

PROFILES on the Women & Men of Distinction who played for SCHC

Mandy Joanna Davies née Pickles Olympian

Mandy was born in Sutton Coldfield on the 29th September 1966 before the family moved to Four Oaks when she went to the Arthur Terry School at the age of 13 when her hockey talent was quickly recognised and she was sent for a trial at Sutton Coldfield Ladies HC, but Mandy unfortunately arrived at the Sutton UR & M hockey trials on Tamworth Road and having passed with flying colours the SUR&M recommended that she should go to SCLHC on Rectory Road as she had turned up at the wrong Sutton Hockey club. So began a relationship with Sutton Coldfield Ladies HC that is still continuing some 40 seasons later.

While still a schoolgirl Mandy played for the West Midlands in both Under-16 and the Under-18 as well as the Warwickshire Senior team and was also representing Midland Hockey at Under-18, Under-21 and with the Seniors. In 1987, while away from Sutton Coldfield at Bedford College on a Higher Education course, Mandy became a BUCS Gold Medalist and was selected in 1989 to play her first game for England which was followed by another 93 occasions. In the following year she gained the first of her 87 International caps with Great Britain.



Mandy Davies

On the 12th May 1991 Mandy played her first game for England in the Women's European Nations Championship held in Brussels, Belgium with England winning the final against Germany 2-1, with her Sutton Coldfield colleague, Jane Sixsmith who scored both goals resulted in Mandy and Jane picking up European Gold medals. This win secured England's first European title and was the beginning of the two girls picking up three awards at the highest level of European woman's hockey. In the same year playing for the Sutton Coldfield Ladies Hockey Club both girls picked up silver medals being runner up, losing in the final in the European Cup Winners Cup 1991. However, in the next season 1992 and still playing under the Sutton Coldfield Club name Mandy picked up a Gold Medal as the team secured a victory over Dutch side, MOP Vught in a dramatic final to become the first British club to win a European championship.

In 1996 Mandy was selected to play in the Great Britain team in the Olympic Games in Atlanta, where the team won its group but lost in the Semi-final and with great disappointment lost again in the play-off for the bronze medal against the Dutch side with the last penalty stroke of the game 5 – 4 after the score had been 0 – 0 after extra time, so finished 4th in the competition.

On the 29th May 1997 Mandy, the newly appointed captain of the England team, lead them out to play Germany in Berlin, in with what the press described as an inexperienced side.

Mandy in her youth had always been a sporting girl with interest and talent for netball, where she represented Warwickshire in both Under-16 and Under-18 age groups and in athletics on the track where she picked up an Under-16 Gold Medal in the West Midland 100 meter Championship as well as the silver medal at the same championship in the 200 meter event.

Looking back on Mandy's outstanding hockey playing career she remembers with nostalgia some funny events; of Jane Swinnerton having driven an empty minibus all the way to Taunton because

she thought the rest of the team had gone without her, when the rest of the team were actually having a cup of tea in Walsall waiting for her to pick them up; On another occasion that brings a smile to one's face was the printing of some funny contact cards at a motorway services after beating Slough 2-0 and handing them out to other teams – "How to beat Slough - phone 2-0 2-0 2-0 and ask for Brilliant Bayliss, Super Sixsmith and Perfect Pickles". Also the annual Weymouth Easter Hockey Festival regularly brought out lots of fun moments that linger a life time.

Mandy is still involved in hockey and has taken on the responsibility as Coach to the SCLHC 1st Team in the 2018-19 season.

Janet Theresa "Jane" Sixsmith [MBE](#)

Janet was born 5 September 1967 in Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, West Midlands played hockey and was a member of the British squad that won the bronze medal at the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona. She retired from the international scene after scoring over hundred goals and winning 165 caps for England and 158 for Great Britain. Jane is the only British female hockey player to have appeared at four Olympic Games which included the 1988 Games in Seoul, 1992 in Barcelona, 1996 in Atlanta and the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

Jane took up hockey when, at the age of twelve, after she was unable to play football for a boys' team. As a teenager, she was selected as a reserve for the England under-18 netball team before being chosen for England's under-18 hockey squad. Jane attended St Joseph's Catholic Junior School and Bishop Walsh Catholic School.

Jane played hockey at club level for her hometown, Sutton Coldfield and took part in the 2013 Maxifuels Super Sixes indoor hockey finals with her team Sutton Coldfield.



Jane Sixsmith MBE

They reached the final after beating Bowden Hightown in the Semi Finals. Jane scored the second goal in her teams' 2 - 5 defeat to champions Reading HC in the final at the Wembley Arena on 27 January 2013.

Jane continues to play hockey for the Sutton Coldfield Club in the Investec Women's National Hockey League in 2016-17 season and her honours include, an MBE, an Olympic bronze in 1992, a European Cup Gold in 1991 and a Commonwealth silver medal in 1998.

The Hockey Writer's Club Annual Award for the "UK Hockey Player Award for 2000" was Jane Sixsmith MBE.

Sutton Coldfield Observer's Interview with Jane Sixsmith

30 April 1999

It is sheer modesty which doesn't allow Jane Sixsmith to boast to the world about her achievements as an international hockey player.

As a sportswomen who has reached the very top of the game she loves, her achievements in a sport considered 'minority' by many have sadly long been glossed over. But the fact remains that Jane is currently Great Britain's all-time record goalscorer, and with 269 international appearances to her name is the second most capped player ever in world history.

Not forgetting the little matter of three Olympic appearances, including a bronze medal, numerous Commonwealth titles and the serious possibility of participating in her fourth Olympics at the next games in Sydney in the year 2000.

Impressive

It is an impressive curriculum vitae which will ensure the unassuming 31-year-old, who lives near Mere Green, will surely go down in the history of hockey as one of the finest players of all time.

"I have lived in the town all my life and played for Sutton Coldfield Ladies hockey club since I was 19 years old," said Jane. "Although you go through phases of wanting to move and thinking of winning trophies with other clubs, I have always decided against leaving the area.

"I owe the club a lot. They have looked after and I have made a lot of friends. With me also working in Birmingham, there seems little sense in moving to a different part of the world."

As a promising young athlete, Jane represented Bishop Walsh School at both hockey and netball, and her team's regular success at the time on a national basis gave her the confidence to aim for the top. . Despite harsh words from teachers in school reports bemoaning her preference to scoring goals and netting balls, her love for sport has provided her with a good living.

For five years she gained valuable experience working for the department of leisure and community services and more recently in coach education and training.

Now she has been appointed hockey development officer for Sport Birmingham with the briefing of encouraging more youngsters to take up the sport. "If hockey is to progress, it is important the sport is publicised and more young people are recruited. "It is a job that excites me and I will be working with local schools in a bid to increasing participation of hockey across the area.

"I will be on hand to help support and advise everybody, and hopefully pass on my knowledge and experiences learnt from the game over the last 15 years." Under Jane's watchful eye, hockey in Sutton is currently undergoing a dramatic transformation in a bid to increase interest.

The launch of a new £700,000 state-of-the art Astro turf pitch at Wyndley Leisure Centre this weekend has ensured top class hockey can once again take place in the town.

Problems

For Jane's team it marks the first time in a decade they will be able to play in Sutton, after problems with the original pitch meant they were forced to play firstly at the Alexander Stadium and then Cannock. But, more importantly, it will give youngsters the opportunity to play hockey locally. "Wyndley was one of the first synthetic pitches in the country," added Jane.

"But nobody knew how long it was going to last and in the end it was used too much, to the effect that it become uneven and very dangerous.

"We desperately wanted to come back to the area. It is important to the club and important to the players to give them a feeling of really being part of something.

'Now we have returned home and, being a club which attracts more than 1,000 youngsters every Sunday morning, it is important to keep that interest going." Disappointingly, during their time away from the town, Jane's side notched up a string of European successes with no local people to witness it.

The Premier Division outfit won the All England cup in 1991 to qualify for the European Cup Winners Cup and, after finishing losing finalists in the same year, went one better twelve months later

to be crowned kings of Europe.

To complete an incredible year for Jane, she was selected to represent Great Britain in the Barcelona Olympics and was an integral part of the team which collected the bronze medal.

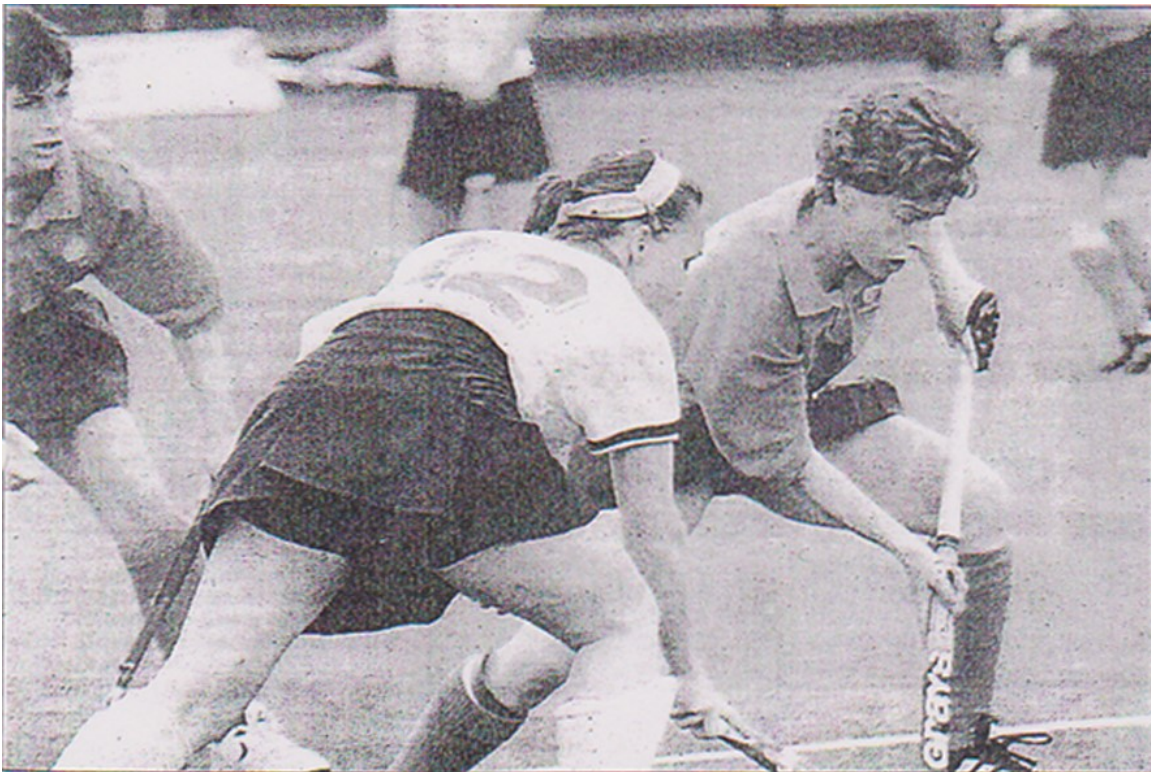
Now the goal-hungry forward is aiming to take part in her fourth Olympics at Sydney next year and have one last shot at winning the gold before she retires from the international scene.

"Getting to the Olympics is the ultimate pinnacle to your career and it is a fabulous feeling to be part of it.

"All the world's best athletes from every sport are gathered in one place and it really does feel like you are part of one big family. "I am coming to the end of my career and this will be my last chance.

"We have finished in the top four for the last three Olympics, so we have as good a chance as anybody."

Jane in Action



Jane Sixsmith MBE

Sutton Coldfield Ladies Hockey Club star Jane Sixsmith has spoken of her delight after she was among a handful of Sutton people whose achievements were recognised in the New Year's Honours.

The 32-year-old, who hopes to play in her fourth consecutive Olympics later this year, said she was "totally shocked" by the award of an MBE and had found it difficult to keep the honour a secret. "I received a letter from Downing Street in November and it said the honour was confidential," she said.

"I told my family and my husband's family over Christmas but I hadn't told my team-mates. "I'm very surprised but very delighted. Hockey doesn't get a great deal of recognition but to get an honour at the start of the Millennium is very special."

Sixsmith has played all her club hockey for Sutton Coldfield in the National League and she has been capped 126 times by Great Britain and 165 times by England.

Janes Profile

Born:	6th September, 1967, Sutton Coldfield
Marital status:	Married to management accountant, Tim Beeton
Job:	Hockey development officer for Birmingham City Council
Favourite music:	Pop
Favourite film:	The Full Monty
Favourite meal:	Chicken tikka sag balti, chilli andarice
Favourite actor:	Denzel Washington
Favourite actress:	Demi Moore & Whoopi Goldberg
Hero:	Michael Johnson
Favourite TV shows:	Coronation Street & Match of the Day
Favourite holiday-	Cairns, Australia
Hobbies:	Socialising, eating out
Other sports:	Tennis & football
First played hockey:	Aged 12, at Bishop Walsh School in Sutton
Career debut:	England v Wales, 1987
Most memorable moment:	Winning bronze at the Barcelona Olympics, 1992
Other achievements:	European silver medal 1987, European gold 1991
Ambition:	To win Olympic gold.

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Laura Unsworth

Laura was born on 8th March 1988 and attended Coppice Primary School, Four Oaks and Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls before going to University of Loughborough to study business and finance.

At the age of 10 Laura became a regular member of the Sutton Coldfield Junior Coaching programme, held on Sunday mornings at Wyndley under the watchful eye of Peter Westbrook, Junior Player Coach. However, it was not long before Laura had quickly working her way through the Club's lower side to establishing a 1st Team place, although still only just 15 and a 2nd team player Laura was selected to play for England Under-16 Girls in the "Four Nations National Tournament" at Easter 2003 in Alcala La Real, near Granada in Spain. This was to be the first of Laura's 129 England caps she received by the end of 2017. Laura also represented England in the Under-18 age group.



Laura Unsworth

Rio Olympic Gold Medal Winner

Laura also helped her Sutton Coldfield Club to win Indoor National competitions as well as getting the 1st team back in the Nation Premier outdoor league at the end of the 2005-06 season. Laura also represented England on two occasions and Great Britain on 5 occasions in Indoor Competitions.

Laura was one of a number of players who made their senior international debut for Great Britain in October 2008 after the team's disappointment in the Beijing Olympic Games and she went on represent GB on 84 occasions as at December 2017.

During Laura's playing career she was awarded an MBE after winning a gold medal in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games to add to her bronze awarded in the 2012 London Games. She also picked awards in EuroHockey Championship in 2009, 2011 and in 2017 with Bronze medals, in 2015 with silver and in 2017 with a gold medal. Success was also achieved in the Commonwealth Games with a Bronze in 2010 and Silver in 2014.

World Cups success was achieved in 2010 with a Bronze and in World League Final in 2013 a Bronze success was recorded. In both World League Semi-Finals of 2015 and 2017 a Gold medal and a Bronze were respectively obtained. In the Champions Trophy of 2010 and 2012 a Bronze and a Silver medal were respectively awarded.

Laura has achieved to date (December 2017) a total of 15 Top International Awards, although she no longer plays for the Sutton Coldfield Club since she was a Loughborough Students, when she played for Leicester and Holcombe clubs before moving on to her current club, East Grinstead. Nevertheless the Sutton Coldfield Hockey Club is extremely proud to have been able to help Laura to develop in one of the world's best International Athletic and a Great Britain Hockey International has benefitted from this outstanding player particular in her defensive roll.

Tom Crockford

Eric Bertram Crockford known as Tom played for England fourteen times between 1911 and 1922 and represented Great Britain and Ireland in the 1920 Antwerp, Olympic Games winning a Gold Medal playing hockey.

This was the last Olympic Games when Great Britain and Ireland were one team. He would undoubtedly have received many more caps but for the intervention of the war period throughout which he served his country with distinction.

Tom was an outstanding sportsman playing cricket for the Warwickshire County Cricket Club and for Sutton Coldfield Cricket Club. He was also the Midland Billiard and Snooker champion.

The Great War robbed Tom of many more appearances for both Great Britain and England.



Eric Bertram Crockford,

Tom would undoubtedly have received many more caps but for the intervention of the war period throughout which he served his country with distinction and without doubt the greatest exponent of the game of hockey in the Clubs history who played for England fourteen times between 1911 and 1922 and represented Great Britain and Ireland in the 1920 Antwerp, Olympic Games winning a Gold Medal playing hockey.

This was the last Olympic Games when Great Britain and Ireland were one team. He would undoubtedly have received many more caps but for the intervention of the war period throughout which he served his country with distinction.

Enlisting in September 1914, as a Private in the 14th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, he was Gazetted 2nd Lieutenant into the 6th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment in August 1915 and subsequently promoted Lieutenant & served in France in 1916 & 1918.

P.C. Petrie

During the period 1921-1930 P. C. Petrie also played for England.

Our 2nd Olympian Dr John Bell

In addition to his appearances for Warwickshire, John Bell also played for England 'B' and 5 times for the Midlands.

However his outstanding ability as a player meant that he was selected to go to the 1960 Rome Olympics although still in the Army Medical Core as a Doctor with the rank of Lieutenant on National Service.

John played in two of the games 1st round qualifying matches, against Belgium which resulted in a drawn game 0 – 0 and in his second game in the Olympic Velodrome Great Britain beat Switzerland 3 – 0. As Great Britain's opening game had been a 0 – 0 draw against Spain they were runner up in Group D to Spain and advanced to the quarter-final beating Kenya 2 – 0, a game John was rested.

However, John played his 3rd game for Great Britain against India in the semi-final, losing 1 – 0. Great Britain had a 3rd team place in the play-off game against Spain which they lost 2 – 0 and John was not included in the team.



Dr John Bell

***Played in the Great Britain Hockey Team
in the 1960 Rome Olympic Games***
