



# Friends of Scottish Rugby

AGM Report - March 2016



## AGM Report 2016

The following report is a summary of the Annual General Meeting which was held on March 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Caledonian Club in Halkin Street, London. The meeting was a well attended and lively affair with much discussion on what the organisation needs to do to move forward with continued success.

### President: David Mackay

"Believe it or not, probably for the first time in living memory, it was standing room only at our 20th. AGM!

David Mackay opened the Meeting and thanked Members for making the effort to attend. He noted that it had certainly not been the easiest of years but thanked the Committee for their sterling support which had helped offset and weather the storms which seemed to blow up more regularly these days.

David was sad to report the resignations of two of the Committee, Steve Fordham and VP Douglas Hutchison. Perhaps a barometer of the pressures involved in FoSR but also the wider and really tough general business climate. He added that this was also a timely reminder that we need to reflect on our strategy, structure and purpose together with how we best generate funds.

There followed a lively discussion and various key individuals volunteered to meet soon to debate the pros and cons of the various alternatives and recommendations which might be available.

David thanked the Members for their ongoing generous support."

### Matters Arising from previous AGM

- 1) Produce a clear and concise "flier" that members could distribute to attract new blood. **Status:** Completed/Ongoing
- 2) Distribute fliers to targeted events. **Status:** Completed/Ongoing
- 3) Look to produce an article for the Caledonian Club Magazine. **Status:** Completed
- 4) Send out regular updates with "clickable links" to information rather than just attachments. **Status:** Ongoing
- 5) Every member should try to introduce at least one new member. **Status:** Ongoing
- 6) We need to devise a strategy for addressing our target audiences. Status: See note 1
- 7) We should develop a profile of current membership (age, gender, etc.). Status: See note 1
- 8) We should try to identify the drivers for potential younger members. Status: See note 1
- 9) Better use of technology (especially Facebook and Linked-In) to attract younger members. Status: See note 1

Note 1: A member volunteered, at the 2015 AGM, to progress these actions. However, having postponed commencement on several occasions due to other commitments, he has now left for pastures new. If anyone wishes to take on this activity, please contact Les Fordham.

### Secretary: Les Fordham

Les started by touching on membership and explained that this time last year we had 103 members and today we have 109. This clearly does not reflect the increases we were looking for but given that we have had a few members drop out for various reasons, at least numbers are heading in the right direction.

He then moved his attention to the Website which continues to be developed and it is clearly attracting visitors with over 16,000 hits to date. Sadly though we have only attracted half a dozen new members via this medium so Les will now be looking to make it more appealing in order to try and convert a higher number of hits into new members.

The main theme of the secretary's report focused on events, past and future and in the last 12 months, we held 4 events.

**Minford lunch** 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015 – the lunch was much enjoyed by those who attended. However, demand for places was much lower, at 32, than in past years. Feedback has suggested that this lunch has run its course and therefore no more are being planned.

**Odgers Lunch** 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015- We are grateful to Ian MacLeod for sponsoring this lunch with Bill Sweeney, Chief Executive of the British Olympic Association as guest speaker. The lunch was held in the prestigious Odgers-Berndtson Boardroom overlooking St Pauls Cathedral. Feedback was very positive and the lunch was much enjoyed by those in attendance. However, once again, take up was poor and we struggled to get 16 in attendees, including Ian and Bill Sweeney!

**Gala Dinner 15<sup>th</sup> October** – We held an absolutely wonderful gala dinner in the Landmark hotel which was thoroughly enjoyed by all in attendance. However, getting it off the ground proved for a very bumpy ride and for some time, we were expecting to make a loss, with less than 200 attendees at a gala dinner for the first time ever. This, despite the fact that the cost of attending was reduced to £125.00 following comments at last year's AGM.

In the end, thanks to careful negotiating and flexibility from the Landmark Hotel coupled with the amazing generosity of everyone who donated prizes, as well as those who won them! (not to mention some incredible auctioneering by Ian Robertson) we were financially successful.

**Donald McNab tribute dinner with HRH** 22<sup>nd</sup> February – and what a tribute it was! 114 turned out to tell Donald how much we think of him. Andrew Fox outdid himself with an animated and amusing address to a haggis. Dinner was followed by a tribute from David Guild that will leave me wondering for the rest of my life... What DID Donald do !

And then there was the whisky... yes, a tribute indeed!

**The lunch that never was** – In an effort to try and stimulate interest, we looked further afield. Malcolm Offord kindly agreed to sponsor a lunch in Edinburgh to hopefully capture some of our northern based members. But we received not a single response!

### **Treasurer: Simon Frost**

The accounts were distributed two weeks before the AGM to ensure that members had a chance to consider them.

Simon began by announcing that a total of £31,500 had been distributed during the year. The breakdown of donations was £15,000 to London Scottish Academy with the balance in tranches of ranging from £1,000 to £3,000.

During the year we had surplus of income over expenditure of £19,361 (2014: £27,141), and a bank balance of £40,069 (2014: £52,207). The bank figure is sufficient to meet our commitments for the year.

Membership was up, with total subs being £13,180.

The gala dinner was not as financially successful as in previous years and produced a profit of almost £11,000. There had been some concern from members regarding the cost to attend the dinner and it had been decided to reduce the cost from £160pp to £125pp which did not have the desired effect of increasing numbers.

By contrast, the Donald McNab dinner, albeit for the current financial year, was a sell out and produced a surplus of £3,000.

David commended the accounts to the membership and these were unanimously approved.

### **From the floor...**

The meeting was opened to the floor and discussion focused on future events. It was agreed that we set up a small team whose aim will be to determine the format of and timings of such events. Volunteers to take on this role included Adam Brodie, David Guild, Ralph Potter, John Noble, Richard Black, Ian Macleod and Keith Macrae.

It was unanimously agreed that if we do not hold a Gala Dinner than we should hold an alternative "Keynote" event, not just for enjoyment but more importantly to market ourselves. Whilst raising funds at the same time. This aspect is seen as imperative to increasing membership.

Rather than trying to fill somewhere like the Landmark Hotel Ballroom, we should consider holding smaller events (perhaps in the Caledonian Club) but 2 or even 3 per year. The auction should continue, as it is a good way of raising funds but fewer prizes would allow time for other activities.

From the discussions, a popular option would be an annual dinner with an exceptional speaker and continued attendance from the SRU. This could perhaps be held in Scotland to enable more folk north of the border to attend.

The consensus was that we should continue with the Professor Minford Lunch and see if this could be timed to coincide with the EU Referendum.

It was agreed that the "Dundee" collections should continue.

If there are any other members who would like help with event planning, please contact a member of the committee.

## Guest Speaker

Murdo Fraser, President of Howe of Fife Rugby Club was our guest speaker and he regaled his audience with his views from the sharp end of Scottish Rugby with a witty, refreshing and erudite talk.

He warmly thanked FoSR for our timely financial support and encouragement, noting how influential we can be in generating enthusiastic assistance from other quarters.

Murdo went on to answer a wide variety of questions from the floor, and post Dinner, stayed on into the wee small hours putting the World and beyond to right!

### AN ADDRESS TO A HAGGIS

*(With apologies to R Burns)*

Fair Fall your honest sonsie face Great Chieftain of the Oval Ball Race  
Abun them a you take your place Soccer Tennis

Cricket ball or thairm  
And weel as you are worthy of a grace  
As langs my airm

The groaning trencher there you fill  
Your buttocks like a Twickenham Hill  
Your pin would help to mend a mill in time of need  
While through your pores the dewes ditill  
Like brown polish dubbin bead

3His knife see rustic labour dight  
And cut you up with ready slicht  
Trenching your gushing entrails bricht  
Like ony second row ditch  
And then President oh what a glorious sight  
Warm Reeking jock strap rich

Then horn for horn they stretch and strive  
Diel take the hindmost in a pick and drive  
Till a their weel swelled kytes belive are bent like drums  
Then the referee maist like to rive Bethankit hums

Now is there that ower his French line oot  
Or Italian Olio or Irish Stew or Welsh Fricasse  
That wad make him spew wi perfect scunner  
Would look doon wi scornful view on sic a Dinner

Poor Deevil see him ower his English Trash  
As feckless as a stand off rash  
His spindle shank a good whiplash  
His nieve an assistant referee nit  
Through Water of Leith floods or Murrayfield ..s to dash oh how unfit

But mark the Rustic haggis fed  
The trembling earth resounds in the changing shed  
Clap in his wally nieve a blade  
And he ll mak it whistle  
And English legs and airms and heids will sned  
Like taps o tight head thistle

Ye Powers and the SRU WHO MAKE THE FIRST FITEEN YOUR CARE

And their bill o fare you do out dish  
Auld Scotland wants ware that jaups in luggies  
No But if you wish her grateful prayer  
Gie her a bonus point haggis from London Scottish

**Jock Meikle**

## George Horne - winner the Sir Tommy Macpherson Quaich

DOB 12th May 1995  
Birthplace Dundee, Scotland  
Height 1.75 m (5' 9")  
Weight 79 kg (12 st 6 lb)  
Position Scrum Half  
Club London Scottish

George Horne was one of the inductees for season 2015-16 at the new academy structure for Scottish Rugby. Coming through the school set up, Horne was a pupil at Bell Baxter High School before moving to Strathallan School.

Horne has played for Howe of Fife and Currie and represented Scotland at Under 17, Under 19 and Under 20 levels. His father is the coach at Howe of Fife Rugby. His brother is the Glasgow Warriors centre and Scotland international Peter Horne.

George made his debut for Glasgow Warriors in a friendly match against the British Army Rugby Union side on 25 September 2015. In a 71-0 victory for the Warriors, Horne came off the bench to grab a try.

In November, 2015, he was loaned to London Scottish, by Glasgow Warriors, to gain more experience of playing professional rugby.

## Mark Bennett – winner of the Sir Willie Purves Quaich

DOB 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1993  
Birthplace Irvine  
Height 1.83 m  
Weight 89 kg  
Position Centre  
Club Glasgow Warriors

As 2015 World Rugby Breakthrough Player of the Year nominee, Mark Bennett broke into the international stage due to exciting performances for Glasgow Warriors and Scotland 7s. He represented Scotland four times at under-18 level and 17 times at under-20 level, and captained the Glasgow under-18 and under-16 teams.

He started every RBS 6 Nations Championship match in 2015 and gave some fine displays with two tries against Italy at home in the BT Murrayfield stadium and against England at Twickenham.

Mark won a place in the Scotland squad for the 2015 Rugby World Cup during which he scored three tries in four games - two in the opening match against Japan and a third in quarter-final against Australia.



*Left: George Horne Receives the Sir Tommy Macpherson quaich from Lady Jean*

*Right: Sir Willie presents the Sir Willie Purves quaich to Mark Bennett*

*Photos by Ian MacLeod*



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*Guests enjoying the reception*



*Jock addressing the haggis*



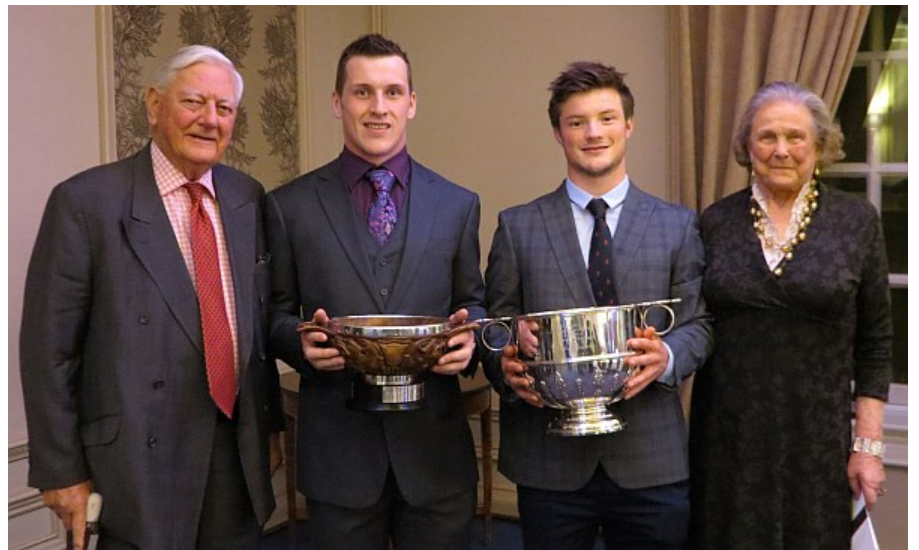
*Dinner was most convivial*



*Piping in the haggis*



*David presents a gift to Murdo*



*The quaiich party*