, Imtiaz, De Sousa,
Kalsi N, Imdath;
Front: Kalsi P, Snashall, Cleall, Kalsi M, Couves (Capt.
Flynn, Cobb.

This match is also famous for Cathy Snashall's indignation at being charged an entrance fee – "It's bad enough having to watch him play - without having to pay for it!"

Under Brad Rehling's management in 1997/98 an outstanding crop of products from the Youth Squad won promotion to the South Premier League drawing one game, winning the rest and scoring 100 goals in the process. Unfortunately university and domestic calls weakened the side in subsequent years and we became a yo-yo club wandering between the South Premier and the two divisions of the Kent Sussex Regional.

1997/8 BLACKHEATH FIRST XI – Champions
Kent/Sussex League

Standing: Kalsi N, Kalsi P, Bartlett J (*Club Capt*),
John Donachy (*Sponsor*) Couves A, Djavit,
Choda, Thompson R, Moat, Rose, Avis, Rehling
(*Manager*)

Kneeling: Mitchell, Thompson N, Layton, Couves
J (*Capt*), Bartlett A, Macnamara, Brown.



Promotion came again in the 2004/5 Season but we couldn't maintain the position although we came close again in 2008/9.



Kent/Sussex Champions 2004/5

Rose, Hammett, Anthony, Becker, Avis,
Leckamwattage, Djavit, Couves,
Thompson N,
Bartlett, De Cruz (Mgr), Baljit, Thompson R.
Burnett, Golbey.



Blackheath Ladies have also enjoyed considerable success since their creation, culminating in winning Division II South of the East of England League in the 2009/2010 Season.

Team:

Standing: Louise Akers, Beth Little, Jilly Lloyd, Kara Paris, Elin Fuller, Hollie Moffett, Julie Taylor, Debs Yates, Vicky Pitt;
Kneeling: Lindsey Farthing, Sian Evans, Marion Potter, Rachel Biggs, Claire Tubridy;
Front: Ita Antonioli

Correspondence

Any Club will generate a large amount of correspondence over 150 years, some of it has been excellently preserved and tabulated by Nicholson Smith in scrapbook form. We have selected some of the more important and entertaining items

In the 1860s there was a player called Frederick Holmwood whose robust style of play was causing great consternation. A minute of February 1863 records:

Letters were received from members regarding Fredk Holmwood's left handed hitting. The Committee decided that ".... The Secy. should have Rule 10 viz. "Left handed hitting & throwing of sticks is strictly prohibited" printed in large letters and hung in the tent on play days, and the attention of members directed to it."

Mr Holmwood was threatened with having his resignation requested if he persisted. Throughout the 1860s there are further references to this Gentleman's vigorous approach to the game which apparently had little effect, as at a Special Committee Meeting on 23rd March 1870 it is minuted as follows:

It is agreed that a notice be placed in the Tent drawing the attention of Members to certain things.

First to the danger of hitting across the (Game)*****. A player on his right side of the Ball ought always to be safe from an Opponents hit but this will not be the case if the Ball be struck at across the Game**** for then a Player on his right side of the Ball may be seriously injured by an Opponents Club.

Secondly To Hitting back at an opponent who is on his wrong side of the Ball This is allowable only when the Player is about to strike the Ball and is not permitted when both are running after it.....

And at a further Special Committee Mar 25th 1870 The Secretary was authorised to write to Mr A Holwood urging in him the importance of playing in a less dangerous manner so the following letter was written to him.

Dear Sir:

A Special Committee Meeting was held on Wednesday evening last at the Hare and Billet to take into consideration two or three important points about the game in order if possible to prevent accidents. The Committee are unanimously of opinion that hitting back at an opponents stick (except just previous to striking) is not only exceedingly dangerous but against the rules.

Your name has been mentioned as infringing this rule, but the Committee thinking that you have not seriously considered the importance of it have desired me specially to call your attention to the notice which will be posted in the Tent bearing on the subject. The Committee feel quite sure that your good feeling will cause you to abstain from what they consider an unpopular & dangerous practice.

I am dear Sir Your obedient Servant

2nd November 1864

Mr. E.D. Drury wrote to the Committee as follows:

My dear Sir

As the proposer of Mr. H.D. Drury as a member of the Blackheath Hockey Club I beg to protest against the ballot which took place when his name was put up for election as from what I have learnt from several members present the proceedings were very irregular besides being conducted in the dark. I shall be glad to hear what steps I should take further in the matter

Yours obediently Edw D Drury

The Club Secretary replied as follows:

My dear Sir

With reference to your protest against the ballot for Mr. H.D. Drury as a member of the Blackheath Hockey Club, I am desired to inform you that the Committee have carefully enquired into the circumstances and see no reason to interfere

Yrs obtly J.A. Raynes

This is an intriguing exchange, we presume the complaint is concerning non-election of H.D. Drury as in those days one blackball in ten was sufficient to refuse membership. There is fruitful ground to speculate about what H.D. had done to warrant rejection and what went on in the dark!

The Heath is a fairly large area and it might be thought that it could accommodate a hockey pitch and the varying number of holes used by The Golf Club without impinging on each others territory but apparently not, in April 1865 A letter was received from Captain Crosse, Secretary of Blackheath Golf Club asking The Hockey Club to move their tent on Medal Days as it was close to one of the Golf Club's greens. The Club's reply was as follows:

"Dear Sir,

I have ordered our attendant to place our tent out of your line of play, tomorrow. Our Committee think that we might with reason (considering the inconvenience to both clubs and the danger to ours) ask you next season to move your golf hole, which lies to the south of us, some few yards towards Greenwich so that your line of play should be behind our tent.

This was done on one Saturday (March 18) our President having proposed it to some of your members."

The minutes do not record the result of this exchange, but we assume the two sections continued in relative harmony.

"This letter received from the secretary of The Royal Observatory Hockey Club dated Jan 2nd 1896 is my favourite and self-explanatory:

"Dear Sir

Your letter of Dec 30 having been laid before the Committee of the Royal Observatory H.C. I am requested to inform you that:- considering we sent you a challenge at the commencement of the season which was left unanswered for a month and that you practically refused to play us; and as we have lately been informed in a paper called Hockey" our play in a match with your club was described as rough and it was stated that we disputed the referee's decisions; it is the general opinion of the committee that such treatment is quite unaccountable, considering the number of friendly games played between members of the two clubs, it being remembered that in one of your matches two of our men were playing for your team, owing to your being short.

It was also decided that no matches could be played with your club until some apology had been offered us.

Beyond this, we think that a challenge from your A team to a team that repeatedly and so decisively defeated your 1st team last season, is not calculated to smooth matters at all.

I am yours faithfully

N.Bowyer Hon Sec"

A post card sent to Nicholson Smith from the 2nd XI Captain A.G. Hubbard at the beginning of the 1897 season reads as follows:

Thanks for yours – will do my best with the unruly herd you surrender to my tender mercies – though I hardly know six of the men on the list, even by sight – however we shall see – I trust enough will turn up to make a game
Best luck at Bromley
yrs A.G. Hubbard

Letter received by J. Nicholson-Smith dated 27th March 1899

Dear Smith

Please be so good as to take my name off the list of members of the Blackheath Hockey Club.

I also cancel my subscription of 2/6 which I intended to give for the improvement of the Club Ground. I have played (during my Membership of the Hockey Club) with several teams but I have never come across one that was so rank as the one that was put into the field against Kingston School.

We turned up Two short which is nothing unusual and the remainder had better have stayed at home; for my own part I wish I had done so.

I was put to play in goal a place I am no good to be in owing to my sight not being good enough. The consequence was that Kingston School scored three goals within about the first ten minutes of the game. I spoke to Pullen about it before we started but he said he could not move me.

The consequence of being where I was on a very cold afternoon is that I have a bad sore throat for which I have the Blackheath Hockey Club to thank.

If there is to me a game or match next Saturday or on Easter Monday do not send me a card as I decline to play any more

I remain
yours faithfully
P. Montagu Sampson

Minute of a Committee Meeting 24.2.1930:

The Captain of the First XI reported that Mr. Brewster the goalkeeper in the excitement of the match against Wimbledon had not behaved in a manner befitting the traditions of the Club. In that he had not kept his temper. The Captain of the First XI (Arthur Pasley) was deputed to speak to Mr. Brewster on this point and to obtain from him an apology for such behaviour otherwise the Committee felt they would have to ask Mr. Brewster to resign

signed off by R.Keller

The Vice-Captain reported at the following Meeting that Mr Brewster had apologised and it was decided to take no further action

Notoriety

MONTAGUE JOHN DRUIT (1857-1888)
Member of Blackheath Hockey Club
from 1881
Suspected of being Jack The Ripper

Montague John Druitt was born in Wimborne, Dorset on 15th August 1857. He seems to have been bright, able and articulate, and won a scholarship to Winchester College. Subsequently he gained another scholarship, in 1876, to read Classics at New College, Oxford. When he left the university, he came, in 1881, to teach at a small, privately owned school at 9, Eliot Place, Blackheath (very near *The Hare and Billet*.) There were in fact several schools in Eliot Place at the time. The particular one that Druitt joined was officially called Eliot Place School, but was more commonly known as Mr Valentine's School, after the Headmaster who ran the school successfully for 20 years (1873-93).



The school had about 40 pupils, all boys and all boarders, and 3 members of staff. Eliot Place School was not the same school as the Blackheath Proprietary School that supplied the old boys who founded Blackheath in its early days. Montague John Druitt was a keen sportsman, and in the autumn of the year in which he took up his position at the school (1881), he joined Blackheath Hockey Club, which in those days played on the heath, being proposed for membership by George Valentine (the Headmaster of Eliot Place School) and seconded by George Lacey, the other master. He is believed to have committed suicide in the Autumn of 1888 after losing his position at Eliot Place School.

The reasons he became suspected of being The Ripper are largely circumstantial: as a sportsman, he appears to have had formidable strength in his arms and wrists (he was also a good cricketer); he had medical knowledge - his father was a leading surgeon in Dorset; His mother suffered from mental illness; there was a family history of insanity and suicide; and he himself was known to have had psychological difficulties.

His father died in 1885; his mother was committed in July 1888; and The Whitechapel murders all took place soon after these events, from 31st August to the 9th November 1888, when they ended abruptly. Druitt's body was found in the Thames on 31st December 1888, having been in the water for a month or more.

Subsequent examination of his movements at the time of the killings have shown that it would have been very difficult for him to have committed them, although at the time of the murders Assistant Chief Constable Sir Melville MacNaghten had Druitt high on his list of suspects.

Legends of Blackheath H.C.

ROY KELLER M.C. - Life Member

Joe Halliwell's Obituary

Roy Keller joined Blackheath Hockey Club in the season 1925-6 and died on 25th March 1972, at the end of his 46th season – he would not have wanted to go in the middle of a season. In 1925 he immediately went into the 1st XI, a left-back of outstanding ability and selected for Kent County for many seasons. When his 1st XI days were over he happily moved down the XIs to the 5th XI. Not only for the sake of a game but to know and encourage the younger players. He never claimed to be a 'coach' but he was an excellent judge of a player and a knowledgeable and fair critic of the game. For more than 20 years, with the enthusiastic help of Esme his wife, Roy was the Teams Secretary and he succeeded in making the 1st XI, to use his phrase, "the shop window of the Club". Roy was known and loved not only in Blackheath but in all the London and Kent Clubs and it would be no exaggeration to say that he carried the banner of Blackheath wherever he went. For many years Roy rendered great service to Kent, his county, and he was overjoyed when he was made President in 1967-70. During these years he visited and introduced himself to the members of the 74 Clubs in the County. He held office as Chairman of The London Hockey Circle for 22 years. His lovable, inimitable style was an entertainment in itself and created an atmosphere of good fellowship.

As his daughter, Dawn, said – Roy was a man who could say "I've had a good life". He had a tremendous zest for enjoying every moment of it. He was Blackheath, jealous of its reputation, jubilant in its long history, leader of its social life – a character, a personality with a wonderful sense of humour.

We hold his memory dear in a game between the two teams for whom he devoted his life – Kent and Blackheath.

The extent of Roy's popularity can be judged by the fact that on Sunday 22nd October 1972 a memorial match was played at Rubens Street between Blackheath 1st XI and the full Kent side. Dickie Hollands of The Telegraph and Brian Lewis of The Times reported the match, describing Kent's narrow 1-0 victory over The Club for whom Couves was outstanding.

Roy won the Military Cross in the First War; he kept Blackheath going through the Second War and the difficult period afterwards when we had no regular ground, and a bombed out pavilion - to the relatively peaceful pastures of Rubens Street.

During his Kent Presidency although he didn't drive he visited every Club in Kent and there were twice as many then as there are now. I have a vivid picture of him rushing into the bar one Saturday evening gasping for a drink and threatening to expel the Club he had visited that day from the Kent Association because they didn't warn him that they hadn't got a bar. The most repeated Keller story is of John Robbins driving a carful of players back from Southgate and stopping in the middle of the Blackwall Tunnel for a pee – when they got back to Charlton there was one missing – Roy was still in the tunnel.

Roy was the founder of The Outcasts. In 1934 Blackheath received an invitation to send a team to the Worthing Easter Hockey Festival, a number of Members were keen to go but The Committee at the time decreed that as it would not be the full First XI, they would have to call themselves something other than Blackheath. The Club was also fairly well stocked with members of the clergy at the time, one of whom stated that if the team played on Easter Sunday they would be regarded as outcasts from The Club.

According to legend and Jimmy James, after one Saturday evening's revels, Roy was travelling home down the Old Kent Road on a number 10 tram, when he decided that 'Outcasts' was an excellent name for the festival team. Relieved at having solved this problem he dozed off to be woken at 3.00 am by the cleaning lady in the tram depot. Roy offered her the flowers he had bought as a peace offering for his wife Esme. The cleaning lady refused the flowers and ushered Roy on his way home to Charlton.



*Roy at Worthing late 1950s
Centenary Match Umpire 1961*



The practice of the early Outcast teams was always to select the Sunday side from those in the bar on a Saturday night. This has always resulted in a good mix from all sections of the Club. The team was seldom short, and sometimes had too many. Roy once enlisted the services of a Royal Artilleryman, who played in goal wearing a dark suit, bowler hat and pads, and smoked a cigar throughout the game. In the Thirties, the Outcasts regular Sunday lunchtime watering hole was The Crown on Blackheath.

I remember as a very young player one Easter, being swept in his wake into The Assembly Rooms at Worthing where he demanded loudly that the party should be shown to "Mr. Keller's Table".

Hung over one morning in The Brunswick at Worthing, Roy refused his kipper at breakfast despite the repeated insistence of Lillian the waitress of indeterminate years. Roy couldn't be persuaded but promised to eat it for his Dinner. That evening when the rest of the team was served with beef, Lillian presented Roy with his kipper – and he ate it.

At Thanet 1970, Roy was in the beer tent with Smiler Baker and missed his lift back to the hotel. While we were half way through lunch he appeared in the Dining Room and loudly declaimed "And all his disciples forsook him and fled – Matthew 26 verse 56". Next morning at breakfast he was explaining how the night before he hadn't climbed enough stairs and instead of going into his room on the 4th floor he had entered the room in a similar position on the 3rd floor and disturbed a lady in her nightie. Someone asked him the colour of her nightie, his immediate reply "same as her eyebrows".

On an end of season Coach trip to Cliftonville I was kitty master, whenever I went to the bar Roy was at my elbow "get me a drink and you can play for Kent" by the end of the evening Roy was *very* merry and I was Captain of the South.

Roy never drove or owned a car. He relied on public transport; other members; and various other sources for a lift home. Being an ex policeman the local constabulary would often drop him off at Charlton and he was not averse to thumbing a lift. On one occasion he got a lift in a car with a party who had been to the races. There were two bookies in the front and Roy found himself in the back between their ladies. They had not gone far when he found the ladies hands wandering in interesting areas, I asked him what had happened – he replied "I got home too bloody soon!"

His last weekend was typical Roy, The Club had a box at Lords for the end of season International, Roy was there and attended the H.A. Dinner that evening. He stayed at a London Hotel that night and presented himself at Eltham Well Hall station the following morning, as I was due to pick him up and take him to Canterbury who The Outcasts were playing on the Sunday. He had Steak and Kidney Pudding for lunch; demonstrated how to take a short corner with his walking stick during the knock up; joined in the evening revels including failing to hit the board with any of his darts and presented arms with his walking stick and two fingers when Ian Robertson and I dropped him off at Tankerton. He died the following week. His funeral was the Thursday before Easter - over 100 attended from Blackheath and Kent; we held a wonderful wake in The Sun in The Sands and set off for the Worthing Festival.

JOE HALLIWELL M.B.E. - Life Member, President 1962-1971

Joe Halliwell was one of the administrative pillars of Blackheath. He came to London in 1932 from Lancashire where he had been a member of Wigan H.C. for 12 years – 10 of them as Club Secretary. He joined Blackheath during the 1931/32 season, and ran the team which kept The Club going during the War Years; became Secretary in 1944 and President from 1963 until 1970. He was the organising force behind the Centenary Celebrations and established the 1861 Club to finance the Celebrations. He was heavily involved in the purchase of the Ground and with it the foundation of the Joint Club in 1959. Joe was one of the founder members of the Outcasts in 1934. This is one of the few pictures of him we have been able to find, taken during the Costume Match Celebrations at The Club in 1961.



Bill lived with his sister Betty and they were constant supporters at social events; overseas trips to Paris; and they made an annual visit to Worthing to support The Outcasts at Easter. He was Club Secretary for 9 years, and then took on the Presidency in 1971. From 1976 he resigned on an annual basis but we refused to consider anyone else until 1981 when he insisted it was someone else's turn. On retiring he took on the role of Site Manager for the building of the changing rooms, squash courts and groundsman's flat. Bill's interest in The Club was indeed lifelong and his example inspired us all, which is why his portrait has pride of place in the bar.

J. NICHOLSON SMITH

J Nicholson Smith was one of the great men of The Club at the end of the 19th Century and into the 20th. He played in the First XI, and was Captain from 1896-99. He was the driving force behind Blackheath joining the Hockey Association in 1894. He was one of the instigators in the foundation of The Kent County Hockey Association and was the first Secretary of The KCHA. He collected and preserved many of the Club Records and compiled Scrapbooks of Blackheath's activities while he was Chairman. He along with Robson were mainly responsible for the great strides that Blackheath made during this period, they developed the tactics and rules of the game and wrote the definitive text book on the History and skills of the game in 1899



Nicholson Smith in the 1st XI in 1895 and 1896

P.A. Robson in 1896 and 1937

P.A. ROBSON - Life Member

Phillip Robson was the other half of the driving force that raised Blackheath to prominence in the 1890s; managed progress up to the 1914-18 War and restarted The Club in 1925. In 1899 he and Nicholson Smith wrote "Hockey Historical and Practical" which is the principal source of information for the early years of hockey. Robson was still supporting The Club in the early 1950s.



ARTHUR PASLEY - Life Member

Arthur was another of the rare breed of outstanding and skilful players who also motivate and organise others. During the period from 1927 until 1952, he captained the First XI and Second XI as well as being Club Captain from 1934 until 1952. He promoted the Club's affairs and was instrumental in building up the strong fixture list that cemented The Club's place in the Hockey Establishment. When he retired and moved to Suffolk he maintained his interest in all things relating to Blackheath.



JOHN ROBBINS Life Member

John Robbins joined Blackheath Hockey Club in 1928, and captained the First XI from 1936 until 1954. In the years between 1928 and 1936 he scored 324 goals. He became Club Captain from 1952 to 1957. John was also one of the founding members of The Outcasts and was driving the car that left Roy Keller in the Blackwall Tunnel.

DOC HAYDON-JONES Life Member



The Doc
Blackheath 1st XI 1929/30

Doctor David Haydon-Jones – a very genial GP who joined in the 1920s and retired to Aberystwyth in 1965. During the years in between he enlivened life in the Club considerably. He was a regular in the 1st XI until the early 50s and then moved gracefully down the Club and ended his playing days in The Fifth XI. He was a class player with good stickwork and in his prime represented The East.

During the restricted 1939-45 war years Blackheath managed to run one side on the old Harvey's ground in Blackheath where the Club had built a pavilion. When this was bombed, The Doc provided changing accommodation at his house near the ground. On one occasion, Roy Keller was home on leave and visited the Doc in his surgery. The last of Doc's patients was a burly docker suffering more from depression than any physical ailment; The Doc's treatment was for the patient to join him and Roy at the local pub.

In 1965 - his last season – The Doc inspired a mighty 5th XI recovery against Wimbledon. The Fifts were 4-0 down at half-time and playing up hill on the little pitch The team rallied and won 5-4 to the cries of "up you go lads" as he galloped up behind the attacks. The same season he was emergency goal-keeper against Beckenham and stopped everything with his stick without ever using his pads or kickers.

He stopped everything within reach either side and this with an old English stick, and his positional play was so immaculate that he appeared to hypnotise forwards into running the ball onto his stick. His final appearance at the Club at the age of 84 was to help celebrate The Outcasts 50th Anniversary.



Paddy in typical pose chatting
up a barmaid and
Old Members Day 1998

PADDY SLOANE Life Member

David Sloane joined Blackheath in 1947. For a rugby player he was very good at hockey, and soon graduated to the First XI, which he captained. He was Club Captain from the late 50s until 1964 and anyone who joined at that time would have had their first drink provided by Paddy at The Practice Match. He was one of The Club's greatest ambassadors and raised Blackheath's profile throughout London Hockey. He was an Associate Member of the H.A. and helped in the organisation of The World Cup and The H.A. Centenary Celebrations in 1986. As Export Director for Belfast Ropes and subsequently British Ropes he was widely travelled and always seemed to be bumping into hockey acquaintances on his travels around the globe. He had a great line in abuse; after George Goldsmith had one of his more inept performances Paddy advised him "You came in my car but you're walking home". As time went on Paddy dropped down the Club and was a regular in the Veterans. When he reached 65, he retired to Bourton-on-the-Water but regularly attended Old Members Days and our Golf Matches. We held a Golf Day to mark his 80th Birthday and, as was his wont, he spurned a buggy and walked all 18 without effort. He died in 2004 aged 85.



ALBERT ANGEAR - Life Member

The term "Life Membership" is a perfect description of Albert. He was a Member for 68 years. His contribution was so much more than mere longevity. He played at the highest level, he was part of The Club's senior Management for many years, and he was at the heart of all the Club's social life.

Albert joined Blackheath in 1933 and was an ever-present in the First XI until 1959! He was a fit, classy inside right. He had a high level of skill and read the game perfectly. He was the sort of player who improved the game of all the rest of the team. Albert would have had no difficulty with today's game in fact he would have revelled in it as he would have loved the surface and been protected from some of the clogging full-backs that were around at the time. He was regularly selected for Kent and Wales, and held the Welsh record for the highest score in a match for many years, after putting 4 past Scotland. He then played down the Club until 1966, captaining the 3rd and Extra 3rd XIs until injury forced him into a much regretted early retirement, when he umpired for some years. Playing on the right wing with Albert inside was an absolute delight as he would draw opponents into him and then put a pass on the end of your stick.



He was always involved in Club Management, serving as Team Secretary and a Committee member until 1970.

Albert and Ella were completely involved in the social life at Blackheath, whether at The Club or on Tour. They were always part of the welcoming Committee that made new Members feel at home and many of us were invited back to the flat in Elliott Park for a sprat supper after a Saturday evening at the Club.

Albert was one of the original Outcasts, he was present at the Founding Dinner at The Cheshire Cheese in 1934, and regularly attended Worthing and Thanet Festivals.

Albert and Ella produced two more Club Members – Charles and James. With such parentage talent was bound to emerge and Charles played for the First XI for many years and for Kent and Wales.

Albert was in the car on the night Roy Keller finished up in The Blackwall Tunnel. Another notable occasion was one memorable wet Saturday in the 60s when all games were cancelled except the Fifth XI match against BICC. The Fifts were one short and Charles was drafted in while Albert umpired. The score was BICC 5, Fifth XI 0 Charles Angear 5.



DR. J.D. HARDWICK Life Member, President 1981-2004

It is one of the Blackheath Hockey Club legends that David, freshly arrived from Canada, turned up at Rubens Street with a pair of skates and asked where the ice was. In later years David was asked if this was true, to get the reply – "Let's not spoil a good story with the truth".

The truth is that David came over from Canada in late summer 1958 with an Athlone Fellowship to study for a doctorate in Civil Engineering at Imperial College. He lived in London House, Bloomsbury, an International Hall for Commonwealth students. There he met Michael Graham, Keith Driver, Tony Harben, and David Wright who were already members of BHC and they introduced him to grass hockey and the Club itself. He was appointed temporary lecturer in 1961, a post which was made permanent in 1964. He received his doctorate in 1969. In 1988 he became Senior Lecturer and Departmental Senior Tutor.

David was never one of the prettiest of hockey players, favouring a 'bite your legs' style which he displayed mostly in the 2nd XI. He was more than ready, and often would, run through a player to get to the ball – this would explain the tolerant nature of his subsequent umpiring career.

His first role was to organise our social life as Chairman of the Social Committee and he masterminded a series of dances, socials and 'at homes' which kept us entertained and boosted the Club's income.

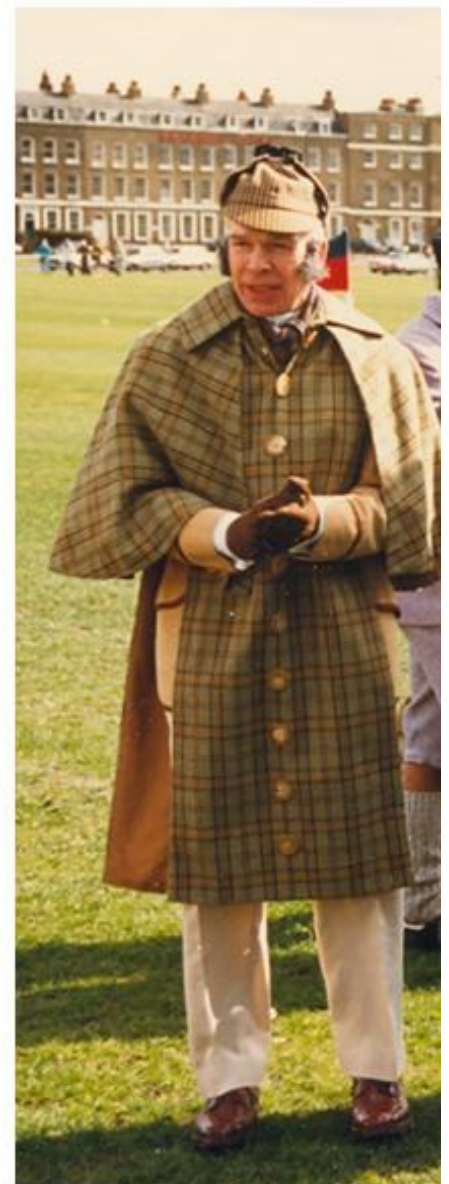
David married Alison on World Cup Final Day in 1966 and had a television installed so that the guests could watch a Russian linesman help us to win the Jules Rimet Cup. He was overjoyed to discover that his father-in law – Donald McDonald – was an ex-pupil of The Blackheath Preparatory School and owned the school bell which now graces our Trophy Cabinet.

In 1978 David took on the role of Club Captain which meant our Committee Meetings were shorter, better directed and infinitely more motivating and entertaining. In 1981 he ascended to the Presidency and was created a Life Member of The Club. He was an innovative President for 23 years, and his most inspired creation was our Old Member's Days. The Hardwick's would arrive; David with his red apron and Alison with a foil wrapped salmon and then direct their squad of helpers in feeding a host of old friends.

He gave up playing after suffering problems with his balance, and took up the whistle, mostly for The Heathens. He instituted The Umpire's "Apology Jug" which he took round to friend and foe alike after every game, to compensate for any errors of judgement he might have made during the game.

He was always generous in his encouragement and his praise, particularly to those who he considered had enriched the lives of others. To be classified as such by one of the greatest enrichers of all time was praise indeed. He took a genuine interest in everyone and was the first to welcome new members and make them feel at home.

David and Alison have always been great contributors and supporters of all Club events; a benevolent involvement that they extended to all aspects of their lives, particularly to St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church. The Club Auction is well remembered when David paid £35 for a wood carving of "Giraffe smelling offspring's bottom" and the following day, the same artifact was sold for £28 at the Church Sale of Work.



BRIAN BROWN Life Member

Brian joined the Club in the late 60s and died tragically early at the age of 53 in 1995. He was at the heart of the Club's affairs for nearly 30 years and during that time he held the offices of Team Secretary, 3rd XI Captain, Bar Manager, Joint Club Treasurer, Social Organiser and numerous other unrecorded roles. Brian's drive and enthusiasm were behind every facet of Club life.

When The Club's finances were under threat it was Brian who organised the whip round. At Club socials it would be Brian organising the tote or the kitchen; and appearing in the cabaret dressed as a chicken or one of the Three Degrees. When the Membership of The Squash Section dwindled, Brian took on the Chairmanship and helped rebuild The Club. When Blackheath went on tour to Barbados, Brian organised the trip.

However, Brian's greatest legacy will be his work as Joint Club Treasurer for the last 7 years of his life. In this position he established the Club on the soundest financial footing of its existence and built up the surplus that financed the rebuilding of the Pavilion and the extension to the bar.

As a player Brian always gave total commitment. Not noted for excessive subtlety he contested every tackle for 70 minutes. In his last match he came on as a sub in the second half of Blackheath's Kent Veteran's Cup-Final triumph over Bromley. He played for about quarter of an hour and was in agony from his back for every minute. When asked why he hadn't subbed himself off, his comment was "*no bloody fear*". This attitude typified all Brian's appearances for The Club, The Outcasts and every aspect of his life. Tragically, he died of cancer in June 1995 after over 25 years outstanding service to Blackheath H.C.



This concludes my very subjective record of an organisation that has been a major part of my life for 47 years. Through "The Club" I have made lifelong friendships with a disparate collection of individuals of a wide variety of age, nationality, ability and circumstance. Whether king or commoner everyone's equal when they pull on the Blackheath shirt.

*It should be realised that items marked with an asterisk on Page 2 are intended as anachronistic attempts at humour and not historical fact.



The Three Ages of Man – Blackheath style

Roll of Honour

Presidents

1861-1866	Colonel Hillyard
1866-1871	James Terry
1871-1874	Rev. E.A. Claydon
1875-1885	Wickham-Noakes
1886-1888	W.H.M. Christie
1889-	G. Valentine
1895-1908	Richard Winch
-	P.A. Robson
1926-1939	Stanley Christopherson
1947-1962	Sir Leslie Hollis K.C.B. K.B.E.
1962-1971	J.F.S. Halliwell M.B.E.
1971-1981	A.W. King M.B.E.
1981-2004	Dr. J.D. Hardwick
2004-2007	A.J. Harrington
2008-	S. W. Miller

Club Captains

1896-1899	J. Nicholson-Smith
1902	H.J. Yeomans
1905	H.M. Tennant
-1914	P.A. Robson
1925-1933	Rev. Canon F.H. Gillingham
1934-1952	A.D.S. Pasley
1952-1957	H.J. Robins
1957-1965	D. Sloane
1965-1967	J.C. Barlow
1967-1971	P.D. Clarke
1971-1978	J.S. Breen
1978-1981	J.D. Hardwick
1981-1987	A.J. Harrington
1987-1991	J.R. Bartlett
1991-1994	C.G. Couves
1994/95	D. Cant
1995-2000	J.R. Bartlett
2000-2008	S. Miller
2008-2011	A.R.A. Bartlett
2011-	M. Wilde

Life Members

1951	P.A. Robson
1951	A.D.S. Pasley
1954	H.J. Robins
1954	R.K. Keller M.C.
1958	J.F.S. Halliwell M.B.E.
1961	A. Angear
1963	Dr. D. Haydn-Jones M.D.
1968	D. Sloane
1970	A.W. King M.B.E.
1974	R.G. Purnell D.F.C. D.F.M.
1980	A.J. Harrington
1981	Dr. J.D. Hardwick
1985	H.S. Clarke
1985	R.B. Dawbarn
1987	J.R. Bartlett
1987	B.K. Brown
1987	A.D. Maltman
1991	D. Brown
1994	C.G. Couves
1999	R. Cleall
2007	S. W. Miller
2011	A.R.A. Bartlett