

## **OHAFC** *1859 to 2008*

Founded in 1859 and therefore the second oldest surviving Association Football club after Sheffield FC (a club founded by Old Harrovians in 1857), the OHAFC continues to prosper, most notably last year by winning the hitherto elusive Arthur Dunn Cup, the prestigious trophy contested since 1902 by old boys' teams from such traditional footballing strongholds as Eton, Charterhouse, Malvern, Repton, Shrewsbury and Winchester. This achievement was just reward for an outstanding team which has developed under the leadership of Quentin Baker, *Moretons 1989-3*, who has completed ten seasons as 1<sup>st</sup> XI Captain.

It is well documented that soccer at Harrow was abolished in 1927 in favour of rugby. This sounded the death knell for the OHAFC which disbanded in 1931 and remained dormant until its re-establishment in 1963. The next four decades attracted loyal membership and witnessed many remarkable victories against strong opposition. The 2<sup>nd</sup> XI started in 1966, the (still flourishing) Veterans in 1973 and a 3<sup>rd</sup> XI operated from 1978 to 1986. The Annual Dinner, overseas Easter Tours and The Arthurian League Championship win in 1977/78 provided further evidence of a thriving club, generating a lasting spirit of friendship amongst its many supporters. The re-introduction of soccer at Harrow by David Elleray in 1977 was (and perhaps still is) seen as controversial in some quarters, but in truth it represented just another significant milestone in Harrow's longstanding involvement with the game.

Launched with an exciting tour to South America organised by Club Chairman Andrew Butler, *The Knoll 1981-3*, the 40<sup>th</sup> year since the Club's re-establishment heralded the arrival of a new era. A constructive meeting of Vice-Presidents and senior officers was held at Stamford Bridge to consider future strategy and Barnaby Lenon announced the School's intention to expand soccer at Harrow. OHAFC members responded by helping to raise the funds necessary to equip the School with one of the two all-weather pitches on New Fields. The Philathletic Ground became the Club's venue for home league and cup matches and in the Club's first season back at the School the 1<sup>st</sup> XI lifted The Arthurian League Premier Division trophy, a feat which commanded immediate respect from competing clubs.

The past four years have seen many talented School leavers lining up in OHAFC colours. The high profile of soccer at Harrow is now providing the flow of recruits which had been missing for so long and the combination of experience and youth has enabled the 1<sup>st</sup> XI to maintain its high ranking in the League, finishing runners-up in the Premier Division in 2004/05 and 2005/06 to Old Etonians and Old Carthusians respectively.

Success breeds success and a revitalised 2<sup>nd</sup> XI has gained promotion to Division 4, Division 3 and Division 2 in successive seasons. Before this in 2005/06, it became the first team ever to win the Junior League Cup from Division 5, defeating teams from Division 2 along the way. The average age of the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI is lower than that of the 1<sup>st</sup> XI and the team contains outstanding players who will go on to represent the Club at the higher level. The team is ambitious and fully expects to win more silverware to add to the Division 2 title won in 2007/08.

The 2006/07 season saw the re-establishment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> XI (promoted to Division 4 as champions in 2007/08) and it may not be too long before demand from School leavers leads to the requirement to field four sides regularly in the League. In 2009 the Club will celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its foundation confident in the knowledge that future generations of Old Harrovians will join its ranks, as those school leavers recorded all those years ago, "to keep up the practice at all events of the game at which they had shown some considerable aptitude" . (Alcock *The Association Game* – quoted in *Butler The Official Illustrated History of the FA Cup* p 35).

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