



Gate Post No. 134 May 2022

This newsletter is sent to all the supporters, current and past members of Harrogate Rugby Club for whom we have an email address. Please forward the newsletter to anyone else who may be interested. If you would like to be added to our database for future copies please send your email address to brianforshaw4@virginmedia.com. Your contributions would be most welcome along with your feedback. If you would like copies of previous editions please contact brianforshaw4@virginmedia.com.

Martyn Wood becomes Director of Men's Rugby with Sam Fox as Head Coach



Harrogate Rugby Union Football Club are pleased to announce the appointment of Martyn Wood as Director of Men's Rugby and the continuation of Sam Fox's position as Head Coach for next season, 2022/2023.

Martyn and Sam will also be joined by Aled Jones, who is taking on the role of Head of Rugby Transition.

Aled will be responsible for supporting young players as they move from the Academy to Senior Rugby and



will manage and coach the Georgians next season.

These appointments demonstrate the continued commitment of the club to provide players with a pathway to whatever level of rugby they aspire to play at; social rugby, National League rugby or beyond.

Martyn joins Harrogate after a long professional playing career which saw him playing for Wasps, Bath, and England. This was followed by coaching roles that took him to Hull Ionians and Yorkshire Carnegie.

Sam started his coaching career while still playing for Harrogate 1st XV supporting the early season of the fledgling Junior Academy. Named as Head Coach at the start of the season and struggling with injury 2021-22 was a baptism of fire through which Sam has conducted himself with the level of professionalism that embodies the values of Harrogate Rugby Club.

Aled also joined Harrogate to support the early years of the Academy and has continued to support both the Colts and Senior sides during the past season. His passion for the club and attention for detail provides a much-needed platform for players stepping up to senior rugby and joining the club from outside.

The positions of forwards coach for senior men's and strength and conditioning coach remain open for the coming season and Harrogate welcome any applications to info@harrogaterugby.com.

Iain Salkeld to step down as Club Chairman

Dear Members,

I write to inform you that after six years on the HRUFC Committee, five as Chairman, I will not be standing for re-election at this year's AGM. I believe with my particular skill-set and business experience, I have taken the club as far as I can at this time and someone with a different set of skills and drive is needed to continue the growth and development of the club. Hopefully you will agree that the club has made significant progress over the last five years with the key areas of progress being:



Financially we have moved from a position of high debt, £25,000 overdraft, poor cash flow and daily fire-fighting for payment of creditors, suppliers and so on to one of low and affordable debt, cash in the bank and suppliers paid as per agreement and in a timely fashion. Much of the progress made being due to the time and efforts of David Thompson as Hon. Treasurer.

The five-year lease with Crest Nicholson was negotiated and following an initiative led by Mike Cowling, we have secured a 999 year lease of the property at Rudding Lane. We have also moved to Regulated Charity status to secure the future of the grounds and facility, dislocating the ownership of the grounds from the trading part of the club in an initiative led by David Thompson.

Clubhouse – Jo Finnegan has worked tirelessly for the last two years to keep the clubhouse running and improving throughout the challenges of Covid-19, the return to rugby and some social normality this year. I often receive complimentary comment on the welcome at the bar and improved food offering.

Grounds have continued to improve under the care of Dave Oswin, Zeynu and a team of volunteers despite significant budget restrictions and we have exciting ground development plans to be delivered in the future.

Rugby has seen the Aces promoted back to National 2 North at the end of the 2019/20 season. The Ladies have been promoted through various leagues to the second tier of Ladies rugby finishing 6th this year and regularly field a second team. The Harrogate Academy has been established with professional coaching in place to create a clear pathway to senior rugby which has seen a number of debutants in the Aces from the Junior Section and Academy.

The Junior and Minis Section continues to grow. My thanks to David Doherty, Mike and Lucy Barnett, Mark Garrett, Andy MacDonald and Matt Grant for all their work in these areas. The Junior Section provides a foundation of circa 450 members and it would be great to see this section more widely represented in the running of the club as a whole.

Having created a stable financial base, good facilities/environment and rugby structure the club is well placed to develop further and I am confident a new Chairperson will be in a position to take the club to the next level. One area that needs further development is a wider representation on the committee. For the last two years certain individuals have held dual roles such as Commercial Chairman and Rugby Chairman, President and Honorary Secretary and the number of people coming forward to assist with the running of the club has been minimal. With the complications of Covid-19 and work-life balance, I fully recognise why you might be reticent to come forward. I can tell you that involvement on the committee is a rewarding way to assist and/or give back to your rugby club.

A review of the structure of the club and guidance on how individuals can help-out is underway and resources should be available soon to help you consider how you might help.

In order for the club to grow from its current strong base it needs new ideas and energy to assist in the running of the club and I urge anyone who is interested in helping out to stand for nomination to the main club committee.

Farewell to Stalwarts of Harrogate Ladies



Bill Barrack (President HRUFC) writes: The departure of Lucy and Mike Barnett from Ladies Rugby brings a remarkable period of success to an end. I think it was in 2016 when Lucy took over the Harrogate Ladies Team. I well remember the Sunday Ladies Gala Day which she put on to show what she had in mind for the girls. There were all sorts of raffles, lucky dips and side shows. Our then President, John Finnegan and I made the grand tour of the event and I won an England Rugby Mug. I've still got it though, as a Scotsman, I have to keep it hidden.

Very soon, Lucy absolutely transformed Harrogate Ladies Rugby. Mike soon came on board to contribute his valuable coaching skills and the standards escalated beyond recognition. Harrogate Ladies Rugby are now running two sides, Harrogate Ladies and the Hens second team. Our Ladies are competing at National Level 2.

Most unfortunately for the club, Lucy and Mike are retiring to concentrate on the development of Didi Rugby and Ladies Coach John Hardy is also moving on.

John's considerable coaching talents have been fundamental to our Ladies many successes and it goes without saying that they're all going to be sadly missed. Everybody at Harrogate Rugby Club wishes them well for the future.

RODNEY SPRAGG (SEPTEMBER 1942 - APRIL 2020)



Harrogate Rugby Club is sad to announce that Rodney Spragg has died and we send our sincere condolences to his wife Sian.

Rodney played hooker for the Harrogate Georgians against Wilmslow 'A' on Saturday 8th September 1962 and later played for the 1st XV in the 1960s. He was Club Chairman and NCA representative 1990 - 1993, Secretary 1994 - 1998 and President 1998 - 2000. He was also Chairman of the Squash section when the squash courts were built under his supervision

at Claro Road. He was Press Officer, Membership Secretary and led the Relocation Group from 1988 to 2001. He became known as 'Relocation Rodney.' Rodney was a great servant to the club in so many ways over so many years. He was voted Touchline International of the Year for the 1996/1997 season.

Rodney was a chartered surveyor and offered his skills to the rugby club throughout his time as a member. In the photograph of some former Presidents of HRUFC taken at Rudding Lane, Rodney is on the right. Left to right: Allen Tattersfield, Norman Hesp, John Finnegan, Roy Guy, Brian Forshaw, Glyn Smith, Rodney Spragg.

Harrogate Weather Wakefield Revival (13th February 1965)

The following match report from 1965 was included in the May 2022 edition of the Burglar Bill magazine produced by Richard Lowther of Wakefield.:

Wakefield were on a roll of eight successive wins before travelling to Harrogate. The home side were missing three regulars including international Oliver Grant and two players who were playing

in the inter- services game, whilst Wakefield were at full strength bar for regular captain John Kaye who was out with a long term injury. Vice-captain John Waind took over the duties.

The home side with the benefit of a gale-force wind at their backs built up an 8-0 lead at the interval. A.G.I Wood snapped up a ball following a defensive kick by Garth Morris before linking up with Pawson who sent Smith over for a try, which John converted. The full-back later added a penalty.

It was thought that Harrogate had not taken full advantage of the weather conditions and that Wakefield would be able to overturn the deficit in the second half and they started brightly with a drop goal by Morris and a try by John Masters but, in the words of the Wakefield Express, "They never really looked like cracking Harrogate's tough hard-tackling defence."

Harrogate's pack, although beaten in both lineouts and scrums were never mastered in the loose and they held on to win 8-6.

HARROGATE			WAKEFIELD		
15 *G. A. JOHN	Full Back		1 D. GOMERSALL		
14 S. D. WILKINS	Right Wing		2 *M. MELLIGAN		
13 M. W. BIELBY	Right Centre		3 D. GARTHWAITE		
12 J. E. SMITH	Left Centre		4 R. EASTWOOD		
11 J. F. PAWSON	Left Wing		5 M. BOKAS		
10 J. M. MILBURN	Off-Half		6 G. MORRIS		
9 C. N. L. ROTHERHAM	Scrum-Half		7 J. MASTERS		
1 C. E. MITCHELL	Forwards		8 *A. DANIELS		
2 *J. YOUNG			9 A. GOMERSALL		
3 *M. A. HYMAS (Captain)			10 A. BELLWOOD		
4 S. R. HIPPS			11 *D. COPLEY		
5 D. R. CHAPPELL			12 *J. WAIND (Capt.)		
6 M. H. GAUNT			13 *J. WILD		
8 M. S. NEWPORT			14 *G. CLARKSON		
7 *A. G. I. WOOD			15 R. SPENCER		

† Denotes International Player
* Denotes County Player

Colours: Red, Amber and Black Colours: Black and Gold

Playing Record :
W11, D1, L9, for 243, against 169 (Mr. P. G. Holtby (East Riding Soc.)) Playing Record :
W18, D2, L5, for 462, against 152

1964/1965



Harrogate 1st XV

1964/1965 Back row left to right: Martin H. Mordy, Ninian D.C. Smith, Richard R. Baldwin, Don R. Chappell, T.O. Grant, Steve R. Hipps, J.F. Stephenson, M.H. Gaunt, G.A. John, Bob Fall (Trainer). Front row left to right: I.P. Reid, J.M. Milburn, C. Jack Simpson (President), Mike A. Hymas (Captain), Charlie

E. Mitchell, Steve D. Wilkins, Chris L. Rotherham.

Other Harrogate Players 1964/1965: M. Bielby, J. G. Cummings, S. Loud, M. Newport, J. Smith, J. Stephenson, A. G. I. Wood, J. Young.

ANNUAL DINNER AT THE OLD SWAN HOTEL



The Harrogate Rugby Club Annual Dinner was held at the Old Swan Hotel on Thursday 28th April, with guest speaker Brian Moore who spoke about his career and experiences inside and outside of rugby. The Master of Ceremonies for the night was Kevin Lynch, a former football league referee.

This was the 150th anniversary celebration for the Harrogate Rugby Club which was formed in 1871 and over three hundred guests were able to celebrate in style with their first dinner in two years following the Covid restrictions.

Organiser, Mike Cowling welcomed all guests, including the main dinner sponsors Emsley Crane Hire. Other sponsors present were Apollo Capital, Harrogate Wealth Management, Richard Austin Alloys, CBRE, Laver Regeneration and Tellermate.

Over a hundred junior parents and coaches were present, and also the Touch Rugby section managed by Tony Lewis. The guest list included many former players and current supporters. The top table guests included former Harrogate Internationals Peter Squires and Roger Shackleton, with former 'England Rugby' doctor Terry Crystal auctioning some England international tickets. The silent auction was run by Impulse Decisions, which is managed by ex-Harrogate player James Marsden. The evening was thoroughly enjoyable and raised several thousand pounds for the club's funds.