

Ipswich - East Suffolk Hockey Club

http://www.ieshc.org
Associate Member Club of Rushmere Sports Club Ltd.



Annual Report for 2001 / 2002

Editorial:

The Club achieved a good deal of success during 2001/2002 apart from relegation for the Mens 1st X1 from East Premier 'A'. The Ladies 1st X1 came third in East Div 2S after promotion and the Mens 6ths were promoted for the second successive season.

<Continued after the results table>.

IES - Summary of match statistics for games listed in the Fixtures Card 2001/2002

Squad (X1)		<u>Played</u>	<u>Won</u>	<u>Drawn</u>	<u>Lost</u>	<u>Goals For</u>	<u>Goals Ag'st</u>	<u>% Success</u>	<u>League Position</u>
Mens 1st	League	22	4	2	16	38	66	22.7	11 (12) R
	Friendly	6	0	2	4	9	20	16.7	
	Total	28	4	4	20	47	86	21.4	
Ladies 1st	League	18	10	3	5	43	33	63.9	3 (10)
	Friendly	7	5	0	2	19	8	71.4	
	Total	25	15	3	7	62	41	66.0	
Mens 2nd	League	22	11	3	8	57	43	56.8	5 (12)
	Friendly	5	0	1	4	5	17	10.0	
	Total	27	11	4	12	62	60	48.1	
Ladies 2nd	League	26	10	7	9	54	42	51.9	8 (14)
	Friendly	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	
	Total	26	10	7	9	54	42	51.9	
Mens 3rd	League	22	7	5	10	38	41	43.2	7 (12)
	Friendly	5	2	2	1	14	12	60.0	
	Total	27	9	7	11	52	53	46.3	
Ladies 3rd	League	26	17	4	5	96	19	73.1	3 (14)
	Friendly	1	1	0	0	6	1	100.0	
	Total	27	18	4	5	102	20	74.1	
Mens 4th	League	22	9	5	8	64	40	52.3	6 (12)
	Friendly	4	2	0	2	8	12	50.0	
	Total	26	11	5	10	72	52	51.9	
Mens 5th	League	16	7	1	8	35	42	46.9	6 (10)
	Friendly	6	2	2	2	13	17	50.0	
	Total	22	9	3	10	48	59	47.7	
Mens 6th	League	18	11	3	4	66	20	69.4	2 (10) P
	Friendly	9	2	2	5	13	23	33.3	
	Total	27	13	5	9	79	43	57.4	
Mixed X1	Friendly	6	2	3	1	16	13	58.3	n/a
Totals		241	102	45	94	594	469	51.7	n/a

(Note that the above data excludes the cup/trophy, tournaments and 'extra' mid-week Mixed Friendlies and Mens 5ths includes 2 deleted results following East London 3rd removal from the League).

<Editorial continued from above the results table>

Our other league teams all competed well to achieve mid-table positions with the Ladies 1sts and Mens 2nds respectively 3rd and 5th after promotion. We won the Suffolk County Mens Indoor Cup and the Harleston Mens Veterans Tournament. No fewer than 8 of our people were part of Suffolk's victory in the East Mens County Championships tournament.

We continue to build excellent relationships with Rushmere Sports Club - grateful thanks are due to Sonia Smith (for the Teas), Roger Osborn and others. Ongoing sponsorship from GAH Heating (formerly 'Thermecon') continued to provide funds for additional training resources. Off the pitch it is worth recording that IES again provided a considerable part of the Suffolk HA's management including Secretary (Avril Adams), Mens Treasurer & Handbook Editor (Chris Hatch), Ladies League Secretary and Web Site Manager (Dawn Claxton), Mens U-21 Manager, East League Rep & Indoor League committee. (John Adams), Mens U-21 Coach (David Taylor), Schools & Youth Treasurer (Ian Watson) and Boys U-13 and U-14 Manager (David Walsh). No other Suffolk club comes remotely near this level of commitment to organising the sport in and around our County. Charlie Farrow has become the East Hockey Regional Development Manager – a professional position supporting our sport throughout the region.

The Club would again like to acknowledge with thanks the work done by Suffolk HA President Brian Perks to run the Indoor League & Cups throughout the season at Rushmere. We entered four squads in total and enjoyed both playing in the competitions and a good deal of success in them.

The Club's social & fundraising programme was perhaps not as successful as in recent years. However, the events put on were enjoyable and of considerable financial benefit to the club. Avril Adams is, once again, thanked for the considerable effort put into leading this activity.

Our youth coaching programme again proved highly popular and of enormous importance to the long term future of the Club and for which the Youth sub-committee and coaches under the leadership of Charlie Farrow deserve special recognition and thanks.

EHA Mens Cup & Ladies Vase. Summary of results

Competition	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	GF	GA	Venues
Men, EHA Cup	2	1	0	1	5	8	1 Home + 1 Away
Ladies, EHA Cup	3	2	0	1	3	7	1 Home + 2 Away
Totals	5	3	0	2	8	15	

Outdoor Tournament & Indoor competition results during 2001/02 (to semi-finals or better):-

Ladies	Runners-up, Suffolk Indoor League (L 'A'); Runners-up, Suffolk Indoor League Cup (L 'A');
Men	Winners, Suffolk Indoor League Cup (Mens 'B'); Runners-up, Suffolk County (Outdoor) Cup, and Runners-up, Suffolk Indoor League (Mens 'A');
Veterans	Winners, Harleston Veterans Tournament;
Boys U-14	
Boys U-13	

Representative Honours during 2001/02

England U-16 Squad	George Pinner
England Men Over-60 Squad	John Taylor
Suffolk Men Senior X1 Squad	Charlie Farrow, Danny Mayhew, Stuart Gooderham, Geoffrey Reed, David Taylor, Matt Walker, Guy Marshlain, Matt Gardner. Manager: Chris Hatch
Suffolk Men U-21 X1 Squad	Will Fulker, Marc Lloyd, Simon Rose, Graham Bendall, Geoff Reed, Alex Borwick, Ian Swallow, Tim Caston Manager, John Adams; Coach, David Taylor
Other Suffolk or East Junior Squads	Tim Fletcher, Tom Parry, Stephen Peck (U-16); David Messant (U-15) Eddie Day, James Hughes, James Howe, Michael Tomiak (U-14) Jamie Pinner (U-13); Josh Godfrey, Jack Hinshelwood, Max Underwood (U-11); Hannah Golding (Girls U-17)

News from the Annual General Meeting on 14th May 2002

The following elections were made at the AGM (or by subsequent committee appointment):
President, John Taylor; Chairman, John Adams; Secretary, Sue Stenson;
Business Manager, Men's Team Secretary, Astro Pitch Liaison & Umpire Appointments Officer, Chris Hatch;
Club Promotions Officers, Guy Marshlain;
Social Secretary, Mandy Minter; Youth Committee, Charlie Farrow, Stephanie Cook, David Walsh, Claire Pearsons, Mandy Minter.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Ladies</u>
1st X1 Captain/Secretary	Charles Farrow / Danny Mayhew	Fran Popleton/ Janis Taylor
2nd X1 Captain/ Secretary	<i>To be advised</i>	<i>To be advised</i>
3rd X1 Captain/ Secretary	Danny Cripps / David Walsh	Dawn Claxton / Gill Burch
4th X1 Captain/ Secretary/	John Pope, John Bentley	
5th X1 Captain/Secretary	John Wright, Jon Oakley	
6th X1 Captain/ Secretary	Chris Hatch, Ray Black	
Mixed X1 Captain / Secretary		
Indoor League Captain 'A', 'B'	Andrew Keedle / Paul Read	Mel Maguire / Liz Marshlain
Fixtures Secretary	Peter Blake	Jaq Gooderham
Press Officer	Charles Farrow	Maria Whelan
County liaison	Chris Hatch	N/a
Communications Officer		Mandy Minter
Web Site Manager	Andrew Keedle	

Other Matters reported on at the AGM:-

(i) Chairman's Report (adapted from a letter to club members by John Adams);

During the last season and a half it has become very clear that there is an air of complacency around the club. The decision to move away from Chantry Park to Rushmere, was not a difficult one because the grass pitches had run their course and the new facilities had no comparison. The move provided the club with a fresh impetus' the sociable and friendly atmosphere boosting the hockey on the pitch. It was fun for everybody including those people who give so much time to ensure that the hockey happens. But I believe the move has also had its downside because we have not had to put out goals, run a bar, make sandwiches etc and this has been reflected in a belief that the hockey and club infrastructure runs itself. Most social functions have not been well attended during last season with the exception of the best support for our Annual Dinner in many years. Also, the recent AGM was the worst attended for years.

In short, it has become increasingly difficult in the last two seasons to fill all the committee posts to provide the hockey for our 150 members and all the youngsters on our books. The 'willing few' have expressed frustration that we clearly need more volunteers to come forward and take their due turn. Please take this point on board – the future organisation and sustainability of the club depends on it!

On a positive note, we can reflect that the club has gone from strength to strength over its 16 years history. It has been gradual and proven to be sustainable so far. Membership numbers have slowly increased and the Mens 1st X1 have worked their way up from modest league status to the top, although for the coming season we will be in Premier B. The rest of the Mens teams have also progressed up the league structure since divisions for all teams became available. The Ladies 1st X1 is now playing in the East League and has made a highly creditable impact. The junior section is the envy of many clubs and provides us with great public credibility. In general, great strides have been made in the last 10 years or so but it is clear that new momentum needs to be created to avoid things going backwards. So, the message is that it is good but it could be better and that very much depends on YOU offering some of your time and expertise as well as your subscriptions and your skills on the pitch.

(ii) Business Manager's Report (Chris Hatch);

At the end of our 4th season after moving to Rushmere Sports Club, it is a pleasure to report that we have continued to pay our way and look forward to the future in an adequate financial position although much remains to be done if we are ever to come near financing an astro at Rushmere and there is no room for slack or complacency. Please make every effort to pay subscriptions and match fees promptly and support the excellent Social & Fundraising programme. Despite an unexpected affiliation fees levy for the EHA, it has proven possible to avoid any increases in Subscription or Match fees for the 2002/03 season (although a penalty has been endorsed for 'late payment of

Subs).

(iii) Social & Fundraising Report (Editor's report);

Grateful thanks once again are due to Avril Adams for leading the Club social and fundraising activities. The programme got off to a good start with a Mexican Night in September, organised by Mandy Minter and Avril, resulting in a £230 profit for the Club and a convivial evening of music, food and good company at Rushmere. The by-now traditional Craft Fayre was organised by Sue Stenson and Avril in November. This brought in some £665 to the Club and was fairly well supported by the public and a good cross-section of our members but there was certainly room for more to come through the doors on the day. The Christmas Party Karaoke evening did struggle for numbers and perhaps that form of self-help entertainment has run its course. To close the season, the Annual Dinner Dance & Awards, organised by Avril and John Adams, was probably the most successful in terms of numbers, atmosphere and guest tables that we have had for years. Mandy Minter has taken over the mantle of Social Sec for 2002/03 – and it's so important that she gets all the help and support needed to really move forward again on our social programme.

(iv) Youth Coaching Report (Editor's report);

Very briefly, much was achieved in terms of providing coaching and playing opportunities for our 'army' of youngsters on the youth coaching list, which now numbers some 96 boys and girls. Charles Farrow again spearheaded the programme and was supported by a varied group of the Club's coaches on Wednesday evenings and when matches or tournaments were played, usually on Sundays or weekday evenings. The impressive progress and commitment was the foundation of the Club's successful application for an 'Awards for All' grant, which will help to finance coach education and related skills development during the next year.

(v) Umpires and Umpiring Report (Chris Hatch);

For the record, the Mens 1st X1 Premier 'A' league matches were umpired by ECHUA appointees whilst the Mens 1st X1 friendlies and most of the seconds games and were umpired by members of the SCHUA. Ladies 1st X1 East League games were umpired by the Suffolk neutral pool. The Club is grateful to these three organisations for this essential contribution. Ladies 2nd, 3rd and Men's 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th X1 games were umpired by Club appointees. For our official Saturday and Sunday programme, 6 or more games were umpired by Chris Hatch (34 games), Nigel Munson (19), John Bendall (17), John Pope (12), Ian Reed (11), Danny Cripps (9), John Wright (8), John Adams (7), Jon Oakley (7), Steve de Boltz (7), Anne Edney (6). Fourteen others umpired 31 games between them.

Sixteen of the Club's 23 'Level 1' Umpires contributed to the total effort but the other 7 were inactive. It is 18 months since any club member completed the Level 1 qualification process and this is extremely disappointing. All members are encouraged to acquire formal umpiring qualifications – our sport is requiring more pool umpire appointees and we simply must get more qualified and willing umpires in the club. There is no option if we want to continue playing. Chris Hatch will again act as the Club's non-pool umpire appointments coordinator for the coming season.

End of Season Team Reports: (2001/2002)

Mens 1st X1 (Charlie Farrow);

“Relegated but many plus points”

After three seasons in the East's top flight division the first team return to Premier B next season after finishing the season eleventh out of twelve. Colin Mannell a key player for the two years, left the area and was to be badly missed, whilst on the arrivals front Matt Walker joined from Felixstowe, Matt Gardiner a promising young defender and Gavin Cole previously of Harleston Magpies were other new faces. Pre-season saw some encouraging performances against three sides with National League experience in Ipswich, Harleston and Bromley.

The league programme started at home to Bishops Stortford and a wonderful game ended in a 3 /3 draw, and despite a heavy defeat at Cambridge City a big win 5-1 over Long Sutton gave reason to be optimistic. This feeling was further enhanced with a wonderful win in the EHA Cup at Crostyx, but this like the early season promise proved be a false dawn. A long sequence of defeats was to follow and the run in to Christmas become a depressing sequence of missed opportunities and defeats by the odd goal. An away point at Colchester was a pre Christmas boast, but the team squad were aware that we would have to improve after Christmas to survive.

January arrived with a second defeat to Cambs City with Marc Lloyd making a promising debut in goal before an crucial win over Long Sutton away 3-2. John Kirton had joined the Squad as part time coach offering some fresh ideas and started to change the way the team played. The IES system since arrival in Premier A had been based on good defence but a lack of goals had always been a problem. A more attacking 4,3,3 was introduced and slowly the players warmed to the system and despite not turning this into points IES were now playing some attractive Hockey. Despite this improvement defeats at home to Broxbourne and away at Chelmsford left IES facing the drop, but the following week saw the performance and the result of the season. Cambridge University were beaten 2-1 the first success over the students for the club and thoughts of survival were again mooted.

In losing the next match at Champions to be Harleston IES again played some great Hockey winning many admirers among the large home crowd. Sadly the next match with Clacton was abandoned due to snow when IES looked in the mood. Colchester were comfortably beaten two weeks later leaving IES two rearranged games with relegation rivals Bedford and Clacton. Both of these sadly, were lost with the IES side seemingly restrained by the fear of defeat. On reflection the team was not at their best for much of the season and losing twice to both Clacton and Bedford were critical. Martin and John Reader two key players barely played and others key men did not perform when needed. However on the positive side the squad is a much younger than at any time in the recent past and many young players are knocking on the door. If the same attractive Hockey can be played in a more relaxed manner next season the future still looks bright.

Thanks to Dave Taylor for all his hard work as manager and to all the boys for never giving up.

Ladies 1st X1 (Editor's report);

At last, promotion from the Suffolk League to the East League meant new challenges, oppositions, distant Away games and a chance for our best players to be stretched to having to play at their best on a week to week basis. Following some steady performances in early season friendlies, the League got off to the best possible start with a 3 – 2 win over Burnt Ash. Although losing to Colchester, momentum was retained with wins over Berkhamstead and Crostyx (who were the eventual league winners). A 5 – 4 epic victory over arch-rivals Ipswich 3rd and further wins over Hertford and Burnt Ash (again) kept IES in contention for league honours at the mid-season break. Some friendlies and some postponements and cancellations meant it was February before further league progress was made but a 7 – 0 thrashing of Chess Valley followed by wins against Hertford and later against Maidstone and Berkhamstead meant that IES were always amongst the leading clubs. However, three losses in the latter stages against Ipswich 3rd, Crostyx and Bromley, meant a slight falling off the pace and an eventual 3rd place in the league. The ten wins from eighteen league games was a great credit to the commitment and hard work of the squad and its management (especially coach, John Adams). Perhaps the infrequent availability of captain Steph Cook (due to training for a new career) in the second half of the season was a factor which contributed to not quite being able to win the league. However, Fran Poppleton stepped in as acting captain when required and will be captain for the new season, when the goal will be to build on a highly creditable first season in the East League.

Mens 2nd X1 (Guy Whiting);

Promotion three years running with consecutive championships. No way was Div 2 N going to be as easy. Eight weeks, eight points and five yellow cards later, our worst thoughts were confirmed !. Worse still was to come the next week. One down within 2 minutes against league leaders Norwich Union but at that point the season changed. Two from Pete Elsom and a scorcher from Sam Gibson heralded eight straight wins including 12-0 against Royston. We weren't stopped until February by the eventual league winners, Shefford & Sandy. Notwithstanding this, we still had a chance of winning the league on the penultimate week of the season. Ultimately it wasn't to be, but we still achieved an excellent 5th place. As for individuals, Simon Rose was the well deserved players' player of the season with Graham Bendall a close second. The excellent (but taken for granted !) performances of Kevin Day have to be acknowledged, as do the 17 goals in 16 games from Pete Elsom.

As for the spirit of the squad it was excellent and my thanks are due to everyone who played for the team at whatever stage. I echo the sentiments of my predecessor in that you couldn't wish for a nicer bunch of guys with whom to spend a Saturday afternoon.

As for next season, no excuses !. There are only 2 teams we didn't beat and Div 1 hockey is there for the taking if the squad really want it !.

Ladies 2nd X1 (Editor's report);

Slightly unusually, the Ladies 2nds season comprised 26 league games and not a single friendly – such was the size and duration of the Suffolk Ladies Premier Division. Mandy Minter and Mel Maguire captained and managed a side which quickly settled in terms of regular selections but took a few games to make a significant impact on the league table. However, concerns about struggling were soon put aside as wins over Harwich, Southwold, Orwell 2nds and Bury 3rds moved the side into a mid-table position by the Christmas break. The fact that we were competitive was underlined by a good draw with Bury 2nds and just a 2 – 1 loss to eventual champions Carlton Park 1st.

In the New Year the side consolidated an upper mid-table position with excellent wins over Christchurch 1sts, Harwich, Southwold, Bury 2nds and 3rds, Hadleigh, Orwell 2nds and Felixstowe 1sts although defeats came at the hands of Carlton Park 1sts, Sudbury 1sts and Lowestoft 1sts. The Carlton Park (home) game was marred by a dispute over the necessity of finishing the game in a gale and (another) broken finger for Mel, defending after the award of a dubious short corner.

Altogether, an outturn of 10 wins, 7 draws and 9 losses with a positive goal difference of +12 was a credit to the side and showed that we had one of the best 2nd X1's in Suffolk ladies hockey.

Mens 3rd X1 (Richard Adams);

Another good and competitive season by the 3rd XI, resulting in a mid table finish at the end of the season. Each and every game was competitive and had goals been nipped, or the odd shot gone wide, we would have been challenging for top honours this season. After a poor start to the season, the team fought hard for each other and carved out a fine series of results before and after Christmas. Highlights included a 3-0 away victory against top of table Colchester, and a very hard fought 2-1 home victory against Crostyx.

The player of the season was Marc Lloyd between the posts, who handled each situation with maturity beyond his years – let's hope that he can continue this off the field too! Many other players came of age this season - Alex Borwick had a fine season, Charles Coulson was a rock in defence, the Harris lads both showed promise for the future and James Klug played very well in front of goal and formed a highly effective partnership with Ducky.

We were blighted by injury early in the season, with Darren Clarke being struck down by a snow boarder – I suspect foul play by Ipswich Hockey Club. Missed for his agility and speed around the pitch, this also had a significant impact on the average age of the team. Against Saffron Walden, I won't embarrass myself, but I was the old man of the team by well over 10 years!!! I would like to extend my thanks to the older players in the team, including Jaffa, Ducky, James Taylor, Simon Martin, Matt Lowe and latterly Andy Keedle for their help and support throughout the season. Also to all those occasional players who helped out during a difficult season for availability. Final mention must go to Ducky for knocking the hat off the Crane's keeper during a very competitive pre-Christmas match!

I will be looking forward to a successful 2002/3 season and feel that there is a real chance of promotion. Whilst I will be stepping aside as Captain, I will be as keen as ever to ensure that nothing gets by me at the back!

Ladies 3rd X1 (Anne Edney);

It has been a very successful season for the 3rd Eleven. This can be attributed to the hard work and dedication that everyone has shown. We have had a consistent team all year and have gone from strength to strength. We started the year off positively with some very pleasing results and were deservedly up in the promotion zone. Having only lost two games (one on grass) before the Christmas break we were flying, having had some emphatic wins, several of which were in double figures. However, after Christmas we had a poor spell which started with an unforgettable game on grass at Stour Valley, which we lost 2-0. We then played several of the better teams in the league and unfortunately more disappointing results followed. This took us out of the promotion zone and adrift from the top two.

As motivated as ever and always looking for that next goal, we managed to get it back together and finished the season as we had started with some excellent results. This left us comfortably in 3rd place in the league at the close of the season. Several players had a particularly successful season, with Laura Collinson scoring a hatful of goals on several occasions; Sue Nunn and Claire McBride were also very influential in midfield. Both junior players in the team continued to play well and Helen Cook made noticeable progress as the season progressed.

Our season is a tribute to the positive attitude, excellent team work and fun-loving approach of everyone in the 3rd eleven.

Mens 4th X1 (Editor's report);

Neil Slade succeeded David Walsh as captain and lead the 4ths through a satisfactory season in Div 7SE, one in which the side always hovered around mid-table. Mixed success during the early season friendlies and a first league game loss at home to Waltham Forest 2nds did not make for the most auspicious of starts. This was soon overcome as the side began to settle and wins over Sudbury 3rds, Braintree 3rds, Upminster 3rds and Saffron Walden 3rds (an 11 – 1 thrashing) along with several draws, meant the side had collected points in 9 out of 12 games by Christmas. League status was virtually ensured after further wins over Sudbury 3rds and Braintree 3rds by the end of January. Losses in February and March to Old Southendian 4ths, Dunmow 2nds, Upminster 3rds, Witham 3rds and Saffron Walden 3rds meant that the promotion places were never really attainable but further wins over Romford 3rds and Redbridge 3rds meant a 6th place finish out of 12 and an impressive goal difference of +24.

In all the side benefited from an effective mixture of youth and experience. Duncan Vaughan in goal, Graham Ramsden, John Bentley, Stephen Peck, Tim Fletcher, Ian Harris and Duncan Harris were prominent amongst the defenders whilst Neil Slade, David Walsh, Matt Crane, Danny Cripps, John Pope and Tony Elsom scored most of the goals. Several of the younger players will be expected to progress to the Club's higher sides in the 02/03 season and this competitive season in Div 7 has certainly provided a good basis for such progression.

Mens 5th X1 (John Wright);

From the start of the season the team possessed the potential to do well with a squad exhibiting both experience and youthful enthusiasm. However, the first clutch of games did not produce this promise. It took some time for the squad to settle but with a scratch squad travelling to Old Southendians a high point was to come! An extremely fierce fought game ensued and despite having to soak up pressure with our backs to the wall for the last 25 minutes and much sterling work from our goalkeeper, we ended the game with a 4 – 3 victory. With confidence restored several good league games ensued and an even smattering of wins and losses meant that our average hovered around 50% success. A very deserved draw against league leaders Chelmsford 6th and an excellent win against Brentwood 6th in the last league game contributed to a 6th placed finish in Div 9SE. Unfortunately, the end of the season fizzled out with all the friendlies being cancelled for various reasons.

Throughout the season the team gelled with all players developing in their respective positions and without taking anything away from the experienced senior players, those to watch for in the future clearly include Jay Percival, David Messant and Robin Weston. Special mention must be made of the contribution of goalkeeper Mark Burrows who frequently kept us in contention on the pitch and deservedly was awarded Player of the Year. The 5th X1 is never an easy team to manage and although a higher placing than 6th in the league would have been welcomed, it gives us a goal to improve on for next season.

Mens 6th X1 (Chris Hatch);

The former Veterans, playing their 2nd season of league hockey in Div 10SE after promotion from Div 11 SE, repeated the success of the previous season with 2nd place and promotion. It was not only a highly successful season but a most enjoyable one as well! Once some early season friendlies were completed with mixed results, the tone was set for the league campaign with a 4 – 0 win away at Havering 4ths. Three further wins saw us top until a loss to Felixstowe 4ths followed by a loss to Brentwood 7ths (who did the 'double' over us) brought us back to earth. However, an unexpected away draw to eventual division winners Crostyx 5ths and a massive win against Romford 4th meant a challenging 3rd place at the mid-season break. A generally similar pattern of results was achieved after Christmas, the highlights being a 2 – 0 home win over Crostyx 5th and a 1 – 0 win over a young Essex Univ side who were competing with us for the 2nd promotion place. A classic case of old heads triumphing over young legs! The lowlights were a loss at Harlow 3rds in the worst 'playable' weather in years and the above-mentioned loss to Felixstowe 4ths on the Dellwood Avenue grass, when two of our players got injured.

The regular team was given some pace and width by the inclusion of Nick Cook and Kevin Foster. At the back, Jerry Hindle playing sweeper and Terry Murray in goal had excellent seasons. Barrie Whelpton was again comfortably leading scorer (league & friendlies) with 22 goals followed by Brian Mitchell (12), Kev Foster (6), Hugh Rowland (5) and Tom Grant (5), Ian Reed (4). Many thanks to all the umpires and other stalwarts in the side not mentioned above (including Ron Woolgar, Ray Black, Dave Gooch, John Taylor, Chris Hatch) for contributing to a very satisfactory season and also to the various youngsters and other regular club members who made up numbers when required.

Mixed X1 (Editor's report);

Traditional Sunday morning Mixed Hockey finally fizzled out in this locality during the season, as an already patchy fixtures list was undermined by cancellations from most of the opponents listed in the card. Indeed, just 6 games were played, the last in January. Steve de Boltz, as captain, was well supported while the games lasted, with the team achieving a positive overall record. Thanks are due to Simon Martin for his work as Mixed fixtures secretary in difficult and frustrating circumstances. It seems that a good number of the local 'keen' players are now involved in the Monday evening Indoor and taking that with a distinct lack of willing organisers (in other clubs) and Cup games, it may be considered as no surprise that Sunday Mixed has fallen down the priority list. However, positive points to record included the fact that most of the nine mid-week evening Mixed games at Framlingham took place (setting aside the foul weather, at times) and the regulars enjoyed their annual end-of-season excursion to the Hearn Bay tournament during the May Day Bank Holiday weekend. The plan is to continue to support mid-week evening Mixed during the new season and participate in one or two tournaments but Sunday mornings (at Copleston) will be re-allocated to the Club's youth coaching programme.

Information concerning the build-up to the 2002/2003 season

1. Training, Coaching and related activities for 2002/2003

i) Main skills training: This will again take place at Copleston School each Wednesday evening starting **Weds 28th August**. There are changes for the new season! Mens training will be 7.00 – 8.30pm, followed by Ladies training 8.30pm – 10.00pm. So each session is extended by 30 minutes from previous years and this should give us a lot more scope to develop skills, tactics and match fitness. The order of Mens/Ladies training is subject to review after a few weeks.

Skills training sessions at Copleston are free to fully paid-up members who play and pay regularly in the Saturday and/or Midweek Mixed match programme.

ii) Youth coaching programme: Youth coaching (for approx 8 – 14 years junior boys and girls) will take place on Sunday mornings 11.00 – 12.00, commencing 8th Sept 2002. Note that this is a change from previous seasons when we have used Wednesdays 6.00 – 7.00pm (which are now discontinued)

2. Start of the 2002/2003 playing season

There is a 'Club Day' at Rushmere on Sunday 1st Sept, in the form of 'social sport' and a barbeque. The Club is booking friendly fixtures for a programme which starts **Saturday 31st August** (1st + 2nds Ladies) and **Saturday 7th September** (for up to all 6 Mens squads + all 3 Ladies squads) as part of the preparation for the League campaigns. The Ladies League (2nd + 3rds X1s) starts on **14th September** and the Mens league + Ladies 1sts league on **5th October**. The full season's fixtures programme will be posted on the Club web site, when available.

3. Arrangements at Rushmere Sports Club during 2002/2003

The arrangements are expected to be very similar to what was established during the past four seasons. Sonia has confirmed here continued availability to prepare our teas and we're hoping to improve the cooking facilities in the kitchen to perhaps provide some more variety in the teas menu from time to time. Please take the messages in the Chairman's letter on board – the future of the Club depends on your response and support. Good luck to everybody for the new season !!

4. Reminder to Members and Prospective Members - extract from the Club Rules

Members and prospective members of all ages, including Juniors, must note that the Club takes part in a physical and competitive sport and that all individuals participate entirely at their own risk. The Club only buys 3rd party liability insurance and is unable to provide for personal player insurance.

Arrangement of personal injury insurance is strongly advised. This may be done, for example, through John Wilkinson of Adams Wilkinson Insurance Brokers (Tel 01473 714224) or the insurance department of Hockey England Ltd (Tel 01908 544644).

*****END*****