

## BOGNOR RFC NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2021



### PHIL MEAD

This is the first Newsletter since the passing, in March, of our beloved President, Phil Mead. Due to Lockdown it wasn't until the end of August that we managed to give him the send-off he deserved when more than 200 people celebrated his life during a tribute in a marquee at the Club. This was followed the next day by a hugely successful commemorative match between a Phil Mead President's XV and a Dick Myhill XV, Dick being another great servant that we had recently lost. My abiding memory of the day will be of Colin Mead walking back to the halfway line, a huge grin on his face and his arm around his son, Finlay, who had just scored a cracking try.

The picture (above) is of the display cabinet in the clubhouse, surrounded by Paul Curtis's memorabilia which is particularly appropriate as Phil led the Club's efforts to enable Paul to return home. Further below: Finlay, Wendy and Colin cool down after the game.

I don't know about you but I can still hear Phil's voice very clearly, particularly his infectious laugh! He will be sorely missed but the memories will last forever.

### PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

I am extremely proud that, throughout Lockdown, your committee, ably led by Liam and Shaun, ensured there was very little wastage of any description, whilst facilitating access to grants from the RFU and the government. In addition, virtually the whole membership, including Vice-Presidents, continued with their regular payments even though the club was closed. The result is that we have emerged from Lockdown, owing nothing, in a strong position and one on which we intend to build.

Already we have refurbished the kitchen and bar areas whilst outside we have invested in new posts, padding, corner flags and portable floodlighting. We have also set aside money for a new floor in the clubhouse, to be completed next June.

We are expecting to receive within the next three months the sum of £75,000 from Inspire Leisure via the Sussex Foundation, allowing us to go ahead next summer with our exciting plans for an extension at the rear to include new showers and changing rooms.

#### VICE-PRESIDENTS

The Club has been in existence for sixty-six years and one of Phil's wishes was to expand the number of Vice-Presidents to reflect more accurately the number of people who have made significant contributions over the decades. A few weeks ago, therefore, I wrote to a number of people in this category to invite them to become VPs. Knowing the special warmth and camaraderie of our club I



expected a good response but, to be honest, I have been astounded at the number of positive replies, the kind words and the wonderful generosity from our new VPs. So, a huge thank you from me to all of our VPs, new and old, for your tremendous support. I shall publish a full list in the April Newsletter.

For those who haven't yet managed to donate, I'm respectfully suggesting a monthly standing order of £10 per month or £100 annually.

The details you need are:

Payee: Bognor Rugby Club

Sort Code 20-20-62

A/C No. 90135259

Ref. (Your surname) VP

You are, of course, welcome to use cheques or cash should you prefer.

## RUGBY ROUNDUP

Playing rugby is what we're all about so I'll be giving a brief review in each newsletter of how our teams are progressing. Overall, as is the case with most clubs, we have been losing players for several years and, therefore, suffering from a corresponding reduction in the number of teams. Ironically, the Memorial Day at the end of August, despite being a sad occasion, seemed to kickstart the interest in playing rugby again. More than fifty players took to the field on the day and many of them have committed to turning out for our Vets during the course of this season for occasional fixtures. Apart from the Vets we run two senior teams and minis/juniors from U-6 up to U-17.

### 1<sup>st</sup> XV

Our top team, under the leadership of Captain Josh Burgess and Coach Karl Flinn have had a promising start to the season. Good numbers in training have helped them to win all of their first four games with maximum points. Currently they sit second in Hampshire Premier, behind Gosport & Fareham on points difference.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> XV

Captained by James Barlow the youthful 2s have also made an encouraging start, winning two out of four and sitting mid-table in Hampshire 2.

### Minis/Juniors

Anyone who visits the Club on a midweek evening or Sunday morning will see that the Mini and Junior sections are thriving. We run teams for boys and girls from U-6 through to Colts thanks to a dedicated team of coaches and volunteers, led by Alex Coombes and Mike O'Connor. 141 minis, including a good proportion of girls, have registered so far this season. These are the solid foundations on which the Club is built and is the source of the vast majority of our senior players.

## PRE-MATCH LUNCHEONS

The first luncheon on 2<sup>nd</sup> October was a great success and preceded a victory over Eastleigh 2, albeit in atrocious conditions. The next one, the Christmas Lunch, will take place on 18<sup>th</sup> December when we entertain Chichester 2. Such is the popularity of this event that John Donoghue informs me that it is already oversubscribed. He has promised that preference will be given to those that supported the first lunch, but anyone wishing to attend must book and pay up front by 20<sup>th</sup> November. John will circulate more information on how to do this via the usual emails, texts, social media and club website next week.

## BILLY PROSSER MBE

Many of you will remember our old friend Billy Prosser who, despite his disability, raised many thousands of pounds for Bognor RFC and for charities in general. Phil was particularly keen that Billy's legacy would never be forgotten so, to that end, we have erected a display cabinet where everyone can read about the life and history of this remarkable man. We still hold £3,500 in a dedicated Billy Prosser account which has been used for many years to assist members in times of hardship. I'm delighted to say that the Club has agreed to maintain this worthy fund by topping up when needed.

## STARS OF THE SEVENTIES IN THEIR 70s



L-R Adrian Dew, Dave and Mary Fleetwood, Dave Thomas, Chris Geoghegan, Mick Trenchard

## IN BRIEF

- I'm thinking about organising a sing-song-supper where we can sample some simple fare before resurrecting the old songs that we used to enjoy all those decades ago, hopefully led by stalwart VPs such as G.L.Jones and Peter Greenwood (I haven't asked them if they're available yet!). In this enlightened age, wives, husbands and partners would, of course, be welcome. If we get 20-30 people interested we could use a local hostelry; much more than that and we'd need to use the clubhouse. If you think it's got potential, drop me a text or email.
- Finally, I am sad to report the sudden and tragic death of Jan Cattermole, Landlady of the Pink Pub. As well as being a Vice-President Jan was a great supporter of Bognor Rugby Club. Our thoughts and best wishes go to her husband John and her family.

Leighton Thomas

President

Bognor RFC

