

The 1890 Club Newsletter
Autumn 2001.

Dear member,

I write as the 1890 Club enters its first full season. The Club, so named because it represents the first recorded Varsity Match between the universities, has started very well with comfortably over 100 members; the full list can be found on the enclosed sheet. In our first nine months, we have held the inaugural Club dinner and supported the Varsity Match. We have also played men's and mixed hockey matches, as well as holding the Club's first golf day. I hope that you agree that this represents a promising start and offers a firm foundation from which to expand the Club.

The first event was the 1890 Club Dinner on Saturday 3rd March, organised by Sophie Rooker and Oliver Brew at Legend's Club in Old Burlington Street, and was attended by just over 50 members. A three course meal was enjoyed by all as acquaintances were renewed and Varsity Match stories relived. After the meal, memories turned more to the Varsity Match Dinner as the more active members ventured onto the dance floor. The chance to meet up with both teammates and opponents was very welcome, and the sense of camaraderie throughout the evening showed the exciting potential of such dinners.

The Varsity Match on Tuesday 6th March was preceded by the Old Blues Match, an established part of the day for over ten years and a major factor in the formation of the Club. Attack and flair were the watchwords for the day in the two sides organised by Trevor Castledine and Andy Grimes respectively from the vintage of 1991. Oxford won an expansive encounter 6-5, but allegedly only because of the late drafting of a couple of Oxford players who had barely entered secondary school at the time of the original fixture. The players were joined by other 1890 members for lunch at the National Hockey Stadium before watching Cambridge's successes in the men's and women's matches. Next year's Old Blues men's vintage will be from the mid-1980's vintage, and it is hoped that the Club will soon have generated enough interest for the first Old Blues women's match.

The first 1890 Golf Day was organised by Trevor Castledine and attended by 14 members at Nizel's Club in Kent on Wednesday 31st May. Coffee and bacon sandwiches prepared the players for the 18-hole stableford competition, in which it became clear how some members have used their time since hanging up their sticks (and how others, including the writer, have not been spending their time!). After a delicious barbeque lunch, all were rewarded thanks to the donation of prizes by Shell and Ferrari, and the organiser's attention to detail was rewarded by his own finishing position high up the winner's table.

Three summer hockey matches were held at the Battersea Park Astroturf. On Thursday, 21st June, two 1890 men's sides played the Travellers: one for under-30s, organised by Toby Griffiths, and one for over-30s, drawn together by Chris Lawless who is already emerging as club stalwart! The standard of hockey was high in both games with some pleasingly slick teamwork from the two 1890 sides. The senior side won 5-2 and the young blades sneaked a 5-4 win in the under-30s match against a Travellers side full of National League players. All four sides retired to the Settle Inn a couple of minutes from the ground for a post-match meal and refreshment; there was much Travellers talk of a rematch after such a successful evening for our club and we look forward to next year's fixture.

On Wednesday, 18th July an Oxford versus Cambridge mixed match took place at Battersea Park. The Cambridge side contained players who were more familiar with each other's play than the Oxford side and the greater level of teamwork proved crucial in their 6-3 win (thus speaks an Oxford man making excuses!).

There are several exciting sporting possibilities to add to the events already organised which include: Oxford versus Cambridge hockey matches for men as well as Oxbridge sides against other opposition; 1890 Club fixtures against the two universities; 1890 Club women's matches; and an 1890 Club Oxford versus Cambridge golf match. On the social side, it is expected that drinks parties will be added to the annual dinner, and the first big five-year dinner will be in 2005. The list of upcoming events is given below. There are also plans for an 1890 Club website to enable members to stay in touch and, finally, designs for The 1890 Club logo and tie are close to completion, whilst options for a female equivalent are still being considered; suggestions are welcome!

It is the Committee's firm hope that the Club is shaped by the wishes of its members so please contact me with ideas for events. In particular, the Committee is aware that it is primarily composed of people based in the south-east in their late twenties or early thirties and is very keen that all members are involved in the decision-making process; please contact me at the address below if think you can help. As a key function of the Club is to act as an umbrella organisation to enable Oxbridge hockey players of both sexes to meet up with their contemporaries and people from different vintages, I think a priority is to broaden the membership base. To that end, may I recommend that you look at the list of current members and persuade former team-mates, who would enjoy the Club but who have not yet joined, to contact the relevant membership secretary for details?

I thank you for your continuing support and look forward to seeing you at an 1890 event in the coming year. Also, I will send another letter when fuller details of the 2002 programme become available.

Yours,

Steffan Griffiths

UPCOMING EVENTS – PUT THEM IN YOUR DIARY!

Thursday, 18th October 7.00pm – 9.00pm: All members are invited to a drinks reception to welcome new members to the Club at Kettner's restaurant, 29 Romilly Street, London, W1V 6HP

Saturday, 2nd March: The 1890 Club Annual Dinner. Details to follow.

Tuesday, 5th March: The Varsity Matches at Milton Keynes, preceded by the Old Blues Match formed from the vintage of 1985.

May: Golf Day at Nizels Golf Club.

June/July: summer hockey fixtures in London, Oxford and Cambridge.