

## History of Deeside Ramblers Hockey Club

At the end of the Second World War (1946) a number of hockey enthusiasts who were themselves very talented hockey players returned to the Chester area from overseas and a meeting was called at the Queens Hotel, Chester to identify a need. They had no readily available ground and played wherever they could, hence the 'rambling' and because they were based in Chester area around the River Dee; Deeside Ramblers Hockey Club was founded.

In the early days they played at many venues including Shotton Steel, Tattenhall and Western Command (Chester) but seemed to have gravitated towards the Cricket Ground at Tattenhall and used the local pub, the Bear & Ragged Star as their clubhouse/headquarters. They then moved to Tiverton, Tarporley where they had access to the facilities of Hampton House School which was owned and run by the Saunders-Griffiths Brothers. It proved to be a sound base and the Club eventually settled there and in 1959 purchasing sufficient land to lay two pitches. Steady expansion over the years has seen additional land acquired to the extent that the club now has three grass pitches, now only used for the occasional nostalgic veteran's game and other events. This expanse of grass is now the backdrop to the Clubs floodlit all-weather pitch a rare facility for an independent single sport club, giving Deeside Ramblers a truly rural atmosphere for the enjoyment of hockey. Installed in 1997, it is of sufficient quality to be used for County, Regional and National Premiership games. Generous assistance came from National Lottery, the Sports Council and the Foundation of Sports & Arts ensuring a top class facility, with members themselves raising a large sum towards the project.

The Club draws its players from an ever expanding radius within the North West – Chester, Tarporley, Nantwich, Northwich, Manchester, Crewe, Wrexham, Wirral, Shropshire and beyond.

In the early days and with no great tradition of hockey playing at local schools the club took it upon itself the task of creating and grooming junior talent which eventually led to some schools taking the opportunity to provide hockey as an alternative to football. Deeside Ramblers has always had a strong youth development section and now has a Junior Section which is envied by others, also placing an extraordinary number of both boys and girls within England Hockey's Single System at the highest levels and gaining honours even to National Age Group Squad Level.

Although the Club was founded as a men only club, a Ladies Section was formed in 1994 and now the Ladies teams and non-playing female members and non-members form an integral part of the Club.

The Club also has fine touring or 'rambling' as we like to call it, tradition and within recent years has taken sides to Barbados, Holland, Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey and Gibraltar.

Currently there are 7 Men's teams and 3 Ladies teams and in the 2009/2010 Season the Men's 1<sup>st</sup> XI play in the National Premiership Conference North, there are junior teams for boys and girls at Under 15 (Boys –Badgers), Under 13 (Boys-Beavers) and Under 11 where the Club is part of a network of Clubs that take part in Under 11's mini-hockey (half pitch) tournaments.

The Club has recently and proudly without any external funding completed a refurbishment of the Clubhouse – 'Project Pigsty'.

We pride ourselves on being a family Club – fathers, sons, mothers, daughters, brothers & sisters, all participating and making it the Club with the recognizably friendliest atmosphere. It has been privileged to receive the North West Hockey Umpires award of the Wilkinson Sword for hospitality and friendliness on no less than five occasions and more recently it is no accident that we were the first hockey club in Cheshire to achieve England Hockey Clubs 1<sup>st</sup> accreditation.