

ROUND 1 | REGIONAL 1 SOUTH CENTRAL



CAMBO VS CS STAGS

MATCHDAY

HOME | 15:00 KO

**02
SEPT**

WATCHETTS PARK

ROUND 1 | LONDON COUNTIES & SOUTH COAST PREMIERSHIP



MAIDENHEAD VS CAMBO 2NDS

MATCHDAY

AWAY

**02
SEPT**

BRAYWICK ROAD

FRIENDLY | SURREY COMBINATION 2 LEAGUE



CAMBO 3RDS VS FARNAHM

MATCHDAY

HOME | 14:00 KO

**02
SEPT**

WATCHETTS PARK

CAMBERLEY RFC
v CS Stags 1863 RFC
02.09.23

London & SE Division
(Regional 1 South Central)
Watchetts Park, Camberley KO 3.00p.m.



Welcome to Camberley RFC



Welcome Everyone to the new season and our match against CS Stags 1863 RFC.

So here we go again. A new season, new hopes, new challenges await us all whatever part we have to play at Camberley RFC. To make this club a success at all levels we need an active membership willing to commit themselves. Of course we all have other commitments (work, school, families) but if many of us can volunteer to help in whatever capacity through the course of the season then that will make a big difference. We have great plans for the club as a whole to make it an enjoyable space for all, making weekends a good experience for players, supporters, parents and guests. So please if you think you can make a difference with whatever skill you may have to offer then let us know you wish to volunteer.

I'd love to see a thriving club with a great atmosphere - with home games on a Saturday for 1st, 2nd and yes a 3rd XV all playing in their particular leagues well supported on the touchline, for the pre-match lunches or enjoying a burger and a drink at the Fish Bar or creating a great atmosphere in the upstairs bar on both Saturdays and Sundays. I know that the players and coaching staff want success and we need to help that come true in whatever way we can. Likewise on a Sunday whether it be training or matches the players and coaches will be fully committed to good and enjoyable rugby and we want to make the experience for all to be a good one, with not only good rugby but a good social atmosphere. But to achieve this we will be again needing volunteers to help. So, the whole experience for all involved with the rugby club in the coming season will be a pleasant one providing we all commit ourselves to "do our bit". We have always been a welcoming club with a great atmosphere, long may that continue with all your support.

Mike Franzkowiak (President)



Today's Sponsors

Stewart Davies and Dave Scott

A massive thank you to Stewart and Dave, two of our strong supporters who unfailingly attend so many of the matches through thick and thin, over the years since they have retired from playing in a very successful 1st XV. There is a very strong "old boys" network in this club and it is a great pleasure to witness how they all enjoy not only the memories of their time playing for the club but how they still enjoy the company of the many lifelong friends made at the club.

We are seeking sponsors for the club in various ways to help support the strength in all our various sections – The Senior squads, The Womens and Girls Teams, The Academy, The Juniors and Kid First.

So if you are in a position to help us in this way please contact Steve O'Meara and Andy Edge.

The players are also looking for sponsors so please contact Michael Clarke with your choice of player.

We have already had so many of you willing to sponsor matches and positions in the 1st XV and I thank you for that but there are a few gaps that need to be filled.

We need sponsors for the following matches:

Bracknell (16th September) - **URGENT**

Hammersmith & Fulham (18th November)

And for the following positions:

Fly Half

Left Wing

Right Wing

Replacements

So if you are able to then please contact Mike Franzkowiak (franzkowiaks@hotmail.com)

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in

Cam entertain Farnham in final 'hit' before the season starts by Roger Berry

So we all gathered at Gordons School on a rather stormy looking Friday for the final pre season fixture against our local rivals Farnham.

The format for evening had been arranged so that both sides could field their strongest squads for an initial 40min hit and this would be followed by 2x20 min sessions to ensure all of the lads had a decent run. In the event Cam turned up with almost 30 players while still missing several of the senior side while the visitors were a little light on numbers which meant that many of their players played the full 80 mins. So the first 40 started with Cam quickly moving into the redzone and we saw Mac and Antonio in harness driving over with Mac claiming the try with about 5 mins played. The restart was not handled well by the black and ambers and poor defending saw Farnham quickly level things up. Throughout this period the Cam 8 were awesome particularly at scrum time and this pressure was rewarded on 15 mins when, following another 5m lineout drive, we saw Mac again using his power to cross for his second of the evening. From the Farnham restart we then had the glorious sight of tight head Bazza being set free on his 22 and he used his startling pace and power to take play back into the Farnham half and a couple of destructive scrums in the visitors 22 saw #9 Ali take full advantage of a retreating defence before a neat pop to George saw the fireman cross for a well worked try with just 20 mins played. As to be expected in these games play from both sides then became a tad scrappy but in the closing stages we again witnessed some great skills when Bazza, following up a kick ahead, at pace, took full advantage of the awkward 4G bounce, collecting the ball and setting off from halfway leaving the Farnham defence in tatters until a pop pass to Ben saw the fullback cross for the final score in this session which end 26-7 or 4 tries to 1.

The second and third periods saw both sides make lots of changes and also tiredness setting in but from the Cam perspective we again saw some very encouraging signs both in the forwards and backs. At this time we saw the introduction of the 18 year old pair Harry and Harrison into the row and they certainly rose to the challenge and this was typified when, in what turned out to be the last scrum of the session the engine room produced a massive scrum which completely destroyed the opposition – not bad for a couple of lads in pretty much their first game of adult rugby. In general scoring in these two sessions was limited but all of us who were at the game will remember Shawa's amazing effort when he collected the ball on the Farnham 10m line and, using all of his power and pace, carved through the Farnham defence with no defender able to hold him and even when he was thrown to the floor he just bounced up again and continued before touching down under the posts – an absolutely amazing run – guess that's what is possible when you can dead lift 210kg!!!

So I imagine that Clarkey and his coaching team will be pleased with much of what they saw in the first session but they will certainly need to ensure that going forward the team protect hard won possession much better than they did at times in this game. It was good to see the early results of our scrum coach Garcia Botta's input during the preseason. Garcia, a member of the Quins squad for several seasons, has been helping Clarkey and his team during the summer and we must hope that his continued input creates an even more dominant 8 than we witnessed this evening.

So, as always, the coaches have some challenges when it comes to selection for next Saturday when the 1s kick off their season with a home fixture against CS Stags ko 15.00, and the 2s start their league programme at Maidenhead and we also have the 3s with a friendly against Farnham also at Watchetts - let there be no doubt - Rugby Is Back!!!!!!

Fixtures & Results to Date

Camberley RFC Fixtures & Results 2023 - 24 Season						Match Sponsor/Information
02/09/2023	Camberley RFC	-	CS Stags 1863		League	Stewart Davies & Dave Scott
09/09/2023	Maidenhead RFC	-	Camberley RFC		League	
16/09/2023	Camberley RFC	-	Bracknell RFC		League	TBC
23/09/2023	Marlborough RFC	-	Camberley RFC		League	
30/09/2023	Camberley RFC	-	Havant RFC		League	Thursday Touch Rugby Squad
14/10/2023	Tunbridge Wells RFC	-	Camberley RFC		League	
21/10/2023	Camberley RFC	-	Brighton RFC		League	Martin Jennings & Dave Scott
04/11/2023	Bournemouth RFC	-	Camberley RFC		League	
11/11/2023	Camberley RFC	-	Horsham RFC		League	Simon & Derek Olsen
18/11/2023	Camberley RFC	-	Hammersmith & Fulham RFC		League	TBC
02/12/2023	London Welsh RFC	-	Camberley RFC		League	
09/12/2023	Camberley RFC	-	Maidenhead RFC		League	Nigel Gascoine & Shaun Bradbery
16/12/2023	Bracknell RFC	-	Camberley RFC		League	
06/01/2024	Camberley RFC	-	Marlborough RFC		League	Karl Jackson, Stewart Johnston & Simon Elverson
13/01/2024	Havant RFC	-	Camberley RFC		League	
27/01/2024	Camberley RFC	-	Tunbridge Wells RFC		League	Declan Pettite & Rowly Thomas
03/02/2024	Brighton RFC	-	Camberley RFC		League	
17/02/2024	Camberley RFC	-	Bournemouth RFC		League	Gus Bartlett
02/03/2024	Horsham RFC	-	Camberley RFC		League	
16/03/2024	Hammersmith & Fulham RFC	-	Camberley RFC		League	
23/03/2024	Camberley RFC	-	London Welsh RFC		League	Chris Powell & Chris Gibson / President's Day Lunch
06/04/2024	CS Stags 1863 RFC	-	Camberley RFC		League	
World Cup Fixtures 2023						
09/09/2023	England	-	Argentina			KO 20.00
17/09/2023	England	-	Japan			KO 20.00
23/09/2023	England	-	Chile			KO 16.45
07/10/2023	England	-	Samoa			KO 16.45
14/10/2023	QF (If England Runner Up)	-				KO 16.00
15/10/2023	QF (If England Winner)	-				KO 16.00
20/10/2023	SF 1	-				KO 20.00
21/10/2023	SF 2	-				KO 20.00
28/10/2023	Final	-				KO 20.00
England Internationals 2024 (6 Nations)						
03/02/2024	Italy	-	England			KO 14.15
10/02/2024	England	-	Wales			KO 16.45
24/02/2024	Scotland	-	England			KO 16.45
09/03/2024	England	-	Ireland			KO 16.45
16/03/2024	France	-	England			KO 20.00

TODAY

London & SE Surrey Premiership League 1 (KO TBC)			
1st XV	v	CS Stags 1863 1st XV	(Home)

London Counties & South Coast Premiership (KO TBC)			
2nd XV	v	Maidenhead 2nd XV	(Away)

Friendly (KO 2.00p.m.)			
3rd XV	v	Farnham 3rd XV	(Home)

TOMORROW

Friendly KO 2.00p.m.			
Womens XV	v	Birmingham Moseley	

Friendly KO 2.00p.m.			
Snr Academy	v	Winchester	

Training for all other squads			
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THE CITY LUNCH - Nov. 3rd 2023



Buy your City Lunch tickets!

****Featuring guest speaker former England Men's Rugby captain Chris Robshaw – Friday 3rd November 2023****

One of the best events on our Camberley Rugby calendar, our City Lunch, is taking place on Friday 3rd November from 12pm - 5pm in Smith & Wollensky's in Covent Garden. Tickets are £99 per head.

What's our City Lunch?

For those of you who have not attended this event before, it's a really fun day, that kicks off with plenty of G&Ts, followed by a three-course lunch and an auction with some fantastic lots on offer. This year we have managed to secure Chris Robshaw as our guest speaker. The feedback from previous years has been great, and the event has built in popularity each time. Monies raised go to our club, benefiting all our members!

Who's it for?

Our City Lunch is for club members and their families, friends, business contacts and clients who enjoy a great day out.

How to buy your tickets

Buy your tickets on the website.

Email our club secretary Nicki Bundock to request who you'd like to sit with: nicki@camberleyrugbyclub.co.uk

You're able to buy between one and ten tickets.

Alternatively, if you would like to book a table (ideally in groups of 10 people) please let Nicki know and she'll arrange for you to be invoiced.

Can you offer an auction prize?

We are also looking for high end auction prizes. At this event we tend to see some really good prizes being auctioned off for great sums of money. If you have, for example, a holiday home, debentures to events, or anything that you think you would happily donate for our City Lunch then please do let Nicki know.

See you there!

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Punjab is the land of Five Rivers and the land of the oldest civilisation in the world 'the Indus valley civilization' . Perhaps, it would be appropriate to call it the Land of Plenty!!

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Punjab is famous for its adventurous, outgoing, eat well-drink well Punjabis. The emphasis has traditionally been on robust food, prepared with the simplest of ingredients and the simplest of basic techniques. Punjab – this side of the border or that – is situated at the crossroads of Silk Route. This allowed the Punjabis – Sikh, Hindu and Muslims – to imbibe diverse culinary influence. They tasted the best of the rest before anyone else on the subcontinent. The proximity with Persia, Afghanistan and Central Asia gave them a taste for fresh and dried fruits and exotic nuts.

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“He who has not seen Punjab has not lived at all”

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League Tables

London & SE Division (Regional 1 South Central) League

[illegible]

London Counties & South Coast Premier League

[illegible]



Camberley RFC 1st XV



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Position Sponsors

No. Name

Match Ball

Sponsors:

**Mike Courtness
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Bruce McLaren
Roger Chamberlain
Stephen Wickens**

**1 Antonio Ripata
2 John Murphy
3 Nick Barry
4 Dom Sammut
5 Sam Voight
6 Alex Hughes
7 Chris Bird (c)
8 Mac Duaibe**

**Gwynne Evans
TBC**

**9 Ally Walton
10 Raymond Morunga**

Coaching Staff

Dir of Rugby:

Michael Clarke

1st XV Coaches:

Head Coach;

Sam Voight

Backs Coach:

Chris Laidler

Forwards Coach:

Alex Hughes

TBC

Roger Berry

Derek Olsen

TBC

Billy White

TBC

**11 George Owen
12 Jaid Wiltshire
13 Josh Wright
14 Matt Bowers
15 Vic Hardwycke**

**16 Greg Franzel
17 Ben Lovell-Smith
18 Ben Stevens**

Managers -

Ant Bentham and Dave Dunsby

Press Officer - Roger Berry

**Director of Rugby sponsored by:
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CS Stags 1863 RFC 1st XV



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Position

1.	Andrew Barton	Loose Head Prop
2.	Jake Farnworth	Hooker
3.	Lewis Jones	Tight Head Prop
4.	Angus Low	Lock
5.	Matt Harwood	Lock
6.	George Butler	Blind Side Flanker
7.	Liam Barton	Open Side Flanker
8.	Mike Ozdilli (c)	No. 8



9.	Alex Jones	Scrum Half
10.	Al Mackenzie	Fly Half

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11.	Luke Trigg	Wing
12.	Will Sherwood	Centre
13.	Toby Eaton	Centre
14.	Parimal Shrestha	Wing
15.	Charlie Maskrey	Full Back

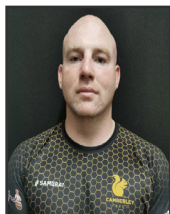
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16.	Ricky Hollamby	Substitute
17.	Tom Eyston	Substitute
18.	Jamie Dimelow	Substitute

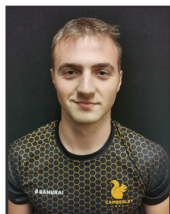
Coach: Oli Bryant

1st XV Squad 2022/23

(watch this space for some new faces for 2023/24)



Michael Clarke



Alex Young



Tom Allen



Nick Barry



Josh Lewanitupa



Vic Hardwicke



Ally Walton



Chris Bird



George Owen



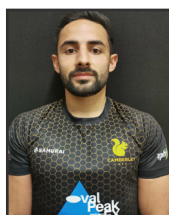
Ben Lovell-Smith



Adam Pickett



Dom Sammut



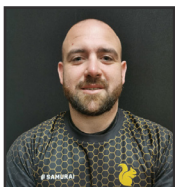
Jaid Wiltshire



Sam Voight



Greg Franzel



Liam Prescott



Shawa Rai



Alex Hughes



Dan Matthews



Ed Grosvenor

Camberley Womens' Team and 3rd XV

Women's NC 3 South East (West)

[illegible]

Surrey Combination 2 League

[illegible]

Our Director of Rugby's Hopes for 2023/24

Welcome back... it feels like a lifetime since we've had rugby at Watchett's, in actual facts, it's been 147 days since we last took the field in front of all of our supporters, friends and family. There's been a lot of change in our men's rugby programme over the last 6 months and before we start talking about all of the hard work over the summer, it's really important to acknowledge the foundations we're currently building on and the people that laid them! It's fair to say Gareth Rise, the outgoing DoR, achieved huge amounts over the last decade. The promotions speak for them selves, but the real success in my eyes is the people like Nick Barry and Sam Voight, both joining Camberley as teenagers under Gareth and staying with us through the leagues, becoming great rugby players and more importantly, even better men! I'm sure you will all join me in wishing Gareth the best of luck in his future endeavours.

The senior coaching team is made up of Sam Voight (head coach), Chris Laidler (backs coach), Alex Hughes (lineout), Mark Eastleigh and Greg Beers who run the second team. Over the summer we spent a lot of time readdressing our roles and responsibilities and defining the value that we add to the players. It quickly became obvious that we needed to add some experience to the group, especially in the scrum and back line.

We've been lucky enough to secure the services of Santiago Garcia-Botata to coach the scrum, a current Harlequins loose-head prop, capped 34 times by Argentina. "Santi" has been incredible so far and with his guidance this year, I'm confident we can continue to make our scrum a weapon. Santi has been working closely with fan favourite Baz, I'm really excited to see that relationship grow!

We also added Max Bodily, a current Ealing Trailfinder and former Exeter Chiefs centre. Max brings a huge amount of knowledge and experience, we're already seeing the gains with our back line!

After building the coaching team, we got straight to work with securing our current playing squad, hopefully you can see from today's team sheet, most of the names are largely the same as last year, with a couple of new faces and a couple of old ones!

Raymond and Antonio have both joined us from Regional Premier competitions in New Zealand, they've made a huge impact on the squad, becoming big drivers of our culture and standards already.

The return of the Mac! It's great to have the big fella back. Having spent time playing for Rochford in national 2, Mac brings back his experience from rugby at a higher level, also some questionable Essex dress sense. I can't wait to see him charging up the middle of the pitch!

In the coming weeks you will also see Matt Smart on the team sheet. Smarty was the driving force behind our promotion into this league and it's really great to have him back after his time away training to become an officer in HM's armed forces.

Sadly, we did lose a couple. Liam Prescott and Ed Grovesnor have both left to play rugby closer to home.

So you'll probably be wondering, with the new coaches and players, what our ambitions for the year are?

As a group I think it's really important that we set ourselves goals that we can all buy into. I believe we have all the ingredients required to do something incredibly special this season, however, April 2024 is a really long way away.

Our aim this season is to deliver the best version of ourselves every Saturday afternoon across 3 senior men's teams, home or away, rain or shine. I'm confident if we do that, with the talent and infrastructure that we are blessed with, I'm sure we'll be in the fight in all 3 competitions at the business end of the year.

As for me, this is my first season on the sidelines. Whilst my brain continues to tell me I can still run around with the lads on the pitch, my knees and shoulders have a very different perspective on the situation. I'm confident you will see me at some point waddling around the pitch in the number 2 shirt, hopefully those occasions are very few and far between.

Thank you for your continued support, I really hope we excite you this season and deliver you a rugby team you can all be proud of.

Michael Clark (Director of Rugby)

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About CS Stags 1863 RFC

Originally there was but one Civil Service Football Club whose members played whichever of the various forms of the yet to be standardised (rugby/ football) games they felt most suited to, always dependent on their and their opposition's ability to reach some modicum of consensus as to what they were about to do! The Football Association was formed on 26th October 1863 and those of the club's players who chose to play under its rules went their own way. Those who preferred to play under laws devised by Rugby School formed what is the Rugby Club. The earliest game of which there is a record was against Blackheath on 14th November 1863. Goals were still all that counted and a touch down over the goal line gained only a "try" at goal. Blackheath won that game by two goals to nil. On 26th January 1871, the Club was one of those who met at the Pall Mall Restaurant to form the Rugby Football Union. Of the 20 clubs which sent delegates only 7, apart from the Club, remain viz. Blackheath, Guy's Hospital, Harlequins, King's College, Richmond, St. Paul's School and Wellington College. Exactly 100 years later, on 26th January 1971, the Centenary of the Rugby Football Union was celebrated with a Founder Member Clubs' Banquet at the Guildhall in London, at which the Lord Mayor of London and the President and Officers of the Rugby Football Union were our guests.

The Club was one of the founders of the Surrey RFU in 1879, and has been a member of the Middlesex RFU since the 1880s. Early home venues were Battersea Park, Wimbledon Common, Kensal Rise and The Old Deer Park, Richmond. At Richmond the Club had a settled home for 30 years. In 1921 the Civil Service Sports Council was formed, and in 1926 the Club gave them full support by leasing the principal pitch on their new ground at Duke's Meadows, Chiswick.

Among the more noteworthy events in the Club's history was the defeat, at the Richmond Athletic Ground, on the 13th February 1893, by a penalty and a try to nil, of the first French International XV to visit England. The Club had previously played French teams, and were the hosts for this first visit of an international XV.

The Club has always been honoured with distinguished Presidents. The first was Sir Rowland Hill who was President for 43 years, and one of the greatest administrators the game has produced. He was Honorary Secretary of the RFU from 1881 to 1904 and President of that body from 1904 to 1907. He was succeeded in 1929 as President of the Club by Sir Edward Crowe, who held that office until 1937. For the next 29 years until 1966, our President was Commander W.J.A. Davies. He had made his debut for England in 1913, his international career being interrupted by the First World War and in 1919 he had been appointed OBE in recognition of his naval service. He went on to be awarded a total of 22 caps, 11 as captain when the side was unbeaten. Indeed he was only ever on the losing side once (against South Africa in his very first game) in an England shirt: he was the outstanding fly-half of his generation.

The Commander was followed as President by Sir Harvey Druiitt for the next 7 years, and then Sir Louis Petch for the following 8 years until 1981. Both Sir Harvey and Sir Louis were Chairmen of the Civil Service Sports Council. Mr. Martin Creasey was our President from 1981 until 1994. He joined the Club in 1935, his greatest contribution being as Hon. Secretary from 1947 to 1964, his term of office culminating in the very successful centenary celebrations. Only our present Hon. Secretary, Nick Alway has served in that role longer. Mr Ray Allwood succeeded Martin in 1994, standing down at the end of the 2006/7 season. He had joined the Club in 1949 and had the unique distinction of having played rugby at the Club in five different decades, only retiring after the Veterans match in 1982. He was a past captain who served on the committee for 30 years. He was also Treasurer of the Civil Service Sports Council for 17 years and was awarded the ISO in the New Year's Honours List in 1984.

Our current President is Mike, also known as "Henry", Lee. A prop forward, he joined the club in 1960 and was Extra 1st XV captain in 1969 and 1st XV captain in 1971-72. He served as Fixtures Secretary in the 1970s and as Chairman, first from 1980-85. Remarkably he has also done some coaching and has a fine tactical awareness of what to do if a scrum is on the left. He is Mr Civil Service and the club's principal sponsor. He was Chairman again from 1999-2007, a very successful period (see below) and enjoys a very much hands-on presidential role.

Following the introduction of leagues in 1988 we were neither promoted nor relegated, although we did more than once endure the vagaries of re-organisation, for 13 seasons until 2001 when we won the Herts/Middlesex League 2 (Level 10) title. The following season we won all our games and were chosen Rugby World Team of the Year.

Two more promotions as league champions followed in 2003 and 2004, making four successive promotions in all. In 2006 we were runners up in what was then London 2 North (Level 6) but lost the play-off game for promotion. We did, however, reach our first ever Middlesex Cup Final, losing 23-36 to Ealing in a game, the outcome of which was in the balance until the last few minutes. 2006/7 was a particularly dramatic one. A run of 13 successive wins helped secure a fifth promotion in seven seasons, all as champions, under coach, Tony Chapman.

The consequences of our rapid rise up through the leagues were apparent from the 2007/8 London 1 (Level 5) fixture list. First-up was Richmond at the Athletic Ground! We struggled initially to find our feet at that level and, despite some gritty performances, particularly in the home fixture against Richmond, were relegated after finishing 10th out of 12. We did however carry off the Middlesex Cup for the first time in our history with a win against Enfield Ignatians. A season of consolidation back in London 2 North then followed.

The announcement in 2009 that the Civil Service Sports Council was closing the bar and catering facilities at its erstwhile "jewel in the crown" Chiswick facility might have been expected to dampen club morale. Instead adversity off the pitch was to breed triumph on it. In April 2010 we secured promotion to that then oxymoron of a league labelled National 3 London & South East - a level (5) we had attained only once before (see above) and then only fleetingly, this time by

CS Stags History (continued)

beating Dover 31-14 in the play-off at Chiswick. Our first team squad, under then coach for his second season, Nigel Rosser, had shown great resilience and very considerable flair: including the play-offs we scored over 1,000 points (145 tries) in competition games that season.

As pre-seasons go, 2010 was certainly an eventful one and the full story is probably best left to a future chronicler to relate, remembering emotion perhaps in tranquillity. Suffice it to say that our first league game away to Havant was also new coach, Stefan Smith's first competitive game in charge. No friendlies had been played – at least you avoid injuries that way (!) – and no-one really knew what to expect. Well, the 4 try bonus point had been secured by half time; the "Stags" (for the origins of this nickname you must research the history of Southland Rugby, NZ) had been born and a hugely entertaining roller-coaster of a season was underway. At its conclusion we were a highly respectable mid-table 7th!

In the meantime, King's House School had taken over the lease of the ground and we now had the support of rugby friendly landlords and a fully open club house again selling draught beer!

In 2011 this old club – implicitly recognising that our Civil Service association now has its roots more in history than current circumstances – made its first name change – a step along the way perhaps - to where we are now to CS Rugby 1863.

We celebrated our 150th Jubilee with panache in May 2014 at a dinner attended by over 240 people, including Jason Leonard, then President Elect of the RFU.

2014-15 was a difficult season with relegation eventually being confirmed on the penultimate league Saturday and after five seasons in the rarefied and money-laden atmosphere of National 3 (Level 5) rugby we had been brought back to earth with a bump.

Although hopes were running high the following season it was soon apparent that London 2 North was going to be very competitive and we had to be satisfied in the end with a comfortable top-half (5th) finish in a season bookended by not just one but two Middlesex cup finals : the first a 20-12 success against Hammersmith & Fulham in a final carried over from the previous season, the second a 37-39 defeat in extra time in an absolute thriller of a match on a very hot early May day against our nearest neighbours, Chiswick.

In 2016-7, under new coach, Mark Jackson, we were looking at a different fixture list again, having been level-transferred to London 1 South where some opponents brand new to the Club awaited us. At the season's end we were again 5th in our league but had at least won more games than the year before. We had also gained fairly comprehensive revenge for our Middlesex Cup Final defeat the previous season : this time we pulled away from Chiswick in the final quarter to take the trophy with a 53-29 win.

So we arrive, finally, at last season's triumphant one with our league now containing Chichester and Medway, as well as - amongst the serious promotion contenders - old friends and foes now, Havant. This was the strongest roster we had ever seen at this level certainly with all sides competitive, as witnessed by the unyielding performances put in against us by, ultimately relegated, Old Colfeians. London Cornish were the new "Middlesex" kids on the block, very keen to knock off us off our perch as the top junior club affiliated to the Middlesex County Union, a spot we have occupied for some years now. In the event we lost just 2 games out of the 26, finishing with an unbeaten run of 16, although few were at all easy and there were some tight squeezes - which speaks volumes about the character of the side and the confidence their coach had instilled in them.

After the Lord Mayor's show came the Middlesex Cup Final, this time against the very successful HAC side that had carried all before them in the league below ours. When the score after twenty minutes stood at 17-0 to HAC some rather unflattering writing looked like it was on the wall but the Stags – note my clever insertion of what is now more than a nickname – do not yield easily and after more twists and turns, HAC hearts were broken by a late clinching score and theirs was not to be a new name on the trophy just yet. Instead we triumphed 28-23 for a second successive Middlesex Cup win and our fourth in total overall .

Level 5 awaits again and - on our third visit now - it has a third new label : London & South East Premier : not quite as misleading as the aforementioned National 3 London & South East! But it will be our club's third name at that level too following the decision that CS Stags 1863 better encapsulates everything of both the historical and current essence of this truly unique club.

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