



March 2020 Issue No. 25

Friends of Scottish Rugby

FoSR

Supporting grass roots Scottish Rugby

A word from our President

As I sit down to pen my introduction to this Newsletter I can't help but be minded by the ancient Chinese curse "May you live in interesting times!". Mark you, I can think of more appropriate adjectives than Interesting!

Anyway, in this climate we should all pull together, offer to help our friends and neighbours, but also take care for ourselves. You know that is probably much of what we already do in Friends of Scottish Rugby.

Jane and I were so sad to have to miss the AGM and Spring Dinner, but it was great to master technology (with a little help from our friends) to send our greetings to the Dinner.

From all reports it was a very successful and indeed enjoyable evening and I would like to take this opportunity to once again say "A very big thank-you for your invaluable support".

Where and when we might meet again is obviously uncertain. However, despite that we plan to continue to do what we do best by supporting Scottish Rugby from grassroots upwards.

We will naturally continue to keep you posted. Meantime, let's all pay heed to the wise counsel which sometimes seems too much to bear, but is given in all our best interests.

We wish you all the very best. If we can help in anyway whatsoever, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours Aye,

David Mackay

Spring Dinner 12TH March 2020 - Guest speaker: Ian Barr

Mike McGlashan and Hilary Clayton-Mitchell piped sixty-eight members and their guests from the drinks reception in the Morrison Room of the Caledonian Club to dinner in the Johnnie Walker Room. There had been a number of overnight cancellations by some members due to travel restrictions resulting from the Coronavirus. Our own President and his wife Jane were unable to be there in person, but joined us via Skype, to welcome everyone to the evening.

For the first time as a member, the Reverend Alistair Cumming said Grace. The haggis was piped in by Mike McGlashan. Shortly thereafter and again for the first time as a member Alistair also gave the Address to the Haggis.

A fine meal consisting of Dingwall Haggis and neeps, followed by roast loin of Elwy lamb and culminating with glazed lemon tart was delivered by the Caledonian staff. All washed down with coffee, tablet and shortbread, and Argentinian wine.

Louise Newton our Senior Ambassador and also Chief Operating Officer of London Scottish FC gave the Loyal Toast.



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Mike and Hilary called everyone back from the bar following the comfort break to hear our guest speaker Ian Barr, Vice President of the Scottish Rugby Union. Ian had kindly stepped in after Tavish Scott, our scheduled speaker, had also fallen foul of travel restrictions.



Ian Barr, Vice President of the Scottish Rugby Union

Ian opened by describing himself as a “boring little devil from Lasswade”. He was anything but boring! Ian talked eloquently and insightfully about the professional and amateur games. He reinforced the importance of support for grass roots rugby. He looked in detail at how other sports have learned hard lessons from some of the financial decisions that they have made in the past. He said that the amateur clubs must be supported, and that everyone has to be part of the journey to balance the professional and amateur games.

Les Fordham presented Ian with a bottle of whisky to sustain him on his journey to Cardiff the following day for the Wales v Scotland game, which was of course cancelled at one o'clock the next day.

The Trophy winners were introduced by Neil McNair. The Lady Jean Macpherson Womens Trophy was awarded to Rhona Lloyd. A film about Rhona was played. Lady Jean presented the trophy to Ian Barr who accepted it on behalf of Rhona Lloyd.

Louise Newton announced the winner of the Sir Tommy Macpherson Quaich was James Malcolm. The trophy was presented to James by Ishbel Macpherson.

Louise also took the opportunity to outline the challenges facing London Scottish with a 50% cut in funding from the RFU and the impending threat of the Corona virus. She outlined the steps the players and staff were taking to protect the rugby at London Scottish and called upon those present to help in any way they can through sponsorship or offering employment or training opportunities to players.



Luke Frost (left) with Louise Newton (centre) and James Malcolm

Neil McNair announced the winner of the Sir Willie Purves Quaich was Jamie Ritchie. Jamie who had received a spectacular punch to the cheek in the previous weeks Scotland v France match, was not there to receive it, however a film was shown of Gregor Townsend and Jamie thanking FoSR for the honour of awarding the trophy to Jamie. Sir Willie then came forward to present the trophy to Colin Rigby on behalf of Jamie.

Our member Ian Black made his debut as an auctioneer to auction the prize for a child accompanied by two adults to be a mascot at Murrayfield next season.

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The prize was generously donated by Graham Law on behalf of Scottish Rugby. This generosity was matched by the winning bidder and a very lucky young lad is now going to be a Mascot for the day at one of next year's internationals at BT Murrayfield!



Lady Jean (left) and Ishbel Macpherson



Reverend Alistair Cumming (right)



Ian Black - Auctioneer debutant!



Sir Willie Purves presenting his Quaich to Colin Rigby (SRU)

Member David Smith gave the vote of thanks to resounding applause from all present.

A Dundee Collection was circulated, and the money collected will be donated to the My Name's 5 Daddie Foundation.

Despite packing in more than usual, the evening concluded at 21:40 giving members and guests ample time to "scrum down" in the Members Bar and drink into the small hours.

Neil McNair

The London Scottish Colts

London Scottish Colts are proud of the support we get from Friends of Scottish Rugby (FoSR) which enables us to provide a great environment for developing future Scottish players, albeit a little further away from Scotland than we would like it to be. Even with the untimely end to the season, this year has been a great success for the Colts. Both teams are currently second in their respective divisions, and we can only guess at what might have been if we had been able to play those final league games. However, all the signs are there that these teams are on the up and enjoying their rugby.

Over the season we have played a host of international teams, coming up against teams from Germany, Italy,

England and Wales. We were looking forward to topping the season off by playing in Scotland at the Melrose

Sevens U18's competition. For many of our players this would have been a last chance to run out with their mates and they were looking forward to using it as the springboard to showcase their talents. Sadly, we'll have to wait until next year before we see them in the competition, but with the coaching that the FoSR

sponsorship provides the team can only be better.

Sponsorship from FoSR allows us to provide professional coaching through Phil Cringle (London Scottish 1st XV tight-head and ex Scottish U20's player) providing the defensive edge, Neil McFarlane providing the attacking style, all under the auspices of Head coach Michael Mullins - Director of Rugby at one of our partner schools. The quality of the coaching this trio provide is second to none in the area and has led to an increase in the number of Scottish Qualified (SQ) players in our squad over last year. We now have SQ players travelling from as far North as St Albans, South as Brighton, and East as Bishops Stortford to play and train with us.

Given there are a lot of other clubs in our area, it is a testament to the commitment of the players that they make the journey to us each week, however the payback for them is on the field where they have developed significantly. All our SQ players play county rugby, most attend the SQ sessions in the area, and whilst it's early days there are a couple in the squad that we expect to break through into senior rugby in the coming years.

Fielding two teams a week has brought more competition for places come match day, and the players have developed faster as a result. With the coaching team instilling the same playbook and fast 15-man rugby for all the players it's been easy for some of the younger ones to make the step up when required. Whenever we are able to restart rugby the boys will be raring to go, and we are looking for them to continue to compete at the top of their divisions. In the meantime, the boys would like to thank FoSR for their continued support and encouragement.

Ian Hannah
Chairman of Minis Rugby
London Scottish

The London Scottish 'Professional Entry Programme' (LSPEP)

The LSPEP represents a key innovation in London Scottish's player recruiting and development activities.

Miles Wakeling (LSPEP)

This season, FoSR continues to sponsor Miles Wakeling.

Player Profile

- Date of Birth: 5th October 1999
- School - Reeds Weybridge
- Position - Back Row
- Junior Club - London Scottish
- Achievements - Scottish Exiles
- Height - 192cm
- Weight - 105Kg's

Miles came through the mini and junior set up at London Scottish and joined the PEP programme in season 2018 / 19. He was loaned out to play National 2 but trained full time with the squad. Miles was offered a new PEP contract for season 2019 / 20 and with the support of FoSR this was agreed and implemented

Miles developed considerably over the summer of 2019 during pre-season both from a conditioning perspective and his all round game understanding and technical skills. Miles impressed the new coaching team of Graham Steadman and Stevie Scott and his reward was a starting place at number 6 in the pre-season match v's Edinburgh at Murrayfield

Competing with some high quality back rowers Miles has continued to impress throughout the season and has been involved in 4 cup matches and 5 League games. He has a great approach to training, is a proper team player and offers his time outside of rugby to coach at local schools

Miles commented

"Coming in for my second year with London Scottish I was keen and raring to go. Pre Season was a lot tougher than the season before and longer as well, but it was great to be back in with the team and everyone working hard together. My pre season went really well and I ended up starting both pre season games the highlight being starting against Edinburgh at Murrayfield, which was an honour to run out and play. After the pre season I was in a good position competing for a place in the match day 23. More recently I had put a string of appearances together however due to the circumstances with the health pandemic the season has been cut short which is a real shame for everyone involved in the team and league"

"On a personal note I would like to say a massive thank you to the FoSR for their sponsorship and allowing me to pursue a full time roll at London Scottish, developing me not just as a player but as a man off the field as well and hope this relationship can continue for other players in my position"

Carson Russell
Commercial Director
London Scottish

Donations:

In the year to end December 2019, Friends of Scottish Rugby made donations to the following clubs and organisations:

London Scottish Colts

London Scottish PEP

Balls 4 Schools

Lasswade RFC

Strathmore RFC

Montrose RFC

Morrisons Academy

Plus 2 Dundee Collections to "My Name's Doddie Foundation" and "Prostate Scotland"

Dates for your diaries

3rd June 2020: Due to the Corona Virus pandemic, our Summer Dinner is now cancelled.

1st October 2020: Autumn Dinner - We are delighted that we will have Jason Leonard as our Guest Speaker.

Jason Leonard OBE gained a record-breaking 114 caps for England during his 14-year international rugby career. He played in England teams which won four Grand Slams (1991, 1992, 1995 and 2003) and the 2003 Rugby World Cup, and was part of the British & Irish Lions squad that won the test series during their 1997 tour of South Africa. Jason played for the Lions on three tours, gaining five additional caps.

He was awarded MBE for services to rugby in 2002, which became an OBE after England's Rugby World Cup success. He was inducted to the World Rugby Hall of Fame in 2014.

Still very active in the sport, he was President of the RFU from 2015-2016 and is currently Chairman of the British & Irish Lions.

Les Fordham

Coronavirus

James Robson, the renowned Scotland and British and Irish Lions team doctor, has described the coronavirus crisis as "the stuff of science fiction" and has appealed to the public to follow the guidance and advice on social distancing being issued by official sources.

Speaking on a Scottish Rugby podcast, Dr Robson, who has been the Scotland team doctor for the past 29 years and who led the medical staff on six Lions tours, said: "If you look at what they are trying to do in cutting down the number of contacts, you can make an enormous difference.

"I would plead to everybody: do as you are being asked and do what the experts are saying. Listen to the World Health Organisation's pleas. Do your best to keep away from each other."

Dr Robson stressed the importance of maintaining a positive attitude and suggested that the crisis could actually have some benefits in terms of how people relate to each other in the future.

"I think we are all developing a greater awareness and appreciation of each other and I hope that continues after this crisis. I fully expect it will. We will reset our values and our goals. Hopefully, the world will be a better place."

Stay Safe!

**Friends of Scottish Rugby thank our Sponsors
and Supporters for their generosity**

Visit us at "www.f-s-r.org"