

# YOU WAT!

## *Watford Rugby Club Monthly Newsletter*



After a short break, welcome to our 3rd edition of You Wat. A lot has happened over the last 8 weeks, with the biggest event surely the wonderful Rugby World Cup hosted in Japan. On the field we were lucky enough to see some absolutely fantastic games (barring the final....) but what really struck a chord with me was just how welcoming the hosts were. A huge part of this wonderful welcome was the enthusiasm shown by the volunteers throughout the country who were so incredibly generous with their time... segueing nicely into the theme for this month's message. As a club, I can't stress enough just how dependent we are on the support of volunteers. Not one member of WRFC receives any form of reimbursement for the time they put into the club.

This includes the committee and every single coach from the 1st XV to the under 6's. Whilst all of us will see the end result of our volunteers' efforts (every time a player pulls on a Watford shirt and steps onto the pitch), the vast majority won't see the hours of prep undertaken by a whole host of people which have enabled that match to take place. . So what do our volunteers do? They coach, referee, organise socials, arrange fixtures, collect membership, maintain the clubhouse, administrate social media channels and the website, represent the Club at RFU functions, wash kit, give lifts to matches, order shirts & various stash items, organise tours, make sure we are safe and compliant to operate as a rugby club, donate funds, approach potential sponsors, organise our finances, administer our international ticket allocation, purchase equipment, upgrade the changing rooms, ensure we are GMS compliant, re-tile the roof.... That's a list of things from the top of my head which I know have happened since our last newsletter, from the seniors down to juniors (apologies to anyone I may have inadvertently missed!). My point is this. Comparatively speaking, we are a small club. We need the buy in of vast swathes of the membership to keep us going. If you are receiving this newsletter, WRFC means something to you and has positively impacted your life in some way. Be it through acquainting you to the great sport of rugby in the first place, introducing you to like-minded individuals or indeed to lifelong friends... Maybe even just providing you with something to do at the weekend. We all love our club, and need more people to step up and share the workload. It's Christmas after all... If you feel able to contribute, no matter how small that contribution may be then please get in touch. We would love to hear from you. On a final note, on behalf of the club thank you for your support throughout the year. We are making real progress, both on and off the pitch across all age groups. Here's to carrying it on into 2020. Have a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Martin Lee Club Chairman

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# U18 Review

Words from U18 Coach Adrian Matthews

After many years of supporting/hindering Anna within our age group it has, for better or worse, fallen to me to put the finishing touches on the goals that we set ourselves over 5 years ago. The goal was to be able to provide any player, whatever their ability, a place within Watford Rugby Club and give them somewhere that they could continue to play rugby. We have a squad of 25 players who are united, talented and committed. At this age group so many clubs are struggling to field teams due to losing players. Not only have we been able to keep our players, we have grown our squad, with both new players and also lads returning to the game. I like to think that this is because of the environment that this club provides. Winning is fantastic but success is being the best we can be whilst enjoying the beautiful game. We are hoping that a number of players will make a successful transition to senior rugby, with a number of this group having already made the jump.

## APPEARANCE TIES AWARDED



The latest round of senior appearance ties recognising long service were awarded following the home double header on the 16th November. James Braun received his 100 appearance tie, with Andrew 'Huxley' Montague and George Hicks being awarded with their 200 appearance ties. Congratulations to all three on a superb achievement!

## MACMILLAN CAKE SALE SUCCESS

A huge well done to Flick Wilson and all who baked or bought over the 15th / 16th November for the WRFC Macmillan Coffee Morning. We raised a fantastic £302 for a brilliant cause! Thank you to all who supported the event.



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# Where's Wat Wandered?

Words from Joe Franklin

It is with a heavy heart that I'm writing this look-back at the 2019 Rugby World Cup 2019... But it's been over a month since the final, so it's about time I came to grips with it and looked at the positives \*he says, holding back tears\*. Getting to Japan and to a Rugby World Cup have always been dreams of mine, so this trip really was a once in a lifetime. I met up out there with my brothers Tom & Sam, my parents John & Sue and some friends of ours, including good old Scott Menzies. It was the full Franklin Clan on patrol (with a few plus 1s). John Franklin managed to recover from injury to get the all-clear to fly only 2 days before, managing 4 thoughtfully-booked walking tours Sue booked them - earning himself the title 'The Ace in a Brace.' We toured the country totalling nine cities (Tom managed more), catching the quarters vs Australia, semis vs NZ and finals vs SA on the weekends and exploring Japanese culture (gorging on Ramen and Asahi) during the weekdays. As gutting as it was to lose the final, you have to take your hats off to the South Africans and to our boys for the effort they put in. Three highlights: Being interviewed on Japanese TV wearing England shirts, karate suits and Cipriani/ Care masks, watching Menzies be the only person in all of Japan to be denied alcohol at an off-license, and teaching NZ how to take a loss (even if we had to endure our own lesson the weekend after). I was proud to be out there and unashamedly proud to so far be the furthest flung entrant on Where's Wats.



Joe, John & Sam Franklin along with Scott Menzies at the Rugby World Cup Final in Yokohama, Japan.

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# Club Improvements



The club are now in the incredibly fortunate position of having a defibrillator installed on the premises, kindly donated to WRFC by the family of Robert Ridley who sadly passed away earlier this year. Robert was a huge supporter of the club during his son Chaz's playing time in the colts as one of 'Craig's Boys' and was an ever-present on the sidelines - regardless of the venue or weather. Rob continued to hold the club dear long after Chaz's playing career ended and was a champion of the values and ethos of our wonderful sport and club. WRFC are incredibly thankful for the generosity of Rob's family and friends which has allowed us to have this piece of kit.

# Birthdays

Belated Birthday wishes to U14's coach Matt Hobbs and Director of Rugby Richard Williams who celebrated their 50th and 60th birthdays respective over the last two weekends at the club. Special congratulations to those members who made both parties (commiserations to their livers), best of luck for those attempting the hat trick at the Christmas Party this weekend!



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### **One From The Archives**

Our monthly feature, WRFC longest serving player Gary Bridge remembers back to the early 1880's (Sorry, 1980's).

Words from Mr Gary Bridge, currently enjoying season no. 42 in a Watford shirt. In the good old days when men were men and Watford ran 7 teams, one would receive a postcard via the Royal Mail the week of a match confirming which team you had been selected for, meet time, opposition etc. There were a few sides back then (and indeed now) who were referred to as acronyms rather than their full name. For example, OMT's = Old Merchant Taylors, HAC = Honourable Artillery Company, BA = British Airways and so on and so forth. When we received our card with the opposition 'TBA', this generated a great deal of discussion as to who our opponents may be. Mick Cook was adamant they were a well drilled, decent side with a pretty formidable pack led by a rather feisty prop. Priding ourselves on our pack, this naturally had all the lads pumped up and raring to go – we would show TBA who's boss. Saturday arrived, WRFC were resplendent in their match day best ready for the long drive to TBA. For those of you who haven't worked it out yet, TBA is of course 'To Be Announced' and we were duly informed we would be playing Pinner at home. Classic Cook.

## **Our monthly update from our friends at the Regent Club.**

Are you drinking too much?

Here at You Wat we like to encourage responsible drinking – quite a lot of it actually. But how much do we really know about drinking habits in the UK? We sent our correspondent Annie DeBeer to find out a little more for us, and here's Annie's report.

As part of my research I obtained a copy of a recently published report called the Study of Obsessive Drinking in Society (SODS), which provides a shocking insight into our drinking habits. The SODS report claims that 74% of people entering Britain's pubs do so with the intention of getting drunk.

I met with one of the report's authors, Alicia Sober, to get some background. Alicia told me that it was a very extensive piece of research and that they sent SODS into pubs all over the country to observe people's drinking habits. "And we are being recognised for it" said Alicia, "only the other day I was in a pub and heard the landlord say to one of his regulars, 'that pair over there have been here for two hours and only had a bottle of coke and a bag of Nobby's Nuts, we can do without those sorts of sods coming in here all the time'".

Alicia agreed to a bit of field research and we headed off to the Drunk 'n' Duck, the local pub to You Wat Towers, to seek comment from landlord Lardy Les on the scathing report. "74% eh" he said, "I suppose the other 26% are those people who come into my pub asking if I 'do food'. Well I tell 'em to piss off, do they think I've got Annoyingly Worrell-Thompson in the kitchen waiting to rustle up a Beef Wellington and asparagus tips for any Hooray Henry who can't be bothered to find a restaurant".

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“Some smart arse will usually come out with the old ‘man cannot live on beer alone’ rubbish. I just point them towards Blind Bob over in the corner. He’s been coming in here every day for the last 30 years for his regular 8 pints of Old Skullsplitter and never feels the need to eat. I will admit that occasionally, like when he misses his breakfast, he might have a cheese & pickle roll and a bag of pork scratchings for his guide dog. My missus does a lovely cheese & pickle roll by the way, should have a bleeding Michelin star for them”.

We look over towards Blind Bob in the corner, a frail old man with lifeless eyes gazing into the never-ending distance; an unlit pipe between his lips, no doubt thinking of better times when he didn’t have to go out in the cold for a puff of rough shag. At that point Bob gets up and shuffles his way carefully across the room to the Gents toilet. His guide dog lifts his head and watches him all the way. Two minutes later Bob returns to his seat, again under the watchful eye of the dog.

I remarked to Alicia how wonderful it was that Bob had been coming in here so long that he can find his way to the Gents OK even though he’s blind. “Oh, he’s not actually blind” says Les, “we just call him Blind Bob for a laugh”. So why does he have a guide dog then if he’s not blind, I ask Les. “Well he’s not a full-time guide dog, most of the day he’s just a normal dog but he has been specially trained. You noticed that when Bob got up to go to the Gents the dog was watching him. Well he was assessing how drunk Bob was from the way he was moving. It’s a very clever skill, and something that they learn at the Guide Dogs for the Blind Drunk Association before they get allocated to someone like Bob”.

Les explained further, “When the dog senses that Bob is blind drunk he switches into full guide dog mode and makes sure that Bob gets home safely without falling into any ditches or taking a dip in the canal.

It’s even been specially trained to take a route that avoids the dodgy kebab shop on Albion Road and the late-night burger van in B&Q’s car park. And it’s good for trade too, it means I can usually get another couple of pints of Old Skullsplitter down Bob as he has no worries about getting home safely. Yes, those people at the Guide Dogs for the Blind Drunk do a wonderful job, there’s a collection tin on the bar if you have any spare change”.

Alicia and I left the Drunk ‘n’ Duck in deep thought, just as Lardy Les delivered another pint of Old Skullsplitter to Blind Bob’s table. The dog looked up and seemed to nod - I’m sure he was counting.

You Wat is very grateful to Annie DeBeer and Alicia Sober for this report, which we are sure you’ll all agree is very thought provoking. If anyone has any old tennis balls, dog chews or squeaky toys that they’d like to send to the Guide Dogs for the Blind Drunk Association, they should be marked for the attention of Ann Hoosier-Goodboyden.

Clive

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**Want to be included in the next edition of You Wat?**

*Email Martin Lee – martin.graham.lee@gmail.com.*

**Looking to hire the clubhouse?**

*Contact Ryan, ryandalton92@gmail.com*

**Those looking to play?**

*Richard Williams (Senior) on rich216williams@hotmail.co.uk*

*Tim Casey (Junior) at tim.casey@arup.com*

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