



142%

£3,567

raised of £2,500 target
by 162 supporters

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Roy Clark

Roy Clark's Grand Tour

I am walking 75 laps of the pitch for Burton RFC because I'd like to contribute to the Club's grand future



Burton RFC

Charity Registration No. CASC Registered

Burton Rugby Club was one of the founder members of the RFU in 1870 and we celebrate our 150th anniversary this year. I have been around for half of this – and have just celebrated my 75th birthday – so I wanted to do something to commemorate both events and raise money for a club that has been a huge part of my, and my family's life.

I was proud to be Burton's club captain in its Centenary year, I was one of the pioneers of the mini-junior section, and I proudly went on to be President. I still support the club home and away each Saturday. Now, we are setting out on a bold new venture to create the club's new home at Tatenhill to build on that proud 150 year history, and I want to raise a grand (or an even grander total) to invest in a future to be equally proud of. I want to help more people enjoy the sport, camaraderie and bonhomie of this fantastic club. To make my contribution I have committed to doing a 'Captain Tom' and will be walking 75 laps of the Burton Pitch – walking out of the old with my first lap at The Croft, and completing the other 74 at the new ground with the aim of raising at least a thousand pounds for the development of the club.

I hope I can rely on the support of all the members of the Rugby Fraternity that I have played alongside and against (and the very many people I've met along my journey) to chip in and help me to raise a tidy sum for the club.

Thank you all in anticipation of your generous donations – please help me to make Burton Rugby Club's future a bright one.

*Thanks to my daughter Amelia for using her artistic skills to promote this worthy cause. I'm also told she'll do her best to galvanise 'Rugby Twitter' to help me raise my total a little... Even the price of a pint will be welcomed... She wanted to put more puns in, but I said: "Once you've seen one rugby joke, you've seen a maul"...



11th lap from 1945 takes me to 1956 when I went to the old Burton Grammar school which was situated where the car park is in Fleet Street, opposite the old Club entrance. I first played the noble game of Rugby at the back of Peel Croft under the tutorage of Vic Roebuck and Dennis Grimsley, member of Drake House. Loved it from the start!



LAP 15 today. Saturday 25th June 2020

In 1960 I was playing for the Burton Grammar School 1st XV

I am walking the 1960 lap with an old school friend and playing mate Ian Birch who I played with through all the school years in inter school matches and then we both played 300 plus games each for Burton 1st XV this means I played more times with Ian than anyone else probably 400 plus closer to 500 games.

Ian was a winger and an excellent finisher he also was one of the best wingers throwing into the line out I ever played with, he must have been because I could catch it. He scored considerably more tries than me but I was a better ball getter.

Other players who went on to play for Burton Club were

Geoff Meir, Rod Bluff, Roy Clark, Tim Hill, Ian (jock Stirton), Johnnie Southern, Chris Woodford, Ian Birch and Roger Dickie.



Ian Birch and myself after completing the 15th lap which represents 1960. The running total on my JustGiving page is now over £900.



Laps 16,17,&18 Mon 29th June

This time last year at school 1961,2&3 around then I was training for Rugby in winter and athletics in summer. I won the Derbyshire County School shot put championship with a put of just over 42 feet.

Rugby events were to start playing for the newly formed Burton Colts with Roger Fearn and Terry Roberts but my first game for Burton was in Timber Woods B team after a late call to the school for players this would have been in 1961.

I played first team with both Roger and Terry , Roger could always force a try near the line and Terry would play with what he always referred to as CHARISMA it was good to watch but nobody knew which way he was going to go next but we are still great friends all of us nearly 60 years on. That's why Rugby is such a great game and one for life.



Tuesday 30th June Laps 19,20,21.

Not so windy as yesterday when farmer Bill and Bob Nesbitt we're working on drainage trenches Bob meticulously going over the trench with a fork and removing stones and twitch. Bill was re seeding with new grass seed where needed.

I am pictured by Olive leaning against a makeshift bar just wishing for a beero.



Bill Spencelayh joined us for the last lap, he had cycled over to Barton, got a puncture and had to walk back. We both agreed that our new home is coming along nicely ground wise and Olive is excited at the prospect of the new clubhouse. Back to my Rugby, playing wise I was mainly A team and causing great clouds of blue smoke arriving on my Ariel Golden Arrow 250 sports bike.

My Twenty First was at Cauldwell Hall Country club with big H Tim Hale in charge of transport.



Look who turned out to walk with me today on lap 22, 23 and 24.

My old mate "Bragger" (Paul Bradley) brewer extraordinaire, now retired.

He is wearing the tour tie from 1994 when we took the lads we had coached through the age groups to three large houses at Hayle. What could possibly go wrong first of all the night watchman was a gnarled old Cornwall forward. He was very friendly to us and the lads helped him to a few pints of Braggers special Pedigree. The next night he came to work complaining we were all animals to be able to drink the strong Burton beer that had laid him up all day. Strangely he did not have any more.

We had three coaches Bragger, Steve Jones (sadly departed now) and myself a likely set but as you will notice one from each row of the scrum. It was always a fight as to who would be backs coach. We had a great time together with a great set of lads who still keep in touch and played some good Rugby despite our coaching. What goes on tour stays on tour as they say but Anders Cox's grandad must have a special place as he kept the boys in bacon sandwiches for the whole tour, breakfast till early hours of next day and earned himself the nickname of "Rasher" He played beach Rugby with the lads and we had to patch him up a bit but he told us later it was the best time he ever had. Thanks for the memory Dennis.

Happy days Bragger and it's good to see your son Simon Bradley coaching at U13 at the club and helping with the ground.



Thursday 2nd July

Today we walked with two of our grandchildren Mollie and Harry and their dad Andrew Lunn or Lunnie to his mates.

They had great fun running around 3 laps with us but Mollie and Harry probably ran four laps seeking out the pitch marking plastic threads.



Today 4 July I was honoured to have the company of George Peter Evanson, Burton Captain 1963 and Claire Bradley our very own Honorary Secretary to complete laps 28, 29 and 30. Also my lovely wife Olive Clark. Along the way we met George Peter Evanson trying to catch a grass trout! As it was easing of lockdown for pubs and restaurants to open we enjoyed a virtual drink at the virtual bar in the virtual Club House.



Lap 30 we were walking with phenomenal walker Claire Bradley who had already walked 3 miles from home to join us and at the completion of the last lap we were joined by the infamous Evelyn Bradley, well known to anybody who is anybody at Burton Rugby Club, wife of the late Royston Bradley (Buster) Club stalwart for many years holding many varied positions of influence. I can not list all his achievements for the Club but have Evelyn's permission to post a copy of an ode that I composed in memory of Buster as neither myself or Olive were able to attend his funeral (in a separate post). My daughter Amelia Clark further enhanced the ode and read it out at his wake at Peel Croft. Another great legend and loss to the Club.

Claire Bradley is I am glad to say getting to be a stalwart of our club in her fathers footsteps. I have enjoyed walking with her and sharing a nice conversation afterwards including many happy times shared.

It is very interesting who you meet and what you see during the walks around what is our new Croft, or whatever it is to be named. Volunteers turning out to make this a very special Rugby Club for future generations. Main picture, Richard Williams and Rob Ridley with myself. Steve Wright was strimming the whole of the periphery of the ground and Rob Nesbitt who was there to carry out his daily ritual of refurbishing the drainage trenches and removal of surface stones. Both Steve and Rob have taken on massive tasks. Not to mention Richard Williams who we seem to see each day and carries out a multitude of tasks and Rob Ridley who is carrying on where he left off at Peel Croft. On the wildlife side we are joined by four beautiful oyster catchers but as yet not got close enough to get photographic evidence of their beautiful plumage.



Today Sunday 5th July. Laps 31,32,33.

Today's walk 5th July with Harry Titley

What a nice surprise.... from one ex Captain to another (Harry Titley). I received a personal message from Harry offering to walk some laps with me because he didn't know me but would like to and to learn more of my history with the club. Although I have been at the club for approaching 60 years most of my time as President and captain was 30 years and 50 years ago before he was born and it has been my pleasure today to walk some laps with this pleasant young man who has stood in the captains boots for three seasons just as I did.

Harry was captain starting in season 2015-16 for 3 years to 2017-18 and a fine job he made of it. I was watching and although the antics of those beyond scrum half were like the black arts to me they were always there to pass to if the pack thought they may score. Our backs in Harry's tenure were good enough to have been given ball by any of my former packs and his tactical kicking kept the pack moving forward when they got up from scrums or line outs which is all one can ask.

When he gave up the captaincy he did not fade away but still plays and has kept on with the 1870 podcast which is very informative about playing matters.

We discussed the new influx of members some of whom were on the last podcast and more importantly what he thought about their comments.

We have done well recently to stay where we are in the league and now with the coaching structure being enhanced under Mark Tweddle we certainly can offer any new players better conditions and coaching than they are likely to get in higher leagues than ours. Our club has ambition and wants to progress and this is why the search for players has gone on and also players are making the effort to come to us. We aim to run three highly competitive teams as well as maintaining the other teams like Vets and Ladies sides. Still maintaining the excellent mini Junior section we have already established. And with five pitches already marked out at Tatenhill we will be able to play at base rather than travelling to play.

I would like more contact with current players and officials especially the current captain and also like to invite Ian Cartwright our President to join me if he has time to ensure I stay on message.

Any player who feels inclined to support my walk for club funds should not feel that £20 or £30 is required the cost of a pint or a £5 note will soon add up and be gratefully received by myself and the club.



Met Harry Titley for our walk at 10.30 when who should walk over the Battlestead Hill from Henhurst Ridge but Bakes (John Baker), in full walking attire on his daily stroll. We invited him to join us and set off for the laps. The main topic of conversation was about money and the affect of the Covid 19 pandemic on Rugby Club and other sporting venues.

Clubs have had no revenue from normal sources since March and our club have done something about it. The 26 challenge was a great fundraiser and as Harry said he felt it had drawn the club closer together with people watching what everyone was doing to raise cash and creating camaraderie and club spirit. Non players and Alikados like myself waited until the 26 challenge had ended to start our contributions and as we saw yesterday Claire just kept on walking.

What people may not understand is that JustGiving cash is transferred to the club each week thus giving an income to our treasurer which he is guarding with his usual grip and only spending on necessities. Without income all clubs are vulnerable and despite the HERCULEAN effort with the 26 challenge we have to replace the £26,000 we lost at the end of last season. So at best we are approaching a break even point. Clubs like Wigan Football Club who recently won the FA cup are struggling to stay in business and others will undoubtedly follow.

It is incumbent on all of our members and supporters to see that we do not get in financial trouble. Support on JustGiving will help and also we need more volunteers to bring the ground up to scratch. Everything costs money and any task that can be done by members saves that cash and/or preserves it for when we get the large drain on funds when the building work starts. Richard Williams is saying that if anyone can spare a half day or a day there are loads of such jobs that need doing.

Please let him know if you can help, building will start soon, perhaps within this month so time is of the essence. If you wish to donate here is the link to my just giving page



Tuesday 7th July. Laps. 34,35,36 almost Half way to my 75.

Walked these 3 laps with my lovely wife Olive Clark. She had a day off on Sunday to get her hair done (hooray at last) this did not stop her on our first wet day from walking with me, but she did not want a selfie picture and nobody was there so she is the photographer.

Not wearing shades they are reactor light lenses in my glasses.

No Rugby stories today but I will be returning to them, as the last weeks walking when translated to years includes my first tour 1966 to Dublin on the 50th anniversary of the uprising. My first year as Captain and the Centenary week and all its fixtures, so watch this space.

What I want to do today is express my most sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to this magnificent total at the end of my second week of walking. Yes, it is only 2 weeks since the page was put up and yesterday it went over the £2000 target with a last little push of a £5 donation from my 11 year old granddaughter Emily from her own money box. She has been following my progress with enthusiasm. Private message sent to her. Contributions are coming from old friends, new friends, club members, people I do not know from twitter where Amelia is running a PR track and getting me re tweeted by people like Gareth Chillcot, Will Carling, Mike Tyndall and Martin Bayfield.

I am getting requests from new players to the Club, long standing friends and players who have retired from playing, to join me and messages of congratulation from all around but the main thing is that the Rugby Club are getting valuable contributions of much needed cash.

So thanks everyone and I will keep on walking and hope to see the sum climb even higher, though £1000 a week is a lot to live up to. I shall spread the remaining laps out and leave at least 2 laps for the 150th celebrations although we do not know if we will be playing or not yet. A celebratory lap with some of the players I spent so many happy hours with in the 60's and 70's would be my ideal way to finish my Grand Tour.



July Laps 37, 38 and 39 with Andy Brown - Halfway point reached.

Well the power of the pen, I said I would like to meet more of the new players and straight away Andy said he would like to walk with me.

We turned up in the rain which soon subsided and walked past the half way point into the second half of my challenge.

Andy works for the brewery Molson Coors in the town and he and his girlfriend Laura have established themselves in Ashby. Last season he was travelling back and playing for Glasgow Ackies and had just a couple of games for our A XV.

After Uni, as quite a few players do, he went for two years and played in New Zealand and later in Sydney Australia. The world is your oyster now for the modern player and why not, it broadens horizons and builds character as well as learning new skills and methods.

Andy is well impressed with the coaching set up at Burton and with the facilities being built so working in the town he decided to join us.

We have an exciting time in prospect with players coming through our system and others joining us because they see we as a Club have ambition. It is a very pleasant experience to walk along and chat to this new breed of confident young men who can take on from my generation and build the Club to higher levels. Definitely at the half way point now and if anyone would like to add to the handsome sum already pledged please follow the link to my JustGiving page.



10 July laps 40,41 and 42 with Roger Fearn

Today we walked with Roger who I have played with since we were both in the Colts, some 60 years ago almost, so we go back a bit as they say. There are some pictures below from Roger's scrap book that his lovely wife Sylvia prepared for him to celebrate a very special birthday. Picture 2 is 1975/76 season when I returned to Captain the Club for the third time. Overall, Roger scored over 300 tries for the Club and in particular 17 tries for the first team in 1975/76. Roger claims that he can't take full credit for this as assistance from Johnny Edwards as to which way he would break and where to pass the ball proved a great formula between scum half and back row but he was still a very canny player in the opposition 25. Roger's daughter Kelly inherited her father's genes and was the first ever female player to score a try for Burton during a mini/junior tour to Blackpool in 1989, playing against Preston. This fact has never been recorded so I am putting it out there. During our conversation this morning the question of who was the best standoff he played with and without question Bill Scobie was the man. I would agree with this as when Bill was playing you got up from a scrum and ran 30 yards down the pitch which any forward will tell you is the way to go. There is much that I could say about Roger but he is not inclined to be boastful but he is still incredibly fit for his age and now looks younger than Cliff Richard who he was often compared to but Peter Pan and Sylvia have been good friends to us for so, so many years. Thanks Roger for your company this morning

was operating at
Pett and G. P.
game played at a
ever tempo than
t XV, got through
mount of work as

Burton Daily Mail

TUESDAY, AUGUST 2nd, 1966



BURTON RUGBY CLUB are now getting down to serious training for the rapidly approaching 1966-67 season, and the above picture captures some of the players during one of the quieter moments in last night's training session on Peel Croft.





BURTON R.F.C.

PROBABLES AND POSSIBLES

BURTON Rugby Club
Probables team pic-
tured above at Peel Croft
last night. Seated (from
left): I. Montgomery, D.
Pinner, W. R. Taylor,
D. H. Mayger, R. L.
Knight, I. M. Birch, A.
Russ.

Standing: E. W. Saul,
M. Jackson, J. Stirton,
T. Roberts, R. A. Clarke,
R. Rees, G. Oldknow,
K. Turner.

RIGHT: The Possibles
team. Seated: R. Fearn,
M. Pett, T. Mitton, D.
Williams, J. Taylor, T.
Bentley, P. Davies, C.
Dixon.





Sat 11 July Laps 43, 44 and 45 with the Edwards family

Walked today with this rugby family who between them have played 1281 First Team games for the Club. The main man Johnny with a record of 684, Jono with 421 and Stevie 176 which would have been more but for numerous injuries. Again between them, two titanium knee replacements, five cartilage operations, two shoulder operations and one broken leg, rugby is a hard game and punishing on the knees. Johnny played more than once with both sons on the same team but his last game was on his 51st birthday (Boxing Day). Picture of them in their playing kit and the more formal one afterwards in Club blazers. What a family. Jeanette has had a lot to put up with, kit to wash for them all and not to mention getting them home. It was a well known around the Club that the Edwards boys had the cleanest, whitest shorts ever and Olive asked Jeanette how she managed this. Simple, soak, scrub, boil. At this point Jono mentioned that during his Bestman's speech at Steve's wedding he presented Rachael, the new Mrs Edwards, the original bucket and scrubbing brush. Rachael was not inclined to take up the challenge and the standard that Jeanette had set and either fortunately or unfortunately, the said items did not ever appear in her utility room. If any budding back row wants to see how to run with the ball so that it is available when stopped, then look at the photo of Johnny in full flight. He means it.... holding the ball in two hands so he can pass either way. I also remember Johnny's first game for the Vets when he picked up the ball at the ruck, ran 40 yards down the pitch and got tackled and presented the ball perfectly for those following up. Unfortunately, there was not a Vet player within 15 yards of him, so we had to slow him down a bit so that we could keep up. The team in the striped shirts was a game against Derby (when I forgot the shirts). This was sent to me by Jim Warren who resides in South Africa and was one member of the best back row that I was ever able to field for Burton first 15. Jim open side, Jonas Miller No. 8 and Johnny Edwards blind side. What a back row. We would be glad of it even now. Not sure that Jim actually played open side in this team as Tom Shread is also playing. It could have been he was playing wing where he was also a very useful player. A massive thank you to you all for taking the time to turn out this morning and walk with me.





Sunday 12 July. Laps 46, 47 and 48

Walking today with Mark Tweddle Alex Walton and his dog.

Glamour provided by Ladies section and Yvonne Tweddle chairman of promotions.

Ladies First. Carrying on from yesterday Jonno who was sorting out his team shirts informed me there was a feisty lot of ladies turned up to walk with me with typical bravado I said just the kind of girls I like with Olive Clark by my side. Jonno runs the 1st Team and Debs his wife was captain last year so we are assured of an Edwards continuity for the next few years.

Michelle Wakelin and Debbie Edwards brought me up to date with playing strength and we have 26 active players registered and more are needed to adequately cover all positions and have cover for any injuries. So anyone with ambitions to play with this enthusiastic group of girls should contact the team manager 07842 910 059 and arrange to attend a training session. This is done in complete safety and at present they train in pods of 6 and there is the vast expanse of the new ground with 5 pitches already marked out to do it in. As well as expertise at rugby they also play a mean game of cricket and as we have provision for a cricket section at the new ground there may be a chance to play all year round. New members will be made very welcome as I was today.

Coaches are Kevin Abel, Head coach, Joe Morgan who also is a referee and Bali Sailsbury whose wife also coaches the first and played for Saracens and The Navy U23. So no shortage of skills in the coaching set up. They have ambition and Mark tells me they hope to be providing players for the England Womenswear side at the 2028 Olympics if not sooner.

Thanks to Tracey and Michael Isaac for the contribution to my grand tour delivered by your daughter our best flanker blind side No 6 allegedly.

Also thanks to Alex Walton for his donation. I enjoyed the walk with him, it is a long time since I coached him in mini junior. Olive will be putting these cash donations to the just giving page.

Mark and Yvonne had just returned from Woolacombe with the family and I am reliably informed the children had managed surfing and at the last minute, Mark too had managed to stand up, he did admit the board he had was the size of a Yacht and did not claim to have hung ten. No sea conditions are available but it must have been fairly rough. Yvonne was not available for comment but did say she could feel the effects of the rays so she probably had more sense and sunbathed in comfort.

Mark was captain of the club in 2002-3 and 2003-4 when on both occasions the club won the league, no mean achievement.

He also arranged the fruit and veg Olympics and lead the team against Preston Grasshoppers and Cinderford when we had the cup run. Those present will remember a great game which we could have snatched at the end, great times.

Now Mark has been appointed Director of Rugby and kicking so has become a DORK and Craig his assistant A DORK.

Like the ladies, having been in the level 5 and survived for the past two years instead of going back down again as has happened before, they are taking steps to not only survive but the plan is to advance to national 3 without resorting to paid players. Recent training sessions have been done with Marcelo Bosch, Thinus Delport, Marcus Ayertza and on Zoom with Anthony Watson, Jamie George, Joe Cockonsigna, Willi Wedjz, Tom Croft, Francois Louw, Thinus Delport. An impressive array for any junior club which i think you will agree shows ambition.

So if you want to be with an ambitious club come and join us.



Wed 15 July Laps 49,50 and 51

Walked this morning with my wife Olive Clark and passed the two thirds distance for my 75 laps. Stopped for a chat with Bill Leason and the conversation went round to boots, the old fashioned leather soles and nailed in

leather studs. Bill tells me that when he started in South Africa nobody wore boots to play but if you played for the school they provided boots of various sizes that you could select for the game. Consequently when he did get his first set of boots they were always kept well polished. I got my first pair of modern boots with screw in studs as a bespoke made to measure from Fosters, you had to draw round both feet on cardboard to make a stencil and send them off. This company Fosters eventually became Reebok and the boots made to measure were £10 per pair.

Bill is sitting on the club's latest acquisition a John Deere tractor in immaculate condition pre owned by a golf club but looking as good as new. The Gand mower is loaned to us whilst a bespoke one is being made for us. It is a massive job to mow the whole area and I have to say that Bill and his team are making a great job of producing pitches to be proud of. All the grass is better than my lawn.

I was invited last night to go on a Zoom broadcast from Tricity Vogue, Ukulele strumming singer, cabaret performer and All girl swing band leader to her evening of 'make do and mend night' an offshoot of the ukulele club of Great Britain .

Amelia plays with them at charity functions and put my walk up as a cause to sponsor so I was asked to do a zoom presentation. It is working as at least three of them have contributed to Roy's Grand tour.

I have copied Tricity's post with the timing for Amelias song and my interview, Evelyn had already spotted and viewed it. If you are reading my post for the first time then please click the link for my JustGiving page



Saturday 18th July Laps 52,53,54. With Dominic Taylor, KiKi and Max.

After a short conversation we took the team photo as KiKi and Max were keen to go.

It is Spuddys second year as captain and he pretty much stamped his style of play and captaincy last year. On discussion our captaining technique is pretty much the same. Lead by example without too much shouting, you are welcome as a player to question decisions then we will discuss after the game to see how right I was (or not) but on the park only one can make the decisions.

Perhaps Dominics background of Marines where he travelled widely around the world as well as action in Afghanistan gives him a calm confidence. He comes over very well as Captain. He has also played in front of a sell out crowd at Twickenham 83,000 and not many players have done that, the only difference he says is when somebody scores you realise how many spectators are in the ground. He played in the Army against the Navy team four times. Whilst training for one such game it meant that his posting to Norway was put on the back burner where it cost £40 to buy a Pizza and 2 pints, not a plumb posting and a good one to miss.

He now lives in Swadlincote with his partner Katie and the two fine rescue dogs who walked with us today, KiKi and Max and carries out his trade as a scaffolder. He has to get peril into his day to day life somehow.

All the players are getting really excited about the coming season and keen to get training on a contact basis and hopefully get into playing before too long. Us alekados and spectators are all ready for the action to start as well.

I wish Dominic and his team an excellent season in this our 150th year and hope we are able to provide a show match as we did in the centenary season 50 years ago when I was captain. Let's hope we can plan for a celebration game soon. Below is a photo of my team 1969/70 some sadly have passed away, others have drifted away and some are still around. Feel free to tag names. All donations to my JustGiving page will help towards the future development of this great Club



17 July Laps 55, 56 and 57

Pete Scobie arrived in Burton in 1981 as a PE Teacher. In keeping with his past he has not been out of his shorts since March when the lockdown started and with tan lines to prove it and looking fit. He cycles 3 times a week 15 to 20 km and is playing tennis too. Pete played 187 times for our 1st 1XV and his son Cameron Scobie has played one, that was in the winning Cup Final against Lichfield. Pete's brother Bill was also a 1st team captain of the club.

Darryl Banton and his whole family turned up today with almost a full family team only Russell was missing. Darryl played 289 times for the 1st XV and father Keith Banton played for the D team, the Vets and half a game in the A team when both Darryl and Russell played with him. My fondest memory of Darryl was in my season as President 1998. I was standing together with my wife Olive Clark one Sunday morning watching some of the mini/juniors play when Darryl approached me and said "Mr President, I have sorted out an Under 17's team but unfortunately all our old Coaches have gone to run the new Ladies section and we have no one to look after us". I started to think about who could do it when Olive came out with one of her typical 'one liners' "you do it, Roy" and that was it. I became the Under 17's Coach with, Steve Jones and Bragger (Paul Bradley) We started with a rag tag team but they developed into a great outfit, all playing for each other. Four of the team all went on to play for the Club, Simon Bradley, Gareth Sutton, Ian Gilbert and Darryl. I can honestly say that being brought out of Coaching retirement and taking on the Presidency made for a busy but most enjoyable special year. Thanks for the memories, the bottle of vintage port and Olive's orchid. A very thoughtful action (I taught you that) . Also a big thank you to Keith, Darryl and Pete for your donations to my JustGiving page.



Sunday 19 July 2020. Laps 58, 59 and 60

Choppy (Charl Neethling), Rob Wakelin and Robert Ferguson

The two guys I walked with today typify the kind of friendships that are formed when you join a Rugby Club. They met in the late 1990's and played together many times. They both met their wives at the Club and have become life long friends. The two families are heavily involved with the Mini/Junior section and are the Team Coaches for the Under 9's. Rob has visited South Africa four times. The two families have a special bond with both wives also playing for the Ladies 1st XV. A definite advert for a family orientated rugby club. Need I say more.

A young man, Robert Ferguson has been following the Rugby Club newsfeeds relating to my 75 lap challenge and asked his parents to take him down to the Club to meet me and have a run around with his dad. I hope he enjoys the Under 11's this year and stay on to play for years to come. Just what we want.

OK.... Rob Wakelin. Started with the Club at Under 13's through to Colts before moving on to senior rugby and has 288 1st XV games under his belt. Rob is married to Michelle and they have two children who both play the game. Michelle currently manages the Ladies team and rumour has it that she has lost THE NAIL she hung her boots on and is considering a return to the fray. Both Rob and Charl have the same memorable games in which they played together, Preston Grasshoppers, Leicester Lions, Driffield and Cinderford in the National Cup runs, as well as the Staffordshire Cup game against Longton.

Charl Neethling came to England in 1995 from Joburg and played at Pontefract. Then joined Burton in 1997 and played 254 1st team games. Like Bill Leason, he did not play in boots until he was 13. For the first four or five games they were so excited to have boots that they trod all over each other and came off stripped like zebras with stud marks. Charl is married to Louisa and they have two daughters who happen to go to school in Walton but they haven't shown any interest in playing.

Just finishing up when Bill Leason arrived with a posh new haircut. Quickly spotted by our Steward Phil Foster, who in a former life, ran a successful string of hair salons in Burton. Bill also had some culinary information regarding the Canada geese who are eating all our grass! Apparently they are very tough but the way to cook them is to put the goose and a stone of equal weight in a pan. After six hours the stone is done but the goose needs another 3 hours.



Wed 22 July 2020 Laps 61, 62 and 63. Andy Campbell

Andy Campbell attended Bishop Vesey's Grammar School in Sutton Coldfield. England Under 15 Group Reserve, England Under 19 tribalism and played for Guys Hospital, the Worlds oldest Rugby Union Club at 175 years. Five years at Guys and the first three years they had a very strong fixture equivalent to first class Clubs. In season 71/72 Andy found himself in successive weeks marking David Duckham at Coventry, the England A centre at Gloucester and Barry Bresnehan of London Irish. In the hospital's Cup Final played at Richmond

against St Mary's Andy scored the second try for Guys by sidestepping one JPR Williams, no less, and he had John Knovak outside but not receiving a pass. I know this is true because he has the photograph and newspaper clipping (I have seen them).

After Guys he spent three years in the Arabian Gulf and was the Honorary 'fang puller' at the Doha Rugby Club. He came to Burton in 1985 after meeting Nick Luft at a wedding and agreed to come and give it a go. I played with Andy in some of the most intense Veterans games when we had some excellent players and Andy was one of our Captains. He has also served as Disciplinary Chairman for Burton and five years as Staffordshire Honorary Secretary and five years as RFU Council Member for Staffordshire. He and his wife Liz have been good friends to Olive and myself for many years and both of their sons Ollie and Angus have spent time playing for Burton. Ollie Campbell is also a good friend to Andrew and was his Best Man and more recently he became Godfather to our granddaughter Mollie. So a massive thank you to you and Liz for stepping out with me this morning and for your very generous donation to my challenge.



Wed 22 July 2020 Laps 61, 62 and 63 Paul Harris

Paul is married to Karen and played for Trentham. He was also a member of the Staffordshire Police side in the 70's when Arthur Reece was Chief Constable. This side contained such characters as Ken Braddock, John Reynolds, Barry Bowen, Tony Brindley, Ken Jones, Barry Tilston and Stefan Skibiki being some of his team mates.

The same Arthur Reece provided the invitation team to play Burton in the Centenary Match which consisted of Llanelli and Welsh Internationals. Paul remembers playing for Trentham in the Staffs Cup Final against John White and Arnie Copeland and wondered what had hit him after his opening sidestep when John White read the second sidestep and hit him full on with Arnie quickly backing it up.

Early 1980's Paul was posted to Burton and signed to play for Burton. Due to irregular shift patterns he was in and out of the 1st XV and Captain of the A XV and played B's and C's before Veterans. After his playing he took up coaching and ran the mini junior section with Andy Peach, Syd Langslow and Keith Blanton. They went on mini junior tour to Canada, organised by Philip Foster. He also served on the Disciplinary Committee along with John Cartwright and Roger Fearn. Paul has refereed for several years for the Staffs Society and now that his speed is diminishing he intends to help out with Referee training. It was a real pleasure to have Paul walk with me this morning and thank you for your support.



Saturday 25 July 2020. Lap 64. Terence Roberts (Terry)

I first started playing with Terry just after the start up of the Colts in the 1962/63 season. Then we played in the A team with progression to the 1st XV in the second row. First memorable games for me were on the 1966 tour to Dublin on the 50th anniversary of the Uprising. I had just got into the team at the expense of Mike Jackson and on the Saturday evening in Skerries noticed he had gone a peculiar shade of green, Guinness slinging was about to happen, so I went up to the room and changed into ale slinging kit. Terry played 234 times for the 1st XV, many of them partnering myself against such teams as Nuneaton, Sheffield, Wakefield, Morley and some easier ones down in London, Upper Clapton and Westminster Bank. These games in London were played in the morning and we all went to Twickenham in the afternoon and down into London again in the evening. Terry's most memorable match was in Bob Wadsworth's year when we won the Staffordshire Cup. It was played at Lichfield's old ground and the build up was memorable. After getting changed Dave Sunderland gave a motivational speech and Vic Roebuck asked Johnny Edwards to organise a short warm up. Vic then told the story of a woman crossing a field with a baby, there was a tempest and when she tried to open the gate the hinges broke and fell on the child. Three times she tried to lift the gate off the child, and on the third attempt sought assistance from above and succeeded. Another short warm up and some words from Captain Bob Wadsworth. All the above went over Terry's head but as he ran out fourth in line Vic Roebuck pulled him to one side and said "Roberts, third line out smack Phil Brown and let them know we are here to win". The dirty deed was done and we went on to win the cup. We went on many Easter tours together, including Brixham where the traffic stopped because of the crowd of onlookers listening to Victor Nelson Roebuck, who had climbed on to the top of a telephone box, telling the story about a girl with the tragic face and imploring her to jump from the burning building into this here tarpaulin. At the third story of the building, she did jump, but she broke her neck. Vic climbed down from the telephone box and the traffic re started and we all went back to the hotel in Torquay for the tour lunch. Outside of playing rugby we also ran the door at our band nights at the Club. There was very little trouble with the crowd and large sums of money was made for the Club. We also had a marquee and had Jethro Tull and Johnny Johnson and the Bank Wagon for a fantastic night at Peel Croft. Spadge Major was Captain and often accused us of fading in the second half after being out until the early hours of Saturday morning with these functions. Yet another lifelong friendship made through the great game of rugby. Thanks for the memories H. Getting closer to my target figure and with 11 laps to go it would be wonderful to receive even just a little donation.



Saturday 25 July 2020. Lap 64. Evelyn Bradley

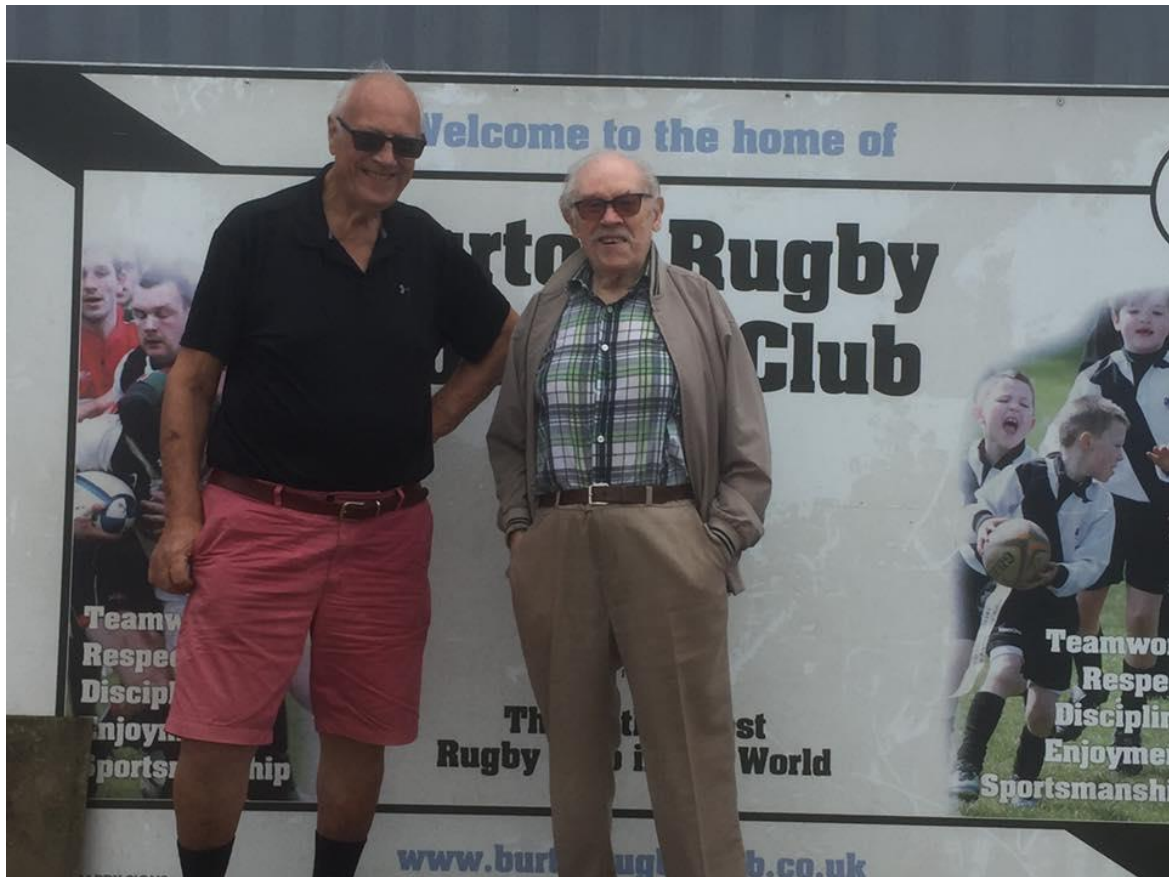
Evelyn first appeared on the scene when her brother John Whelan married Yvonne Bradley in 1968. Evelyn's father drove the whole family over from Ireland and brought the Priest also.

Buster (Royston Bradley) then went over to Ireland for a two week holiday in the September and then Evelyn flew over to England for Christmas and did not go back. Evelyn and Royston got engaged when she was 21 and married a year later. Evelyn stayed with Phylis at the Off License on the Level in Winshill and many parties were held there as Mrs Bradley had no closing time for house guests.

Evelyn remembers the Ladies Committee Members at the Rugby Club with Margaret Minns and also the Friday evening band nights we used to run. Evelyn considered Burton was a series of BALLS, Rugby Club, Tech College, Licensed Victuallers, Vintners and any other excuse for a posh new frock.

Buster and Evelyn then moved into The Coopers Tavern and many great nights and lock-ins happened there. Also, many distinguished guests, no less than the Archbishop of Birmingham, Maurice Couve de Mudville who was brought in by the Parish Priest and accompanied by two other Priests. The Archbishop wanted to go to a pub and definitely not lunch at the Stanhope. When they arrived Dave Bowen and Tug Wilson were sitting on the Top Shelf Seats in the bar and Tug Wilson was heard to say to the Bishop "are you the top brass and you must be middle management" to his attendants. All went well the following day at the Bishop's Confirmation Service where Buster and Declan Bradley were Confirmed.

All were treated the same and the Coopers was always an extension to the Rugby Club. Evelyn has always had her heart in Burton Rugby Club and is always at the heart of the action. Her daughter Claire Bradley is doing an outstanding job as Club Secretary and Declan is actively involved with the General Committee and can be seen running the line since he stopped playing. Every time I post on Facebook I get Olive to check first because Claire re-posts it to the Clubs site almost immediately and then the next thing is Evelyn's comment and encouragement to others to support my grand tour. Special thanks to you Evelyn for turning out on such a wet Saturday morning to walk along side me. Without Covid and social distancing, I am certain that we would have partied on and maybe ended up at Buster's nightclub. So as Evelyn keeps saying, come on, support Roy on his grand tour with all donations going to Burton Rugby Club to help with our new ground and club - Battlestead Croft.



Saturday 25 July. Lap 64 Theo Wellings

Today was a special occasion as we had Theo Wellings our Club's oldest member to walk with us. Theo is a spritely 98 year old going to the gym twice a week and with lots of memories of Peel Croft Rugby back to a school's fixture in 1934. Presumably for the Newton Husbands Shield. War time years he served in the RAF as a WOP AG which for the layman is a Wireless Operator Air Gunner. He served on Wellington Bombers and Catalina's which were flying boats capable of staying airborne for 24 hours. When asked about the life expectancy of Wellington Gunners, particularly the Rear Gunners, he said that is a myth. You trained as a Gunner and you sat at whichever gun the Pilot asked you to, there were no fixed Rear Gunners.

He joined Burton Rugby Club in 1948 playing with Bill Souster, P.C.H. Davies, Tozzer Hodgkinson, Eddie Hardwick, Ken Tunley, Charlie Hunt and Ian Tate. The latter went to play for Tigers when changing Clubs was almost unheard of in those days.

The Welling family business was initially horse drawn carriages and brakes used for Company outings etc and then diversifying to Wellings Coaches

which were still being used by the Rugby Club for away games when I started playing in 1960. They had a famous driver, Arthur George, who always carried his boots and more often than not got a game! Theo has happy memories of stopping off at the Paul Pry or the Flitch of Bacon pubs which were situated between Alrewas and Barton Turns on the A38, on the stretch of road known as the seven sisters because of the series of seven humped back bridges along this section of road.

As well as being a member of Burton Rugby Club he is also a member of Lichfield Rugby Club and a member of Burton Leander Rowing Club where he was recently made an Honorary member. He also played water polo a sport which incidentally was invented in Burton on Trent. It was a very interesting stroll hearing Theo's stories but I am afraid the short walk today was not what Theo had expected. At age 98 he thought we would walk from 10.30am until 12.00 noon, so when we finished lap 1, he said "Is that it? lets go again". I'd like to point out that at this stage the rain was lashing down, so much so, that Battlestead Hill could not be seen in the distance! And Theo wanted more walking and threatens to come again.

Stay forever young Theo and thanks for your donation and look forward to your presence at Battlestead Croft.

N.B Theo was flying Second Pilot from Battlestead Aerodrome, Tatenhill until October of last year. Please, if you haven't already donated and can spare a few coppers go to my JustGiving page



Saturday 25 July 2020. Lap 64. Colin Draycott and Ann Lee-Draycott

Colin didn't play rugby at school but was persuaded by John Mander that joining the Rugby Club would be good for him. Mixing with his mentor John and two others that he introduced him to, may have shortened his life expectancy. The two others were Vera Lyn (Gin) and Girder, or Girder Bender (Guinness).

We all remember on Colin's first tour, when on Sunday lunch John twisted his ear and drank his fourteenth pint of the black stuff, then announcing it was time for an aperitif so they switched to the Vera. Happy days at the George Hotel in Penrith.

He started his playing in Timber Wood's Colts team. Syd Langslow, Colin and Stuart Gotheridge were the front row. Rudolph Peltier and Rod Taylor were also in the pack, and in the back was Glynn Page at FB and Chappie Wilson and Bonnie Ellis on the wings. Quite a few went on to play in the 1st XV and it was the best singing side the Colts ever had. Thanks in no small part to Colin. One Saturday night Colin was approached by Ted Killick and Alfie Lowe and persuaded him to play for the C Team, who were already on a winning streak of 20 matches and went on to have an undefeated season. It was the only time in selection when the C Team released Roger Fearn at Scrum Half and only then because he was wanted by the first team. Roger will tell you how many tries he scored that season in the C's. It was a lot.

Colin was employed at the time by Hoar Cross Hall to compère Medieval Banquets on Saturday evenings. Colin was made for this, he could sing a song, recite a rap about any subject or anybody at the drop of a hat, he still can! Unfortunately Hoar Cross did not want him to turn up smelling of ale every week so he had to curtail it a little. His skills as an Actor, encouraged by his wife Anne Lee-Draycott, who runs her own Drama School, have been enhanced and we have enjoyed Cultural and Poetry evenings in their home. Everyone had to write a poem, or recite their favourite poem. John White, one of the hardest players I played with or against when he was at Stoke, read The Cloths of Heaven by W B Yeats, which is still my favourite poem after some fifteen years. Ann has brought a certain Irish flavour to the Rugby Club functions and assisted by fellow coleens, Evelyn Bradley, Olive Clark, and Olive Wilson has worn a bonnet, with ribbons on it, and around her shoulders was the Galway Shawl. If you ask her nicely she can be persuaded to sing on any Saturday night.

One of Colin's other skills is with the BBQ. Together we have catered for County matches with two to three thousand spectators on Caribbean style oil drum BBQ's making good money for the Burton Club. We even catered for one hundred and forty guests at John Lowe's wedding reception. Rolling along 140 steaks on four BBQ's and all the guests were served in less than thirty minutes. Colin could always be relied on to find a suitable song to accompany the cooking. Thanks to Colin and Anne for walking with us, two great friends of Olive and myself and Burton Rugby Club.





Saturday 8 August laps 70 and 71 - Colin Grimsdell

Today we walked with Colin Grimsdell who has been the visionary who organised the sale of Peel Croft and purchases of Battlestead Croft. Doesn't sound much but in his own words "it has been a journey and a half". Colin remembers at the AGM in 2003 standing against John French for the position of Chair of Development. Early days involved looking at various possible sites for the new ground. At this time he had Pete Minns as a useful touchstone and still has copious hand written notes from Vic Roebuck. Later a steering committee was formed and this group have worked well together with no passengers. Chairman Colin, Ground Bill Leason, Chair of Mini Junior and Working Party Organiser Richard Williams, Electrical, BT etc an also sounding board for Colin, Andy Peach. Commercial and Bar Phil Foster, President Ian Cartwright, Treasurer, TAs and VAT Martin Evans, Renewable Energy looking for Carbon Neutral Stephen Eastwood and Helen Grimsdell as general adviser.

Colin did run me through the various stages of buying, selling, planning permission, buying extra land, selling other land, sharing parts of the site with relevant figures for each. I leave it to be said that the very best deal has been achieved on behalf of the Club members. We owe Colin and his team a massive vote of thanks and as he says "it is still a work in progress" and he will not rest until it is finished.

Apart from the above Colin played for Burton at Under 17 - Under 20 for Dave Williams and on return from University in 1985/86 season Colin was voted 1st XV Player of the Year. The following season he had a bad cruciate ligament and cartilage career ending injury. Captain Mick Waldron commented at the time "you went from great potential to retirement without the bit in between". Colin enjoyed touring, especially the Torquay/Brixham tour where he played in all the games.

Thanks for your company Colin and Helen and we look forward to the opening of our new Clubhouse and Ground.



Wednesday 29 July 2020. - Martyn Evans laps 65 and 66

Many apologies Martyn Evans for the long delay in posting your support for Roy's grand tour. As explained in a previous post it has been a challenging time at the Clark household. Back on track now!

Martyn played his early rugby with Five Ways Old Edwardians where his father was Fixture Secretary and who once loaned Martyn out to the opposition. He studied at Manchester University and played for a time at Sale Rugby Club and as replacement for Steve Smith, the England and British Lions scrum half, thus getting quite a few first team games when Steve was on International duty. He played 44 games for Burton's 1st XV. He has held many positions within the Club. He was Mini Junior Coach with John Atkins up to Colts level and then became Mini Junior Chair for seven years and then taking over from Brian Scott as Club Treasurer on 2009. In 2008 when Colin Grimsdell presented his 'Moving Ground Report' Martyn was asked by Colin to assist him with preparations and the forming of a Holding Company known as HC1091 Ltd. Its purpose was to raise £500,000 to buy the 40 acres of land. Planning was completed 12 years ago and we now stand on the brink of starting to build our new Club House. An amazing amount of work has gone into this by Colin, Martyn and the Management Team. Around 2 million pounds has already been spent and due to grants, land exchanges, all sorts of deals by the Team that money has been covered. We have to build the new Club House still and that will be another 2 million. These are big numbers but our Treasurer, Martyn Evans is confident that we have it all in hand. Soon the Club House will start to be built and the magnificent playing fields, already in existence will have a feature club and stand to be proud of.

I must stress that as well as it being a labour of love for both Martyn and Colin, it has also been a full time job and both wives, Christine and Helen have been fully involved in supporting the new both and the Club. Again we owe a massive debt of thanks for such wonderful achievements on behalf of the Club.

As Martyn would say "we still need money" so go on over to my JustGiving page and all money/donations go straight to the bottom line as the Accountants say. In other words, it is money free to spend on the project straight away.



Wednesday 29 July 2020. Laps 65 and 66. John Cartwright

John joined Burton in 1984 having played for Southwold. So today we were on our very best behaviour as John is Chairman of Disciplinary and he kept us all in order. This is a position he has held for eight years and for two years sitting on the Staffordshire Disciplinary Committee. This position is also ex officio serving on the General Committee. He Captained the B, C and D teams and also played for and managed the Veterans. He also organised and travelled on nine tours, all of which were self funding and returned a profit to Club funds. His ambition is to go on another tour as an Alikado with no specific responsibilities. He still makes the announcements at all the Home matches. He would class himself as a social player and habitual tourist (every Club should have some). Carry on Major.





Laps 67 and 68. Family Laps

Today we walked with John and Sarah, Emily, Jojo and Bea, Andrew, Mollie and Harry (Emma back home in Wales) Robert and Jenna and Amelia my cartoonist and graphic illustrator for my grand tour. Lovely laps with all the family and thanks to all of them and their friends and families for many donations to Burton Rugby Club. It was nice to do laps at the new ground with everyone involved instead of just one on the pitch and the others watching. Pats of the new ground that no-one will notice were examined closely and jumped on by Harry and Mollie. These were the orange line markers to mark where the lines should be painted. Various grand daughters hopped, skipped, roly polyed and generally ran miles around the ground. John played for the Club all the way through from Mini Junior to Colts and several games for the 1st XV before going to Durham University where his first year scrum half was Andrew Straus who went off in the second year to play cricket and became England Captain. In John's second year his stand off was Dave Walder who went on to play for England and is now Dean Richards's Director of Rugby at Newcastle Falcons. His claim to fame was winning £2000 at Henley Sevens as the most entertaining side when they were leading Fiji with Serevey as Captain at half time and only just lost and John tackled Serevey. Robert we never managed to convert to rugby but enjoys the round ball game and took great interest in the new club and how it will function and has great memories of growing up within the rugby club fraternity that was Peel Croft and hopes to support Battlestead Croft as and COVID allows! Andrew played at John Taylor for the 1st XV and was part of the team to win the Staffordshire Schools Cup. Unfortunately he didn't continue at University but still has a love for the game and young Harry is looking good for a back row position. Olive and I had a great time and we have a fantastic family. Amelia has always been a great supporter of Burton Rugby Club and those of you who know her will not be surprised that she wanted to write her own piece for lap 69. As well as a love for the club and game she also played at York University as a flanker and is still in close contact with some of her team mates. If you all want to share this to your wider circle we may get a few more pennies in the pot



Family. Laps 67, 68 and 69

I have already done a 'Family' write up but for those of you who know Amelia, you will know that Amelia would want to do a write up in her style.

Here's the thing – the write up...

Once upon a time, way, way back in the mists of time, but after lockdown, but before shielding was done, but after I was meant to bid a fond farewell to the beloved Peel Croft by getting roundly hammered in it's hallowed hall with all the other ladies on Ladies' Day (damn you Covid-19) – the Clark family London/Surrey branch came up from the Saath to do a couple of laps on the heroic father's Grand Tour of laps around the new Burton upon Trent rugby club ground.

Being the irreverent kind of fool I am, and having grown up learning rude songs hiding beneath the buffet table in the Jack Baker Room, I demanded jokingly that I should like to do lap 69. Happily, Dad is the progenitor of ridiculousness in our family, so, chortling with me like the puerile grown up children we are, it was agreed. We did laps: 67, 68 and 69. <snigger>

As it turned out, the ginger wee bro and erstwhile colt, and gobby wee ginger scrumhalf John could make it as well, with the extended Clark clan. So a date was made. An auspicious, and wholly appropriate buildup night before of many quaffed lagers and a late night B/S session hitting Andy's (another colt) top shelf, meant we were in fine hungover fettle for our inaugural tour of the new ground (I think we'd all played on Peel Croft. I scored from the five yard line on my single outing on that hallowed turf, and - in true Clark-raconteur-style, had upped it to an heroic run starting in our 22 after 3 pints had been quaffed post match). It had been a beltingly hot week, but we were relieved (not just due to our handovers) to find the day was mildly overcast and a bit cooler. The family rocked up early morning for a breezy constitutional around the new pitches in support of dad's heroic 'Captain Tom-a-thon' in support of BRUFC...

Claire Bradley can attest that my memory has a tendency to 'not remember' things where alcohol in vast quantities is concerned, and the night with the two brothers was the first time I'd seen them both since lockdown. The consumption was prodigious. And the start of a two day hangover. So forgive me if what follows is a little hazy. Not least because a bit of time has passed since I was supposed to write this.

Luckily, the sober and sensible Smoss and a gaggle of gambolling girls helped ease our passage around the pitch. Jo Jo doing cartwheels, Bea proclaiming we should "BEWARE THE GOOSE POO" (I played rugby at York Uni and our training pitch was always full of the stuff, for duck's sake!), me regaling a smaller redhead (Emily) with the shenanigans we used to get up to at Peel Croft when I was her age. Dad and lovely Ols, filled us in on all the facts about the new ground. And having already done 65 laps, they are old hands already.

It was a lovely morning, made even sweeter by the fact that we have not seen nearly enough of our beloved ones this year. The new ground is impressive to say the least, and brought back many memories from when we were children and lived nearby in Tatenhill. We walked around the impressive set up, dad told us all about the plans and where – crucially – the bar would be. And sad though we are to say goodbye to what was effectively our second home for a long time, the future looks bright.

Peel Croft was a sanctuary for the original three Clarks after we lost mum, and then it played a part in our new family life for what came next with Dad and Ols' wedding reception, my 21st and many an augmented Clark family outing. I have no doubt that the new Croft will be a sanctuary for new generations of rugby players and supporters and their families and friends after what has been a fairly horrible time for everyone. These places and pastimes are not just 'by the way' they are the things which make existence worthwhile. And the camaraderie and family-spirit we have always enjoyed at Peel Croft will continue at the new ground.

Here's to Burton's new ground. And to its 150th birthday. Which comes just a couple of days after my 48th.

Fingers crossed we'll soon be drinking in the new clubhouse. In the meantime, perhaps pop us the price of a pint or two for dad's ongoing campaign. He'd like £33million and a knighthood – aim high - as ever – but we'll settle for a few more bob in the coffers for Burton Rugby Club's future. And as for Battlestead Croft, it is sweet and fitting I think that the new ground is overlooked by its very own Sunshine Mountain.





Sunday 2 August 2020 - lap 72 Mark Rudman

Today we walked with our adopted son Mark Rudman who is John's best friend since their first day at John Taylor High School. Both our very competitive and everything has to be a competition. They have a kicking competition every year for the Golden Boot but I didn't ask who was winning as I would probably get two different answers! They were Bestman at each other's weddings with various humorous anecdotes and tricks being played. Mark played stand off to John's scrum half from John Taylor High School and Burton Rugby Club Juniors and Colts. There is a bottle of Coleman's mustard in our kitchen cupboard referred to as 'Marky's mustard' as he likes it on his bacon sandwich and Olive always makes sure it is there for him. The John Taylor and Burton Colts boys still stay in touch even though they are dispersed across the world now. They were all intelligent boys and A Level grades across the group were high resulting in good class University places. They are all doing well in business and none more so than Mark who is a Merchant Banker. Mark has driven up from Essex today with all his children, Henry, Ella and Scarlett to take the 72nd lap with me in the drizzling summer rain. He has a large house down by Stanstead airport and my grand daughter says it has seven toilets. My wife Olive says "that's some flipping cleaning"..... but the swimming pool compensates. Thanks for joining us Mark, always a pleasure to see you and thanks for your contribution. Mark, if any of your friends would like to support you with your walk with me then please feel free to share my JustGiving page



Sunday 27 September 2020. - Lap 73

So the first of the Alicadoos to join me were Richard Williams. Roger and Sylvia Fearn, Tony and Sally Stevenson and not forgetting my wife Olive Clark.

Arriving at Battlestead Croft we were greeted by a car park attendant!!! Never seen this before. The car park was full to overflowing and it brought back lots of happy memories of when we were all involved with the Mini Junior Section. It was a stunning autumnal morning with various age groups spread out across three of the five pitches and other areas besides, indicating what a fantastic set up we have for Mini Junior now as opposed to the trek to the Oxhay! Despite Covid there was a wonderful aroma of sausage and bacon rolls/cobs or whatever you want to call them with thanks to Claire our amazing Catering Manager.

The Under 14's were busily engaged in 'car washing' to raise funds and I thank David Storer and his section for the generous contribution to my grand tour.

Also many thanks for the contributions received from Alicadoos who were unable to join in the physical walk for various reasons, some from as far afield as Bermuda, who all walked a virtual lap and bought the club a 'pint or two'. Thank you again. Next Sunday it will be the final two laps of my grand tour and if there are any Alicadoos out there who want to join in then please let me know via Facebook, messenger or telephone and for those who missed the opportunity to buy a 'pint or two' last week, this is it, your last chance.

A fine bunch of Alicadoos going out to support our team. Sadly all these stalwarts have now passed on but you only have to look at the joy and mischief in their faces to know they had great pleasure from their rugby. Roy Prevett, Stan Haynes, Vic Roebuck, John Richards, Pete Minns. All sadly missed but we will remember them on the Alicadoo Lap 74 on Sunday

Saturday 3 October 2020

The last laps of my grand tour are tomorrow. One lap to honour Alicadoos past and present and the last and 75th lap to mark my 75th birthday and Burton Rugby Club's 150th birthday.

I am posting some photos with a small explanatory note as to write up the efforts of all these people would take several pages!



Photo 1 is Bill and Jenny Barbour. Bill and his business partner Dennis Puttick of Keepmere Engineering used their engineering skills to help the Club on many occasions. Also, Jenny, is the only female to go on Easter Tour and soundly qualifies to be an Alicadoo for this effort. Bill was extremely ill at this time but desperately keen to go on tour and Jenny stepped up to the mark and asked if she could accompany him as his carer. I think she enjoyed the experience of touring and she was certainly the conduit to Bill's ability to take part.

The old saying "what goes on tour, stays on tour" but this I can divulge.

I remember the tour lunch to Rochford sur Mer. It was held in a very nice fish restaurant in La Rochelle, shaped like a boat. The President of Rochford sur Mer spoke only French and asked me what wine we would like with our meal and I being bilingual (ish) had to speak French with the help of our interpreter, Graziella. All was understood. Pete Minns was very quick to proffer his favourite wine, which is Chablis but the President said "NON, Chablis est Bourgogne ici Bordeaux, SANCERE". Pete agreed and it was an excellent choice.

Saturday 3 October 2020



Photo 2 Royston and Evelyn Bradley

Mine hosts at the Coopers Tavern, Burton the Rugby Club's second home. Also the home of Claire Bradley our Club Secretary and Declan past Chairman of Burton Mini Junior Section, player and referee.

Evelyn has been first to comment on almost every post I have put on Facebook and will be there tomorrow to support me and everyone taking part tomorrow for the last lap and I understand that Claire will do the walking.

Royston made an immense contribution to the running of the Rugby Club and knew the Clubs constitution by heart whenever a change was proposed in Committee. He was also a formidable barrier to players crying off during his time as Team Secretary when it was easier to play than to cry off. He also ran Busters nightclub for many years from his home and was a well loved and much respected gentleman of the Club, by young and old.

Saturday 3 October 2020



Photo 3 Left to right. Bill Barbour, George Bennett and Terry Roberts

Pictured at Marston's Ball in their finery. At that time Burton had a vibrant social scene with many 'Balls' to dress up for. Now it seems that the event of the year is the Rugby Club Ball. On the tour to Fallingbistle in

Germany George Bennett lost his trousers only for him to discover his friend Terry Roberts was wearing them by mistake!!!

Saturday 3 October 2020



John Mander. - Photo - back row fifth from the left. Also four Past Presidents, L C Reece, Bill Souter, Vic Roebuck and Eddie Hardwick.

John was a prodigious tourist, barman, referee and a true Alicadoo. He had his own language and his adaptations of English were referred to as 'manderisms'. He once told Buster Bradley who had been high tackled by an opponent "you had a high tackle but you took advantage of it" as the tackler finished up on his back in Buster's wake. He had a way of drinking a pint of Guinness where he would state the number of the Guinness he was drinking then twist his left ear and drink it in one. At lunch time before the tour dinner in The George at Penrith he stated "16" twisted his ear and sunk that Guinness as if it were his first!!!

Saturday 3 October 2020

Another bunch of Alicadoos



Left to right. Myself, Buster Bradley, Dave Bowen, Bill Barbour and Vic Roebuck.

Dave Bowen was Club Captain, President and was also very successful in his role as Chair of Promotions where he organised many lucrative sponsorships for the Club.

Dave was a larger than life character and a fantastic Clubman and of course Alicadoo extraordinaire. You definitely wanted him to be part of your tour experience. Everyone wanted to join his round but it was best to join early and buy four halves as he always created a massive round which never came round again. It took a lot of people a long time to catch on to this but I was always second or third to buy.

Saturday 3 October 2020

Pete Minns on the far right.



Pete was Past President and Team Secretary for many years. He was also responsible for sourcing all the Bands for our Friday night Live Band Nights which were held in the 60's and 70's. All this came about when Trevor Johnson joined the Club from one of the Nottingham Boat Clubs and told the Committee it was a great source of income. Pete and Trevor started the live music nights off and at that time we had Northern Soul Groups and Rock Groups like Fern's Brass Foundary. Our premier evening involved a marquee on the pitch and Jethro Tull was the lead act with Johnny Johnston and the Band Wagon as closing act.

All these characters and Alicadoos have contributed so much to what we have today in no small manner. If you would like to make a donation in their memory please go to my JustGiving page



Sunday 4 October 2020 - Laps 74 and 75

Well, the walking has finally ended with the second Alicadoo lap number 74 and the final lap for my 75th birthday and the Rugby Clubs 150th.

I have had marvellous support along the way from Olive who has walked with me and from Club enthusiasts and members who have chosen to come along and join me. We thank everyone who has contributed to my grand tour and I am pleased to say that it has turned from a 'grand' tour to a '£4300 grand' tour with gift aid. Far more than I hoped for when I started so I am absolutely delighted with everyone's response.

Thirty people turned out for the last two laps, on a morning when rain was expected, some old faces, some new and all welcome. So in no particular order Kevin Wrathall, Graham Bird, Sally Roebuck, Danny Bayes, Terence Roberts, Johnny John Edwards, Jeanette Edwards, Evelyn Bradley, Claire Bradley, George Philliskirk, Andrew Lunn, Emma Lunn, Mollie and Harry Lunn, Chas Suggate, Josie Suggate, Mick Brown, David Heptonstall, Peter Scobie, John Cartwright, Ian Cartwright, Debs Cartwright, Paul Harris, Rob Lunn, Jenna Morris, Richard Williams and his lovely mother Mrs Williams, Colin Draycott, Anne Lee-Draycott, Martin Ellerton, Becci J Ellerton, Roy Clark, Olive Clark and Amelia Clark. A massive thank you for your support. I also want to mention two Alicadoos who were unable to attend but walked a virtual lap with me, Bill Taylor and John French.

So I will ramble just a little bit more and thank Olive, not only for supporting me but for being my press secretary, typing and editing my Facebook posts and to Amelia for her art work and for promoting on zoom and twitter and to Claire, who has taken my ramblings and kept an eye on my Facebook efforts and for promoting me on the Club's site.

Having made this epic journey and seen the bones of our new Club rising out of the fields at Battlestead Croft on Sunday morning the most poignant moment for me was when we walked in at the end of the 75th lap and stood for a final photograph. In the background, in clear view were two diggers and a lot of marker posts for the new foundations of the Club house. In the next few months our Club house will start to take shape and all the various age groups who were dispersed around the site will have a rugby home to be proud of. This is what your donations will action and everyone will benefit from the new facilities for years to come.