

*S Hamilton*  
*W. James*  
*A. W. Jan*  
*J. Hay*

# OFFICIAL OPENING OF CLUBHOUSE

*Phill*  
*Buttle*  
*J. Evans*

29th September 1991

*R. P. Jones*  
*A. Jones*  
*H. Jones*  
*R. Jones*  
*S. Jones*  
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### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am delighted to welcome everyone to Wheatley Rugby Football Club on this memorable occasion to mark the opening of the new Clubhouse.

Hard work and hours of dedication by Club members has ensured that the building will be an integral part of village life and that the future of the Club is assured. On behalf of many present and future local rugby players I would like to thank all those concerned and congratulate them on a fine achievement.

The presence of Ieuan Evans, President of the Welsh Rugby Union, to open the Clubhouse is a great honour and a special pleasure for me. His enthusiasm for the game, especially at Youth level is well known and it will largely be through his efforts that success and enjoyment will return to Welsh rugby.

In a hectic year we are very grateful that the President has found time to be with us today. No greater honour can be paid to the Club.

May I also thank my own team for travelling many miles to be with us, especially 'Dusty' Hare who has enjoyed such a distinguished rugby career.

Good luck to the Wheatley Club this season at all levels; may everyone enjoy their rugby.

Finally, I wish everyone a happy visit, meeting old and new friends, and we shall see a game to savour and remember.

GEOFFREY WINDSOR-LEWIS  
PRESIDENT, WHEATLEY RUFC



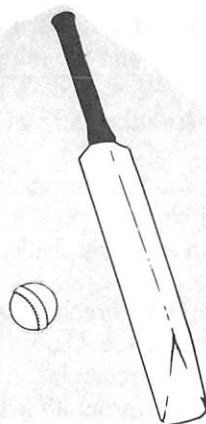


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## **From strength to strength...**

On being asked to write the introduction to this programme, I immediately reached in my memory box for a dog eared copy of the programme issued for the official opening of our original clubhouse way back on the 24th September 1978.

My first response was surprise at the familiar sounding names - ancients of the game who have survived the ravages of time and alcohol and continue playing regularly for Wheatley: Julian Hanks, Colin Stokes, Richard Gurney, Terry Cozier, Callum Crawford and Adrian Manger.

Surprise was tinged by sadness that Dennis Rowan and Dick Thorpe are no longer with us and will not see the product of their hard work and enthusiasm back "in the beginning". We all owe a lot to them and the other founder members such as Dick Manger, Glen Evans and Geoff Windsor-Lewis, who set the ball rolling and provided the village of Wheatley with the game of Rugby.

Perhaps they did not realise it at the time but they also set a lot of beer flowing. "If we cannot beat them on the pitch then we will at least win the Boat Race" is a Wheatley RFC claim that few can seriously challenge.

Such success, both on and off the field, breeds success. Wheatley RFC have a track record of credible performances in the Oxford Merit Table, Floodlit Cup and County Cup, often to the surprise of much larger and renowned Rugby Clubs. In 1988/89, Wheatley narrowly missed promotion to Oxford and Bucks League 1, losing out to arch rivals and naked Conga partners - Drifters. However, this was rectified the following year when promotion to League 1 was gained and it is here that we will continue to face tough competition this coming season.

It is difficult to put a precise finger on what stimulated the process of getting a new Clubhouse. Was it the fact that the lease on our old clubhouse would not be renewed beyond 1992 or were we increasingly scared of the health hazard presented by falling over drunk on the old clubhouse floor? Was it a response to the unerring dedication of Richard Cosier or a general belief that improved facilities could result in someone prettier and much slimmer than myself serving the after-match meals?

Whatever the answer, we now have a new Clubhouse which everyone can be proud of. A place where players leave the room to be ill and a place fit to bring your nearest and dearest, no matter who he is.

Profound thanks must go to many people, not least the Sportsfield Management Committee and those Club Members who lent their time to help with the building work. Many others subscribed to our "Buy a Brick" campaign and there was always support for fund raising Discos and the like. However, the real key has been the fielding of 3 good Rugby Teams and the membership and match fees that this generates.

So what of the future? Our new Clubhouse provides a stepping stone for moving from strength to strength. Last season we ran 3 teams and occasionally managed to raise a 4th team. This season we have a programme of fixtures for a 4th team throughout the season. A Colts side and Mini Rugby are other areas for expansion.

We welcome new members to make all this possible and to fill our ranks as the Club ancients fade away on their zimmer frames. And before I fade away on mine, I would like to leave you with a quote from Dennis Rowan in his introduction to the original clubhouse opening back in 1978:

*"There are many years ahead of exciting games and enjoyable social events. Hundreds of young men wait to be introduced to the game and I am confident we shall flourish"*

I'll drink to that!

Pedro Davis  
Chairman Wheatley Rugby Football Club

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#### A comment from Glen Evans...

When I was first approached by Dennis Rowan with regards to forming a rugby club in Wheatley, I did not think it was possible. Thanks to his tenacity, the Club has prospered and can now put out 4 teams.

I am delighted that we now have a Clubhouse worthy of Wheatley RFC.

As one of the founders of the Club, I have the greatest pleasure in wishing the Club every success in the future.

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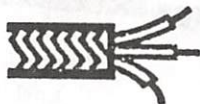
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CHAIRMAN'S XV  
(Wheatley RFC)

K.O. 12noon

COUNTY XV

P. DAVIS (Captain)

C. WRIGHT - Littlemore

M. HANCOCK

R. TYRELL - Oxford

A. QUAINTON

D. DILLON - Oxford

J. HANKS

K. TARRY - Grove

T. COSIER

J. POTTER - Grove

R. DAVIES

G. MARTIN - Littlemore

C. CRAWFORD

R. HICKSON - Littlemore

D. SYKES

C. DUNCAN - Wheatley

G. RUTHERFORD

J. HARVEY - Oxford

A. MANGER

R. TAPPER (Captain) - Oxford

A. QUARTERMAIN

S. JAMES - Drifters

K. LANGLEY

J. SUTTON - Gosford All Blacks

B. AXFORD

N. SMITH - Bicester

P. WILMOTT

S. WILLIAMS - Oxford Old Boys

P. BAILEY

E. GRATWOHL - Maidenhead

R. GURNEY

P. SURMAN

Referee: K. Dunford  
(Oxfordshire Society)

# WHEATLEY 1ST XV

K.O. 3.00pm

- |                               |                   |                       |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 15. L. DUNFORD (Captain)      | <i>Dunford</i>    | <u>FULL BACK</u>      |
| 14. M. WOODINGTON (Fatty)     | <i>Woodington</i> | <u>THREE-QUARTERS</u> |
| 13. R. COOMBS                 | <i>Coombs</i>     | Right Wing            |
| 12. N. CAIRNS (Jock)          | <i>Cairns</i>     | Centre                |
| 11. M. HOBBS (Ned)            | <i>Hobbs</i>      | Centre                |
| 10. I. DUNCALF                | <i>Duncalf</i>    | Left Wing             |
| 9. S. ASHMORE (Slim)          | <i>Ashmore</i>    | <u>HALF BACKS</u>     |
|                               |                   | Stand-Off             |
| 1. R. BROWN                   |                   | <u>FORWARDS</u>       |
| 2. D. BROWN (Daba)            | <i>Brown</i>      | Prop                  |
| 3. O. MURRAY (Fat Controller) | <i>Murray</i>     | Hooker                |
| 4. G. DAVIES (Gadger)         | <i>Davies</i>     | Prop                  |
| 5. P. RAMSDALE (Ramsbottom)   | <i>Ramsdale</i>   | Lock                  |
| 6. J. HOPCROFT (Chocko)       | <i>Hopcroft</i>   | Lock                  |
| 7. J. WILKINS                 | <i>Wilkins</i>    | Flanker               |
| 8. R. GRÖNMARK (Flying Finn)  | <i>Grönmark</i>   | Flanker               |
|                               |                   | No.8                  |

Replacements: R. Besley (Barnes Wallace);  
R. Yeates (Bonecrusher);  
M. Hobdell (Hobby)

Referee: A. Knowles  
(Oxfordshire Society)

# PRESIDENT'S XV

- |   |
|---|
| 15. W. H. HARE (Captain) - Leicester, Barbarians & England    |
| 14. C. STEVENS - Llanelli, Barbarians, Welsh 'B'              |
| 13. S. WINDSOR-LEWIS - Barnes                                 |
| 12. M. MABONE - Barnes  |
| 11. R. VESSEY - Oxford Univ., Kew Occasionals                 |
| 10. A. WILLIAMS - Bridgend, Welsh 'B'                         |
| 9. M. DeMAID - Cardiff  |
| 1. M. HOBLEY - Coventry & Barbarians                          |
| 2. J. EVANS - Neath   |
| 3. A. S. COOKE - Univ. Western Australia & Kew Occasionals    |
| 4. N. G. B. EDWARDS - Harlequins & Barbarians                 |
| 5. W. H. CUTHBERTSON - London Scottish, Barbarians & Scotland |
| 6. M. EGAN - London Irish & Oxford University                 |
| 7. I. SMITH - Leicester & Barbarians                          |
| 8. G. ROBBINS - Sutton Coldfield, Barbarians & England        |

Replacements: S. Ward - Sutton Coldfield, North Warwickshire

Touch Judges: G. Windsor-Lewis - H.A.C.; M. Phipps -Oxfordshire Society

*Ramman*  
*R. Yeates*

## Home is where you make it...

Terry phoned. "Sorry" I said, "Can't play Saturday, I've promised the wife I'll take her shopping". That was always the safest one wasn't it? "No you old fool, as one of the originals we just want you to do a piece for the programme". Much relief all round. A week later, still unscrambling the memories of twenty years ago, and Terry's deadline looming large, I almost wish it had been "Can you play?"

Memories of the earliest times of Wheatley RFC are never without the late and much missed duo of Dennis Rowan and Dick Thorpe, and of meetings held in dark corners of sundry bars around Wheatley, when the plots were hatched that launched a Rugby Club upon the unsuspecting populace.

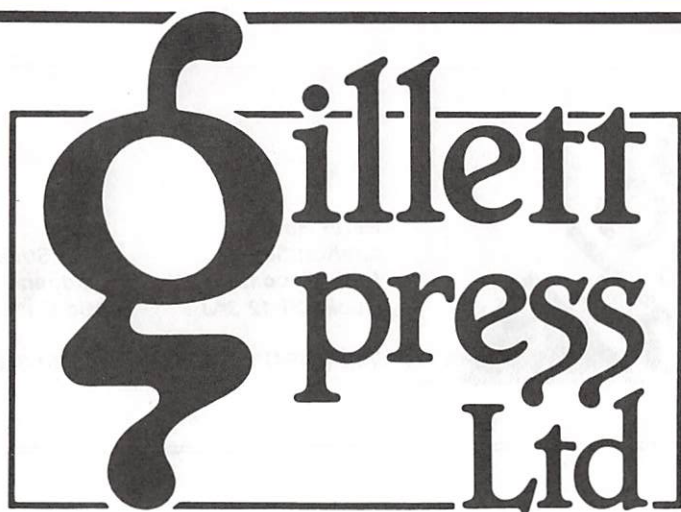
In the first instance we pinched half their soccer team. This was done with the simple persuader that in our game they could knock the opposition off their feet without being booked for it. Along with Leading Seaman Hanks J, escaping the weekend boredom of Chatham Dock Yard, Det.Con. Hanks P, with a strangely convenient weekend duty rosta, and a few callow youths (Dennis' words) from the Youth Club and Lord Bill's, where they actually played the game, we dressed them in a mixture of several sets of school rugby jerseys. We thus presented the Oxfordshire Society of Referees with something beyond their belief and almost beyond their control.

It was said at the outset and oft repeated, "We shall be OK when we have a home of our own". From that point on, the way that we exhausted our welcome in various habitats around Wheatley was almost shameful (it wasn't all our fault - blame London Welsh and London Irish 3rd XV's). Nevertheless, our flitting from the Youth Centre, to The Railway, to the New Club, to The White Hart, to The Sandpiper, and back to The Railway must have had a marked effect in the right quarters, for we thereafter had massive support from the Wheatley "Fathers" in making our move out of their village to the wastelands of the Old Military Hospital site at Holton. Our plight was taken so seriously we even displaced the Civil Defence Corps from their 1940's blanket and bedding store. How many today remember the last "Official Opening"?

To today then. What luxury! Changing rooms in the same building and carpet in the bar. Dennis never dreamed of that. What a marvellous achievement the new home is. To all those concerned in its creation, warmest congratulations. This latest watering hole does you proud. I'm sure the celebration of its official opening will be enjoyed by all and will be in the best traditions of the Wheatley Bedouin from long ago.

Dick Manger





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## MESSAGE FROM NIGEL STARMER-SMITH

I am sorry to miss this important milestone in Wheatley R.F.C.'s history. How quickly the seasons pass - not that that seems to affect Dusty Hare! Which reminds me that the last time I took the field in a 'serious' game of rugby was when Dusty Hare left the field with 20 minutes to go, playing for the Barbarians against East Midlands at Northampton. I was at the match, reporting it for BBC TV, and was 'conned' into acting as a standby for the depleted reserves bench. "Don't worry" said Geoff Windsor-Lewis, "No-one will come off during the game". So he said! Dusty decided to have a 'hamstring twinge' to ensure that I had to take the field - for the first time in months! So maybe it's just as well I'm not on hand to be duped a second time.

Seriously, though, congratulations! I'm away on Rugby World Cup duty this weekend, for BBC Radio (shame about the TV contract!) in France. But this occasion is far more important to you and Wheatley rugby folk than any World Cup. I wish you well and hope my connections with the club will continue in future.

*Best wishes,  
Nigel Starmar-Smith*

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## How the New Clubhouse Happened...

January 1986 - the question had been asked: "What are you going to do when your lease expires?" But that was almost seven years away and thoughts initially focussed on a renewable option on the Club's lease to take us into the next century.

However, the seeds had been sown and after considering the various courses open to the Club a set of drawings was produced by Jeff Biel. Planning approval was eventually granted after some arm wrestling with SODC.

There followed a concerted effort to increase membership by Pete (blood from a stone) Bailey and a season of general fund-raising. Much of the old clubhouse was sold a brick at a time, with some ghouls showing a peculiar desire to purchase parts of the toilets! Nearly every visiting club was coerced into making contributions and things started to snowball.

The real start was guaranteed by a loan from Whitbread instigated by Dave Sykes (of the Bat and Ball - free plug!). A meeting was held at the start of the 89/90 season and in the words of Joe Hopcroft, farmer, businessman etc: "We thought we ought to do it".

Building started on 1/2/90 and favours were called in. The foundations were dug under the management of Joe Hopcroft who was strangely blamed for filling many a local farmer's ditch with unwanted soil.

Things did not always run smoothly. A load of rubble was taken to Joe's farm in a borrowed lorry. The tail board was buried when it fell off and Joe spent the next 12 months picking bricks from his field as they surfaced. Foundation concrete saw an entrenched premix truck rescued by a borrowed JCB. The partial frame (erected by Manitou Joe) was discovered to have the roof sheeting on upside down.

Inspite of such fun, families Coombs and Quainton started block laying and the floor slab saw many a gallon of sweat shed as anyone with a few hours lent a hand.

Due to a change in design, far more block wall was needed than originally envisaged so builders were engaged to see the walls finished.

The internal layout also was being drastically altered. Many an hour was spent arranging bricks on the floor before the bar (bigger and better!) and kitchen (more compact!) were built. Additional exit arrangements agreed during construction meant that entertaining capacity could be increased under the fire certificate, and the extra cost of alarms was thought well worthwhile.



Wiring by Simon Ashmore and assistants was followed by the daunting task of plasterboarding the ceiling. The interior began to take shape with the Brown brothers seeming to spend more time swinging from the rafters than actually tacking them. A rapid contract by a plasterer left us with some semblance of the finished shell.

The heating was designed and laid by a friendly plumber and completed with temporary radiators by Big Slim Quartly.

The fortuitous postponement of home games at the start of the 90/91 season due to unplayable pitches saw work fever intensify. A cattle truck (Hopcroft's) to Marlow one Saturday resulted in enough second-hand seating to fit the "dry" area, almost as if it had been made to measure.

A chance conversation at the King and Queen one Sunday convinced Robinson's Tree Surgeons to donate some rather rough looking lumps of wood. When machined, glued and varnished by Chief Joiner John Plested (Sparrow), these produced the splendid solid oak bar top, the origin of which was an oak felled by lightening on the school campus some years ago. How befitting that someone planting acorns last century foresaw the need for our Rugby Club bar top.

After a valiant start at decorating by members, wives and children, the finishing was passed to others in the form of Roly Yeates. "Painting a fifteen foot high ceiling with a long roller pole and giant hangover was no fun" said Roly.

Thanks must go to all those who played their part but one or two characters deserve special mention: Terry (I know a man) Cozier, Peter (I know where there is ...) Davis, Julian (door before training) Hanks, Joe (Mr Manitou) Hopcroft and Owen (Fat Controller) Murray, who managed to acquire enough electric cable of the wrong size that the scrap money paid for the right stuff.

With such expertise and professional experience to call upon, I think we should offer our services to any other interested Clubs - for a fee this time!

What we have proudly achieved is a natural extension to the facilities on offer in Wheatley. The building is available for associate membership use by all sports persons using the fields and to anybody looking for a meeting or function room.

Richard Cosier





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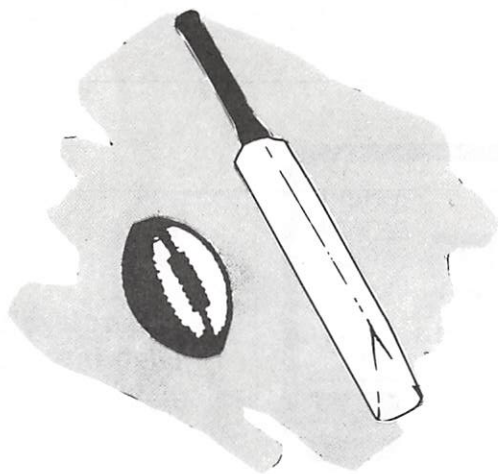
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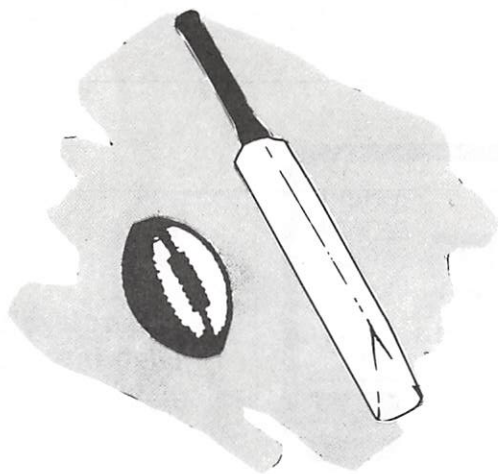


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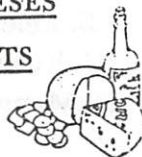


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Ickford  
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