

# TOUCHLINE

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## CONCUSSION EDUCATION

SIMON MILLS

Professional players and coaches in England will take part in a compulsory concussion education programme before the start of next season. Aviva Premiership, Greene King IPA Championship and Regional Academy players and coaches will complete an online concussion education module, and further resources will be extended to professional game referees and, through the Immediate Care in Sport programme, to healthcare providers.

The education programme is designed to increase awareness and reinforce best practice, and will be aligned with the Zurich Consensus on Concussion in Sport and the International Rugby Board's Concussion Guidelines.

Its introduction has been approved by the Professional Game Board (PGB) which also supported a number of further recommendations made by its Medical Advisory Group following the Professional Rugby Concussion Forum held at Twickenham Stadium last November. They include:

- **Mandatory review of match footage of the mechanism of injury by the assessing medical practitioner before a player can be cleared to return to the field following the Pitchside Concussion Assessment (PSCA)**
- **A new review process for individual PSCA cases**
- **A commitment to ensure best practice and objectivity in the Graduated Return to Play protocol which is specific to rugby union**
- **Support for long-term player health studies looking to establish the prevalence of neurodegenerative disease among retired players**



Mike England



Simon Kemp

All stakeholders in the English professional game will continue to engage with the IRB PSCA Working Group to ensure that the best possible decisions regarding any possible development of the PSCA process can be made as quickly and accurately as possible.

RFU Chief Medical Officer Simon Kemp said: "Concussion is acknowledged to be one of the most challenging sports injuries to diagnose, assess and rehabilitate but we continue to make significant progress in this area. The education

initiative is designed to broaden understanding beyond healthcare practitioners and facilitate the further cultural change needed across the game for good concussion management. We are very aware that the way concussion is managed at the professional level drives how it's managed at other levels of the game and it is important we continue to lead the way."

RFU Professional Rugby Director Rob Andrew added: "The professional game in England is a global leader in terms of player welfare and these constructive steps build on the consensus reached at the Professional Rugby Concussion Forum and the work the RFU and its partners have been doing over the last decade in terms of injury monitoring, research and prevention."

The RFU continues to raise awareness throughout the community game and deliver concussion education through its ground breaking HEADCASE website and resources. Launched last year, the UK's leading sports concussion resource, HEADCASE ([www.rfu.com/headcase](http://www.rfu.com/headcase)) is recognised as best in class by leading NHS based concussion experts, the Faculty of Sport & Exercise Medicine, and Headway, the brain injury charity.

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## RUGBY NATIONS IN UNITY



PAULA ROWE

Twickenham Stadium recently played host to the launch of the Unity Project, enabling the RFU, in partnership with the International Rugby Board (IRB), FIRA-AER and UK Sport, to help 17 European nations grow rugby union ahead of Rugby World Cup 2015.

Part of the legacy plans implemented by the RFU under the wider work of the IRB's RWC 2015 legacy programme, IMPACT beyond 2015. Until June 2016 the project sees each country involved twinned with two CBs, non-geographical CBs lending support across the board. The

IRB and FIRA-AER selected the participating nations, the CBs helping them devise and deliver development plans. CB support will include the likes of helping to train grounds staff and facilities managers, through to working on grassroots coach and player pathways.

The launch event hosted by RFU Chairman Bill Beaumont was attended by representatives of the IRB, Rugby World Cup Ltd, FIRA-AER, UK Sport, the nations and CBs and other sporting bodies and government.

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## VOLUNTEER FOR RUGBY WORLD CUP 2015



The search is now underway to find the 6,000 volunteers who will help to make Rugby World Cup 2015 (RWC 2015) a truly great tournament of which the whole country can be proud. With 75% of volunteers set to come through rugby clubs in England and Wales, tournament organisers for England 2015 will recognise those who give their time and effort to the game week-in week-out by putting them at the heart of one of the world's biggest sporting events.

RWC 2015 is also about bringing the game to new audiences, and with this in mind over 1,000 volunteers will be recruited through a national campaign. From co-ordinating transport between host cities to welcoming teams and travelling fans to England, the volunteers will play a key role in making RWC 2015 an unforgettable experience.

**More information on the volunteer programme will be available on [rugbyworldcup.com/volunteers](http://rugbyworldcup.com/volunteers) from February 12.**



### ENGLAND RUGBY OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME APP

Official England Rugby match day programmes are available for the iPad through iTunes. With articles from leading rugby writers, quizzes and features on the opposition - illustrated with superb action photography and brought to life with embedded video - each issue is £2.99 or order a six-match bundle at £14.99. The digital edition is available the day before each Twickenham match.



# MARRIOTT LONDON SEVENS MONSTER WEEKEND

EMMA KENNEDY

## A great day out with weekend passes for £30

The England Sevens team is calling on fans to show their support at a monster weekend of fun and rugby at Twickenham Stadium for the Marriott London Sevens on the 10th - 11th of May, the final tournament in the 2014 HSBC Sevens World Series. Last year's safari fancy dress theme saw a record-breaking 113,000 supporters at Twickenham. This year promises excitement on the pitch and lots of activity off it, with live music, entertainment and a big screen and stage in the West Fan Village at Twickenham.

The winners of both the Marriott London Sevens and the HSBC Sevens World Series will be crowned on the Sunday, which is also the family day with face painters, balloon artists and a rugby activity zone for little monsters.

Tom Mitchell, rising star of the England Sevens says, "The whole squad is really excited about the monster theme this year. We always look forward to seeing supporters' costumes and having Twickenham transformed into Monster City will add to the incredible atmosphere. With the amazing support we receive at home, we hope to better our third place finish from last year."

The England team would love to hear how you are gearing up for the event through [www.facebook.com/londonsevns](http://www.facebook.com/londonsevns), the hub for all team videos and news. You can also join the conversation at #London7s.

## TICKET OFFERS:

### March Weekend Offer

1st March 2014 until 31st March 2014

Weekend Rate of £30

### Family Offer – Sunday Only

Sunday Family Rate 2+2 - £50

Adult Sunday rate of £17.50 for the month of April



# SEAFORD SET EXAMPLE

Seaford Rugby Club has been helping to raise awareness of issues surrounding domestic abuse. Having played one well attended match in support of the White Ribbon campaign they are planning another on March 8th.

Players and spectators have been signing to pledge their support for the campaign and squad members now wear the campaign ribbon on their kit sponsored by Lewes District Council and the Community Safety Partnership.

Said Nathan Palmer, who plays blind-side flanker "We all think it's important to be

seen supporting something as important as pledging never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women. We want everyone to know that rugby is a sport that takes the happiness and welfare of women and girls very seriously."

The first match saw Seaford beat Eastbourne 42 - 27 and they are taking on Burgess Hill at the March White Ribbon match, when partners like Sussex Police, Crimestoppers and Lewes District Council will be there to cheer the players on and share a pre-match lunch.

## Concussion Education. Continued from page 1...

Concussion awareness is already part of the mandatory Rugby Ready course for all new coaches. Player safety training, with concussion as a core component, will also be offered for all RFU Licensed Coaches.

The Headcase Concussion Guide and other resources are provided for everyone on coach, referee and first aid courses and concussion awareness and Headcase are also promoted by Rugby Development Officers, Community Rugby Coaches and University Development Officers.

Headcase changing room posters are being provided for clubs and a network of health care professionals established to run concussion and other player safety educational sessions for coaches, referees, players and parents, bolstering schools' and clubs' concussion management programmes.

The RFU's concussion awareness programme is continuously reviewed by independent experts, one being Dr Richard Greenwood, Consultant Neurologist at University College London

and Homerton Hospitals. He says, "The RFU's HEADCASE is an excellent source of information for those involved with rugby. It is accurate, thorough and appropriate information, based on the most up to date medical consensus. The RFU should be applauded for making this available in such an accessible format."

Said Dr Mike England, Rugby Development Medical Director, "The RFU has also been conducting independent research into the frequency of concussion across the community game through a number of studies since 2008, including a long term Community Rugby Surveillance Project, unique in grass roots sport in the UK and in global rugby. The frequency of concussion injuries has remained stable throughout these studies, and at a much lower rate than in the professional game."

**Take the Headcase test at [www.rfu.com/headcase](http://www.rfu.com/headcase) and check your knowledge on concussion.**

## Rugby Nations in Unity. Continued from page 1...

Bill Beaumont said: "We are honoured and excited to be working with these 17 countries on such an interesting and exciting project.

"Through the Unity Project we hope to work with the countries to capitalise on opportunities presented by Rugby World Cup 2015 to build a lasting legacy for rugby across Europe."

IRB Chief Executive Brett Gosper added: "IMPACT Beyond 2015 is the most comprehensive and far reaching programme for a Rugby World Cup. We are excited to be collaborating with the RFU, FIRA-AER and UK Sport on the Unity Project, a programme that will drive significant playing, administration and development benefits for 17 European Rugby Unions.

"Rugby World Cup is the financial engine for the global development of the game and this project underscores our mission of welcoming and sustaining more men, women and children to play and support rugby worldwide."

Octavian Morariu, FIRA-AER President said: "With interest in rugby constantly growing across Europe, the Unity Project will be highly instrumental in helping us to develop the game even more".

Rod Carr, Chair of UK Sport, added: "UK Sport is proud to have helped deliver London 2012's Singapore Vision to use the Games to reach young people around the world and inspire them to choose sport. It is fantastic to be able to transfer the knowledge and experience gained from International Inspiration to support the delivery of the Unity Project, which will inspire increased community participation in rugby across Europe, building a lasting international legacy for another major sporting event taking place in the UK."

## The countries taking part in the Unity Project and their allocated Constituent Bodies are:

COUNTRY	CONSTITUENT BODIES
Belgium	Eastern Counties + Notts, Lincs & Derbyshire
Spain	Durham County + Northumberland
Poland	Surrey + Sussex
Portugal	Cheshire + Lancashire
Russia	Berkshire + Middlesex
Romania	Oxfordshire + Gloucestershire
Czech Republic	North Midlands + Staffordshire
Hungary	East Midlands + Cambridge University
Germany	Hampshire + Hertfordshire
Georgia	Kent + Essex
Switzerland	Dorset & Wiltshire + Somerset
Ukraine	Leicestershire + Warwickshire
Netherlands	Cornwall + Devon
Sweden, Denmark, Norway	Cumbria + Yorkshire
Serbia	Buckinghamshire + Oxford University

The other non-geographical CBs involved include: Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force, England Rugby Football Schools Union and the Students RFU, Cambridge and Oxford Universities.

# SAFEGUARDING MADE CLEAR & VISIBLE

The safety and wellbeing of young people involved in our sport is of paramount importance.

Our clubs are where many children have their first experience of rugby union and it is important that club officials, coaches, parents and children are aware of the safeguarding measures that clubs put in place to create safe environments for children to train, play and enjoy the game.

It is therefore strongly recommended that contact details for the Club Safeguarding Officer and the club's own Safeguarding Policy are published on the club website. The policy should reinforce the RFU Safeguarding Policy and procedures, while reflecting the unique local circumstances.

Said Richard Smallbone, RFU Safeguarding Manager, said, "We have a very good record and have been at the forefront in sport in safeguarding young people. Our clubs are very aware of the importance of this but sometimes don't shout it from the rooftops. We hope that they will ensure that the subject is very visible and accessible to all involved."

**If your club needs help or advice email [richardsmallbone@rfu.com](mailto:richardsmallbone@rfu.com)**



# MORE YOUNG PLAYERS GIVEN ENGLAND U16s OPPORTUNITY

EMMA KENNEDY

With this the first season that the England U16s come under the RFU's Professional Rugby Department, 100 young players with potential and talent have been selected, 25 from each of the four divisions: North, Midlands, London & South East and South West.

The selection process began last May, with a close relationship between club academies, schools, counties and the national set-up creating greater continuity for players on the development pathway. Following initial nomination by their academies, the final selection followed after a number of festivals and clinics

John Fletcher, Professional Player Development Manager said: "Selection needed to balance potential for the future with current talent. Assessment at this age group can be difficult and the key is to look at what these players could and will be, as much as where they are at this moment in time.

"The number of young players coming through the age grade sides and into the senior England teams reflects the recent success of the player development pathway. We are now able to start this process earlier and more effectively by greater input and



involvement in the U16s squad. Giving players an opportunity, keeping as many in the programme as possible, brings the chance to test themselves in tough fixtures and receive quality coaching. The priority is to create the right environment in which players can express themselves."

Training and competition will remain divisional until April, with John Fletcher and other National Academy Coaches working closely with the England U16s and divisional management teams. The four squads have already met in their respective regions for a training weekend in preparation for the Divisional Festival at Broadstreet RFC (Jan 31- Feb 1). Further development camps follow in March (8-9) before the Wellington Festival in April (12-19). In previous years three England squads were selected following the Broadstreet Festival. This year all four divisions will compete, playing two sides from Wales and France and one from Italy and Scotland.

A single England squad will be selected to face Italy U17s on the final day of the festival (Saturday 19 April) and then to play Wales U16s the following weekend (April 27).

# DIDSBURY DELIGHT AT NEW FACILITIES

MELISSA PLATT

Didsbury Toc H RFC celebrated the New Year with completion of its magnificent £1 million construction and renovation project, giving the local area some of the best sports facilities in the country.

Chosen by the RFU to become a Lead Up and Legacy Centre for the 2015 Rugby World Cup, Didsbury used the RFU's £100,000 grant to upgrade their club house to cater for men, women and junior members with 10 en-suite changing rooms. This also allows the club to introduce disability tag rugby.

The RFU has committed £10m to create a network of over 500 Lead Up and Legacy Centres helping clubs to improve their



facilities and pitches to be 'Fit for 15' to provide a platform on which club rugby participation throughout England can be built.

Didsbury also received a £50,000 RFU loan and significant funding from the Football Foundation, England & Wales Cricket Board and Sport England. The community now has its pick of four rugby pitches, three football pitches, one cricket square, two artificial strips for eight a side cricket, and a training area, all managed by Didsbury Playing Fields Association.

Didsbury Hon. Secretary, Trevor Wooding, a member for over 40 years, said: "There's a real wow factor about the club now. When I joined, we were housed in a converted stable block behind a local hotel. Now we're one of the best equipped clubs in the country, ready to welcome newcomers of all ages. We have relied on tremendous dedication from volunteers over the years and they are so proud of our new facilities. We'd like to thank everyone involved in the funding and organisation of this considerable project."

Didsbury's upgrade will also boost a flourishing relationship with local universities and schools. The club encourages sports students at Manchester Metropolitan and University to coach their junior sides, while club players help to develop young talent in local schools.

"The new facilities will improve the quality of the rugby experience for everyone and provide more playing opportunities, especially for local people in the 14-24 age-group," said RFU Area Facilities Manager Tom Bartram. "This investment will also support the club's financial sustainability leading up to the Rugby World Cup and create a focus for England 2015 and a lasting rugby union legacy in the community."

Didsbury Toc H RFC is one of many clubs across England benefiting from investment through the RFU Lead Up and Legacy fund. To find out more go to [www.rfu.com/betterfacilities](http://www.rfu.com/betterfacilities)



# GRAVENEY SCHOOL'S INCREDIBLE JOURNEY

Graveney School in South West London epitomises the incredible journeys in the NatWest Schools Cup competition.

When a young Kyle Sinckler (Former England U20 and current Harlequins prop) asked his PE teacher Stacia Long about starting a rugby team, little did the Quins Under 14 academy player know that the enquiry would leave a legacy at the Tooting School which still only runs rugby as an after school activity.

This season the ir Under 15s are in the quarter final of the NatWest Schools Cup Vase having edged out The London Oratory 7-5 in the 7th round, with only a 29-28 defeat to schools rugby giants Whitgift thwarting a fairytale run in the Cup.

Says Long: "It all began when Kyle, playing rugby outside school with Harlequins having been spotted by Colin Osborne, was keen to get school matches played. I told him I knew absolutely nothing about rugby but was happy to drive the minibus and arrange fixtures."

To help her students develop their rugby skills Long established a close link with local club Old Rustlishians and in 2011 she won a 'coach of the year award.' For the first three years Graveney could only field combined age group teams but now they have a team at every age, including 45 girls playing weekly.

"This year saw Graveney enter the NatWest Cup for the first time" adds Long, "Some warm-up games gave the boys real belief that they could compete in the early stages of the competition. It's only their fourth year of playing rugby and still after school rather than on the curriculum, but they knew they had something special as a team that could help them through."

Only two matches away from Twickenham, Long wasn't thinking too far ahead: "I'm immensely proud to have been part of what they have achieved. They deserve the success they have had so far and I really hope they can continue this run but we are taking one game at a time! We have all loved every minute of this tournament and it has been the making of them as a team."

The Quarter Finals were being played as Touchline went to press, but whatever the outcome Graveney School have a successful rugby future ahead of them.

The U18 semi-finals are on Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th March and U15 semi-finals on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th March at Allianz Park, home of Saracens.

Finals are on Saturday 29th March at Twickenham - entry is free. So why not come and see possible stars of the future in action?

For more information, go to [www.rfu.com/natwestschoolscup](http://www.rfu.com/natwestschoolscup)

# BRIDGNORTH GOING GREY

Bridgnorth RFC is hoping to increase the average age of the Shropshire town's inhabitants in May when they host the English Golden Oldies Rugby Festival, now in its third year. This is the first time the event has been held at the club and they are looking to achieve a big turnout of teams from around the country on Saturday 17th May.

Says Doug McGill, one of the event's organisers (pictured centre), "This is a fun festival which involves little tackling or serious risk to flagging bodies and anyone aged 35 and over, no matter how old or unfit, would enjoy it. There will be a hog roast, bars and music and camping is available on site, with local pubs also great for b & b, bringing the chance to enjoy our lovely town on the River Severn. There are no winners or losers but it's a chance to meet up, enjoy yourself and punish those muscles that haven't worked in a while!"

If a club can't raise a squad (and teams can be mixed sex) Doug says why not link up with another local club and make a touring XV. Further information from Doug McGill at: [DougMcGil@aol.com](mailto:DougMcGil@aol.com) or 0771 424 7731.





## WEYMOUTH YOUNGSTERS HIT THE BEACH

When the going gets tough Weymouth Rugby Club mini and youth players get going, as they did recently when storms battered the south coast causing severe flooding and leaving the community with a massive clean up problem.

Chesil Beach an 18 mile long stretch of pebbled beach between the ocean and the Fleet Lagoon is an important area for wildlife and lies at the centre of the Jurassic Coast, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The storms swept massive

amounts of rubbish onto the beautiful beach and coastline and flooded the Chiswell area of Portland.

Local community organisers arranged a clean up operation and some 80 youngsters, parents and officials from Weymouth RFC went along to help instead of attending training that day. After three hours hard work, 12 skips were filled with washed up rubbish, helping to protect wildlife and restore the beautiful Dorset Coastline.

# ASPATRIA GROUNDS FOR CELEBRATION

MELISSA PLATT

Cumbria was enjoying Aspatria Chairman John Heyworth's success after he was named IOG Vitax Supaturf Volunteer Sports Groundsman of the Year at the Institute of Groundsmanship Awards. Aspatria RUFC was also runner-up in the Grassroots Sports Ground of the Year 2013 category.

The awards were established five years ago to recognise the best in the industry and to provide a platform to promote the valuable work performed by groundsmen and women around the country.

John Heyworth, also Chairman of Cumbria RFU, said: "I am honoured to have won this IOG award, achieved thanks to the



## WOMEN'S PREMIERSHIP GOES DOWN TO THE WIRE



JULIA HUTTON

Richmond became 2013-2014 Women's Premiership champions after a season which went right down to the wire. They went into the season's final league game having to beat rivals Bristol to stop Saracens, league leaders for most of the season, from taking the title.

Led by international duo Emma Croker (England) and Lynne Cantwell (Ireland), Richmond secured a 75-0 victory at Newbury RFC and a fourth Premiership crown in five years. In a 13-try showing, England's Becky Essex and centre Joanne Watmore both scored hat-tricks, while tight-head prop Elisha Dee added a brace.

Saracens were Premiership runners up, Bristol recording their highest ever finish with third place. Last year's winners Worcester were fourth, just ahead of Darlington Mowden Park Sharks. Lichfield and Wasps finished sixth and seventh, ahead of Premiership newcomers Aylesford Bulls, who, with promotion and relegation suspended in a Women's World Cup season, will have the time to build on a first season at the top of the women's game.

The unusually early end to the Premiership season in 2014 has been designed to allow international players to focus on the Six Nations championship and the Rugby World Cup in France in August.

club's team of volunteers and the support and encouragement of the club committee. I would like to thank everyone involved, including the RFU and Rugby Football Foundation for their series of grants and loans, totalling in excess of £150k, which enabled us to invest in Aspatria's pitches and maintenance equipment. The RFU sourced soil reliever has made a significant contribution and without this investment we wouldn't have been able to achieve the improvements we have."

RFU Head Groundsman Keith Kent, who identified the need for drainage equipment and robust soil reliever to combat issues with waterlogged pitches in the community game, said: "This is an outstanding achievement and the prestigious title is richly deserved by John. I hope this award shows our clubs how much can be achieved through grit, determination and a lot of aeration! The RFU and the whole of Cumbria can be very proud of John's accolade."

In his role as Chairman of Cumbria, Heyworth has helped clubs in his county by running the hire of the aerator unit at a considerably cheaper rate than commercial operators.

Ted Mitchell, RFU Club Facilities Technical Manager, said: "This award recognises the incredible work John has done not only at his own club but in support of other local clubs through his involvement in the RFU Pitch Improvement Partnership."

## ARRANGING TOURS FOR YOUR U16s?

Schools and clubs may well be planning incoming or outgoing tours for their U16s. If you are there is an important point you need to consider.

U16 teams can contain U15s but when playing outside England against U16s team the opposition may contain players classified as U17s under RFU Regulations (but due to differences in age banding, are classified as U16s in the foreign jurisdiction). In this situation special consideration is required and approval should only be requested after VERY careful consideration.

Don't wait until you are on tour. Apply for any permissions when planning. And remember to check with the opposition if the need does exist.

If an overseas U16 team is to play you in England, remember to check if they have any players who, under RFU designation, are U17. If they do you must either say you cannot play them or you must not play your U15s.

For matches in England, no approval can be given for U15s to play against U17s.

Guidance and a consent form for U15s playing against U17s outside England are at [www.rfu.com/thegame/regulations](http://www.rfu.com/thegame/regulations)



## JACKO TACKLING NEW CHALLENGE

Having recently retired from professional rugby, Nottingham Rugby's David Jackson soon discovered a way to develop a new career.

A firm fans' favourite at the Meadow Lane club, Jackson's creative and entertaining activities off the pitch and ability to generate interest in the club saw him snapped up by their marketing and media department to help them build their fan base and profile. He will also work with their community department to develop their profile and support their initiatives.

Jackson said, "The chance to stay involved with Nottingham Rugby is something that I am both very grateful for and passionate about. Having been at the club my whole life I want to give something back and feel that I can use my experience to help us grow now that I can no longer help on the field."

On top of his work with the Green and Whites, Jackson will undertake work experience with OneAthlete, helping to develop their athlete lifestyle and mentoring programme alongside strength and conditioning coach Tim Stevenson, who counts local Paralympic Champion, Richard Whitehead, among his charges.

# JOHNSON RETURNS TO HIS RUGBY ROOTS

PAUL BOLTON

Martin Johnson, England's 2003 Rugby World Cup-winning captain, went back to his roots to open a new clubhouse extension and refurbishment at Market Harborough, his first club. The former England Manager played in the mini and junior section at Market Harborough, then known as Kibworth, before moving on to Wigston and Leicester Tigers.

Johnson, who was raised in Market Harborough, was back in the Leicestershire town to open a new changing block and complete refurbishment of facilities at Northampton Road as part of his old club's '1923 Project' the year that Market Harborough were founded in nearby Kibworth 91 years ago.

The first phase started construction last May and has been completed on time and with financial support from the RFU who have chosen Market Harborough as a 'Lead Up and Legacy Centre' for the 2015 Rugby World Cup.

The Leicestershire Rugby Union identified Market Harborough as a key investment priority in its 2012/13 Action Plan as a result of the club's ability to demonstrate its readiness. The grant of £90,000 confirms a partnership between the RFU and the club to be 'Fit for 2015'.

"I'm glad the club asked me to come and unveil phase one of their development project. As a local man, I'm a big supporter of rugby and the clubs in this area," Johnson said. "I grew up in Harborough and played a bit for the mini and juniors here when I was young. In fact, I think there's a photo on the wall in the clubhouse of me aged 10 appearing with them at Welford Road.

"That was a long time ago but this club has kept pace with the way rugby's developed. The minis and juniors attract hundreds of players, the biggest in the region, and now girls are playing the game too. I've still got good friends here from those old days here. The relationships you form in the sport are just as important as playing and are what makes the game special.

"You need a good place for everyone to change in and mix before and after the game and I'm proud to be opening this new facility for my local club which is an important part of life here."

Market Harborough chairman Phil Jarvis said: "None of it would have been possible without funding from the RFU, supported by the Leicestershire Rugby Union and from Sport England, the Market Harborough and Bowdens Charity and Harborough District Council.

"I can't thank you enough for your support. Architects LE1 and contractors WW Brown have also been phenomenal, as has the energy and commitment of our project manager, Richard Lainchbury. This is a big step towards having some of the area's best facilities aimed at attracting more adult and junior players to the club. The local community can use them for rugby and other sport and leisure activities.

When we finish phase two in a few years we truly will have a wonderful facility."



# GRASSHOPPERS FIRST IN MIDDLESEX WITH KIDS FIRST RUGBY

LOUISE LATTER

Grasshoppers Rugby Club has just launched the RFU's new mini rugby initiative - Kids First Rugby - a new approach to the way the game is played at rugby clubs across England which puts the child at the centre, moving on at the child's own pace and development so that more children experience success.

Grasshoppers was selected as one of 20 clubs countrywide and is the first in Middlesex to participate in Kids First Rugby.

With the official England Rugby Ambassador for the children's game, Ruckley, the English Bulldog in support, Grasshoppers will adopt the new rules of play which put the child at the centre of training and playing.

Tony Robinson, RFU Player Development Manager, ran the initial introductory sessions with coaches, managers and parents and said: "it's great to see Grasshoppers leading this new initiative in Middlesex. They have a great set up at mini and junior rugby already and this new initiative will help ensure their young players have a great rugby experience. The two sessions we've run so far have been very well received, with coaches and parents

impressed by the new approach and keen to see the young players benefit from getting to know Kids First Rugby and Ruckley".

Leroy Arbouine, Grasshoppers Chairman for Mini Rugby added: "We are very keen to ensure that all our players get the very best experience, and couldn't wait to roll out Kids First Rugby in this our 10th season of mini and junior rugby. The coaches are very enthusiastic about learning the different techniques and making sure that we put the child at the heart of everything that we do. Everyone is very excited to meet Ruckley too."

Not to be left out Ruckley had the last word: "Rugby is fun and I love to see all my friends enjoying playing," he said. "It's the best sport in the world, with lots of tries and exciting team action. I can't wait to meet all the players at Grasshoppers to have some fun."

**For further information on Kids First Rugby, contact Tony Robinson at [TonyRobinson@rfu.com](mailto:TonyRobinson@rfu.com).**

**Further information on Kids First Rugby and Ruckley can be found at [www.rfu.com/ruckley](http://www.rfu.com/ruckley)**

# NEW GIRLS PITCH UP AT BURNLEY

A girls pitch up and play event at Burnley Rugby Club saw more than 75 girls from three local schools, Blessed Trinity, Unity College and Sir John Thursby's, giving rugby a go. With most new to rugby, they showed lots of promise and may go on to represent their schools in emerging schools events, as well as swelling numbers at Burnley where they are developing both U13 and U15 girls' teams.

Some of the girls have already been in touch to ask about joining Burnley RUFC, with two attending training that same evening. Burnley Community Rugby Coach, Simon Finnan, said: "Some of the girls who have never played the game before picked it up really quickly and would fit into a team straight away."

**For more information contact Simon Finnan on 07988122186.**



# FROM MINIS TO SLIP SLIDING PERFORMANCE



The youngsters look pristine but on the same day the older Hammersmith & Fulham players looked more like mud monsters, even after the unplayable Hampstead pitch was swapped for one at Finchley, which after an inspection and team discussion was declared fit to "take a stud".

The Hammers, who opted to play against the tide in the first half, had only managed 0-0 at the break but literally slid in four second half tries to give them a 24-0 win. Apparently, the scrum held up well as nobody wanted to end up face down!

The club is fortunate to have BMW Park Lane sponsoring and supplying all team balls. Said Mark Worthington, their Managing Director, "Our partnership with Hammersmith and Fulham RFC is one of a growing number of relationships between BMW Dealers and local rugby clubs, that build on the national long-term partnership between BMW UK and the RFU."

"This national affiliation will see investment from BMW at every level of the game, from the Senior England Team through to direct support of the age grade sides, helping to inspire and develop the talent of tomorrow. It's this philosophy that has motivated us to get involved with the Hammers. As their local BMW Dealer, we are very excited to offer the club our support and already have other initiatives in the pipeline."

# SUNLIGHT HAS YOUNG PEOPLE'S SAFETY AT ITS HEART

MELISSA PLATT

Port Sunlight RFC on The Wirral has welcomed a new addition to the rugby family after a generous donation from club member Paul Cromby and his brother John. The brothers arrived at the club in December carrying a new defibrillator as well as a training package for members.

John sadly lost his 15-year-old son John Paul to a heart condition 12 years ago, despite him being a healthy, sports loving young man, and has worked tirelessly to raise money for equipment which can help to prevent young people from suffering similar health problems.

John put £4,000 raised at his local golf club, HSBC Liverpool Golf Society, towards four defibrillators for three local schools, the fourth given to Port Sunlight RFC, which had been running its own defibrillator fundraising campaign, spearheaded by Safeguarding Officer Brian Ramsden. The club also received support from The Oliver King Foundation to train a dozen members in First Aid and in how to use a second subsidised defibrillator, which will be available to all users of the Leverhulme Sports Complex.

Chairman Chris Lister said: "Our club has a junior section and the committee felt it was only sensible to have this lifesaving piece of equipment readily available should it ever be needed. We were delighted to receive this unexpected present and thank the Cromby brothers for their generosity and support of the club and our players."

"We would also like to thank The Oliver King Foundation and club sponsor Abbotts Advertising for their donations, as well as supporters who have bought RFU 2014 Grand draw tickets to aid the fundraising cause."



# ENFIELD IGNATIANS BIG DAY OUT

MELISSA PLATT

Every one of Enfield Ignatians teams will play a game at Saracens' Allianz Park on Saturday, March 1st, as part of a 12 hour rugbython. The 'climax' of the 'Big Club Day Out' will be the floodlit London Two North-East league clash between the Ignatians' first team and Saffron Walden, kicking off at 7.30pm.

A main sponsor for the event, Fairview New Homes, has already been secured but the club are still seeking further sponsors and teams in all age groups prepared to support the fixtures. Interested parties should contact

Youth Chairman Harold Pritchard on harold.pritchard@landg.com

Harold Pritchard, the driving force behind the project, said: "It's a great occasion for the club en bloc to be able to play at the home of the Aviva Premiership heavy weights, and experience something totally different. Hopefully, it will make for an unforgettable experience with every single player of the 500 in our club, ranging from four to 64, getting a game against different opposition. It will be the largest event our club has ever organised. The first game at 9.15am will

kick off 12 hours of back-to-back rugby.

"Each game will be watched by family, friends and supporters and one of the stipulations is that opposing teams need to bring at least two coach loads of 100 supporters to the game, and there will be concessions available for supporters, including the bar."

Ignatians are no strangers to Allianz Park. In February last year, they staged two youth games there, including a colts' fixture. This is an altogether bigger challenge but it's one they can't wait to take on.



# FIRST FOR MALVERN'S YOUNG PLAYERS

MALVERN U17s 26 - 24 Moseley U17s

Malvern Under 17s recently became their club's first ever side to beat Moseley RFC in a competitive fixture. This North Midlands league fixture featured two of the division's top teams.

Moseley started well, crossing the line for the first score. Malvern, sponsored by 7 Valley Financial, bounced back but the scores remained 5-5 at half time. The match opened up in the second half, drawing a large crowd to cheer on the home side. However, the away team scored before Malvern hit back with a try and conversion. Another converted try opened up a nine point gap to the delight of the Spring Lane supporters.

This was when Malvern began to lose their discipline, with persistent infringements at the breakdown punished by a sin binning, which saw Moseley secure a converted try and reduce the deficit to just two points. Malvern, with 14 players, fought back, a converted try sealing the game despite a last converted try from the opposition. Malvern had stayed unbeaten at home and the fans were a happy bunch.



Picture courtesy of Rob Sandry

## Further information about AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators)

80% of cardiac arrests occur in the home, of those in public places under 1% occur in a leisure facility or sports ground. However, for clubs who have large numbers of people attending, or use their facilities for other community services, AEDs are easily used by lay people with some training. It is recommended by bodies such as the British Heart Foundation (BHF) that they are of most value when placed in areas where there is a high incidence of cardiac arrest and where it's difficult for an ambulance to reach quickly.

If any rugby club is considering investing in an AED it is advisable to first conduct a risk assessment to identify the club's needs and determine if the club can afford the equipment, training and servicing costs. In many cases, it may be more useful to train up and appoint volunteer first aiders who can do CPR which more than doubles the chance of survival. The RFU's Emergency First Aid course includes CPR training and more information on courses and guidance regarding the provision of first aid is available at [www.rfu.com/firstaid](http://www.rfu.com/firstaid)

If a defibrillator is needed, there are schemes that clubs can look into that may provide them with grants for equipment and/or training such as their local NHS Ambulance Service ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) or the British Heart Foundation ([www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)).

## ROGER KNOWS DIFFERENCE ORGAN DONATION MAKES

On the one-year anniversary of his kidney transplant, Roger Bealing Clifton RFC's Secretary has appealed to the rugby community to consider joining the NHS Organ Donor Register.

In the autumn of 2012, Roger started home dialysis because his kidney function was so poor that he says, "I would not last more than five weeks without dialysis. During 2013, I'd been offered a chance to join the transplant waiting list, with a typical wait of three and a half years, or longer for some people. At the same time, my family were tested and, after ten months, my wife Elaine was selected as the best match.



"Eventually, we were booked in to Southmead Hospital's renal unit in January 2013.

Elaine was operated on first, her donation being checked before I was brought to a separate operating theatre. That wait of three and a half hours, not knowing how she was recovering, seemed an eternity. However, we both recovered well. Elaine left hospital after three days, I left after a week. Elaine's recovery at home took several months of rest as it was a deeper operation. I was able to drive after three months and resumed work at Clifton Rugby Club, as Honorary Secretary, many thanks to the club's support.

"Southmead is a regional transplant centre, with around 400 patients on the kidney waiting list. Nationally, as at January 23 there are 5,718 people waiting for a kidney. In Wales, the health authorities are working towards a presumed consent in 2015 that organs will be available from deceased patients with a safeguard to opt out if so wished.

"I was fortunate that my wife was able to donate a kidney. Thousands are not as lucky. I know that the rugby community is often referred to as the rugby family and wanted to encourage club members to register with the NHS Organ Donor Register. This works on the same principle as donor cards but is a more failsafe way of ensuring your wishes are made clear. Joining the register means there's a permanent record of your wishes that doctors can check in the event of your death. You can remove yourself from the register at any time, and specify what you're willing to donate.

Said Elaine, "Watching Roger's health deteriorating was heartbreaking and I knew immediately I wanted to donate if I was a suitable match, which thankfully I was. It was a very traumatic year for us as a family but there was a wonderful outcome for all of us. We have a new life."

Registering could save a life - around three people die every day in the UK because not enough organs are available for transplant. Discover more about organ donation or register at [www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk) and please talk about your donation decision with family and friends. Letting them know what you've decided now makes it much easier for them to support your decision to be a donor.



## NEW PLAYERS ENJOY SURREY FESTIVAL

MELISSA PLATT

Two hundred students from Surrey schools took part in a recent festival of rugby at Purley John Fisher RFC as part of the RFU's All Schools programme, which aims to introduce rugby union to 400 non-rugby playing state secondary schools by 2015 and to 750 by 2019 as part of the RFU's Rugby World Cup 2015 legacy plans.

The students, all new to the sport and in years 7, 8 and 9, came from De Stafford, Oakwood, the Warwick, the Quest Academy, Harris Academy Merton and Evelyn Grace Academy, and are all new to the sport.

Teachers were unanimous in their praise of the positive effect rugby's core values are having on pupils in all areas of school life. "Teachers across other subjects are seeing improvements from students," said Tom Bevan, PE teacher at the Quest Academy. "Students who were perhaps a little silly in lessons last year have a lot more focus in class. It's a great sport for channelling energy and blowing off steam."

Leo Gilbert, Principal at Harris Academy Merton, added: "We find rugby is particularly good at encouraging students to take responsibility for what they're doing, taking a leadership role within a team and helping their teammates to develop. Having RFU coaches coming into the school to take sessions and mentor the coaches and teachers also makes a big difference. They know how to get the best out of youngsters through their coaching expertise, which creates credibility. You can see the students looking up to them."

PE teacher at Harris Academy Merton, Alex Wiltshire, commented: "The kids have really embraced the game and we have new faces coming to training every week. We've also seen more camaraderie among the Year 8s and 9s in school life as they know they might play together on the pitch."

The programme has also unearthed some genuine sporting talent. Tom Bevan, PE teacher at the Quest Academy explained: "All of our students love playing rugby and we have twins in the team, Jonathan and Aristot Benz-Salomon, who have really excelled. They arrived from Ghana via Spain and have come from nothing really and are now living on an estate in Croydon. They are incredibly talented and through playing rugby have the

chance to participate in trials for a sports scholarship to Whitgift School and have been invited to join the Harlequins Inner London Developing Player Programme, which is an amazing opportunity for them."

Aristot Benz-Salomon said: "I put a lot of effort into rugby because they treat me well, I'm good at it and I enjoy it. I'm only 12 years old but I hope I can have a good future through playing rugby. I've joined my local club Warlingham RFC because I enjoy it so much and there are good people there."

Schools that are new to rugby are identified in regional clusters and linked to a local club to help retain more players and grow the game.

RFU Rugby Development Officer, Adam Cottingham, said: "All Schools festivals are based at their link community rugby clubs. Students soon feel comfortable in that environment and it helps the transition from school rugby player to club rugby player. The Quest Academy from South Croydon now provides seven players to their local club and a girl has also attended her first training session which is great."

Pupils from Evelyn Grace School, Brixton, have also been giving rugby the big thumbs-up. Andrea Marino Fosse said: "I've learnt teamwork and co-operation through rugby. To play well you have to work hard with your teammates. You need to stick together as a team." Idreus added: "Rugby is a great sport. It's a game based on sportsmanship and discipline which makes you better." And Kevin Camilo summed it up by saying: "I enjoy rugby because you get to run around a lot, work as a team, fix up and look sharp!"

As part of the All Schools programme schools attend a Canterbury workshop to design their own rugby shirt and the project has got the creative juices flowing at Harris Academy, as Alex Wiltshire explains: "We opened the competition to everyone in the school and we've had some amazing designs. The creativity of our pupils is incredible. The kids are so excited and can't wait to play in their shirt because they feel they have ownership of it."

For more information about All Schools visit <http://www.rfu.com/abouttherfu/allschools>

## LEWES AT CENTRE OF THEIR COMMUNITY

To mark the re-introduction of rugby at a neighbouring school catering for children with specific learning difficulties, Lewes Rugby Club recently presented a rugby ball to Northease Manor School. The club had assisted them in obtaining and erecting a new set of rugby posts, donated a set of post protectors and are currently working on a joint coaching initiative, based at their Stanley Turner Ground.

Dereck Wade, Lewes RFC Vice President, handed the new ball to Joe Goldberg, Head of PE at Northease, surrounded by staff and members of the school's Under 15 team and said it was "another example of the club's continuing involvement with the local community and its encouragement of rugby for children of all ages."

The club, at the geographic centre of the county, also has a good relationship with Lewes Priory School and makes the clubhouse available for



Sussex Police meetings and those of Sussex Rugby Football Union and the local Residents' Association, with whom they have very good and regular contact, especially on their Ground & Facilities Improvement Plan - Project Turnaround - a funding bid for which is currently with Sport England.

Northease Manor's Joe Goldberg said: "As part of the school's constant development of physical education, we have installed rugby posts to help promote and encourage playing rugby, from full contact right down to small sided touch rugby, right across the age groups from year 5 up to year 11. Lewes Rugby Club have been very supportive in helping us develop opportunities for students to be more involved in competitive sport as this has always been a challenge with few numbers but a keen group of year 10 students. The future is hopeful."

## DO YOU HAVE SOMEONE TO PUT FORWARD FOR PRESIDENT'S AWARDS?

This month (February) sees the launch of the 2014 RFU President's Awards. Previously titled the President's XV, the awards have been redeveloped and now offer six new categories embracing the key areas which together contribute to a successful, vibrant club and help to deliver opportunities in all areas of the game. These are:

- 1. PLAYER RECRUITMENT** The team of volunteers receiving this award will be able to demonstrate how they have thought creatively to recruit new players from different backgrounds.
- 2. PLAYER RETENTION** Playing rugby in is what we are about! Tell us how your team of volunteers has kept players enjoying rugby on the pitch by providing a variety of playing opportunities using all formats of the game.
- 3. PEOPLE POWER** The community game at the grassroots exists thanks to people who give freely of their time to run rugby. We are looking for an exceptional group of volunteers who have used innovative ways to recruit, retain and recognise coaches, referees and/or volunteers.
- 4. CLUB MANAGEMENT** Effective and efficient club management and development are vital to the success of a modern rugby club. The winners of this award will be a volunteer team who can demonstrate the ways in which they have developed and modernised the running of their club, ensuring it is a vibrant place to play and socialise now and in the future.
- 5. BETTER FACILITIES** Tell us about a team of volunteers who have developed and delivered better facilities for their club. Thanks to their efforts, the rugby experience has been transformed for everyone who visits the club.



**6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** We're looking for a volunteer-led project that puts rugby at the heart of the community. The winning team will have forged links with schools, colleges, universities, businesses, community groups and/or people that traditionally have had little contact with the game.

**7. PRESIDENT'S CATEGORY - 2014 'Beyond Rugby'** This year, President Bob Reeves has selected the theme of Beyond Rugby. He says, 'Many people have talked about the capacity of rugby to change lives for the better. This new award will go to the person or people who have used rugby as the focus of a project to transform lives or communities and as a vehicle for social change.'  
**Online registration at [rfu.com/presidentsawards](http://rfu.com/presidentsawards)**



### Wales Deaf 36 – 3 England Deaf

England Deaf were outgunned by a more experienced Wales Deaf side at Cardiff Arms Park when Wales regained the Broadstreet Cup, following defeat at Fylde two years ago, with full back Wes Pooley, who plays his club rugby for Taunton, scoring four of their five tries.

England fielded a new-look team with 11 new caps and although they competed well for an hour they were made to pay for failing to turn pressure into points in the first half.

"We put out a young side, we are inexperienced and it showed for sure," said Tony Stoyles, England Deaf's director of rugby. "It was a brave

## ENGLAND DEAF DISAPPOINTED

PAUL BOLTON

attempt by the lads. The fitness didn't quite come through but this was only the second time the group has been together this season and it's clear that we need a lot more sessions. We have some very good individual players, it's just a matter of putting it together.

"There were some very disappointed heads in the changing room but they have to realise that this is what we build from. It's onwards and upwards. For us as a coaching staff it's a platform to start again. It's a good way to go forward and hopefully attract more players to join us and make sure that Deaf Rugby is on the map."

England were at their best in the first half when they were aggressive in defence and they threatened in attack. Captain Graham Sage had the first chance to score but his third minute penalty attempt fell short.

The Arms Park's rubber crumb pitch stood up well after heavy rain fell throughout the morning and Pooley appreciated the surface as he cut back inside for the opening try which centre Celyn Ashton of Treorchy converted. Sage pulled back three points with a penalty midway through the first half and England's excellent defence held firm until first half injury time when Wales worked Pooley over in the corner and Ashton converted.

A close range try from Wales tighthead David Wellbeloved, who also plays his club rugby in England for Withycombe, seven minutes after the break stretched the lead and Wales pulled clear in the final quarter. Ashton banged over a long range penalty and Pooley's dangerous running brought him two more tries in the last ten minutes, both of which Ashton improved.

The England Deaf Rugby Union was formed in 2003 to provide opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing rugby players to play for their country. Players are eligible to play for England Deaf and the England Deaf Rugby Union for Women if they have a combined hearing loss of 25db or more in both ears. This roughly translates to a minimum hearing loss in both ears or a moderate hearing loss in one ear but with normal hearing in the other. Not all players wear hearing aids or only communicate by sign language and this has never stopped them communicating and playing rugby as a squad.

EDRU offers Deaf Awareness advice to clubs and schools to help integrate deaf and hard of hearing players.

**For further information contact lyndon.james@btinternet.com**

## ARRESTING PERFORMANCE FROM BRITISH POLICE

British Police eased to a 39-16 win over UK Fire Service in their annual contest at Castle Park, home of National One club Doncaster Knights.

Fly half Chris Scott ran the show for the Police with the West Midlands Police player contributing 19 points including one of their five tries. Scott, who plays his club rugby for Earlsdon in Midlands Two West (South), also converted four of the tries and kicked two penalties.

Flanker Justin Jones (Gwent) scored two tries with wing Russell McKeown (Police Scotland) and replacement forward Kevin McGill (Greater Manchester Police) also touching down.



## GETTING YOUR INSURANCE TO WORK FOR YOU MEANS KNOWING WHAT TO DO IF THE WORST HAPPENS

Firstly, act as if uninsured in order to mitigate the effect of any incident. Then, contact your insurance broker for advice on what to do next.

By getting your insurance broker involved at this early stage, you will have access to specialist advice and services in dealing with the incident and you will have the reassurance that any costs incurred with insurer's consent will be covered by your insurance policy.

The claims process for property and loss: How it works

In general terms, making a claim involves six steps:

- 1. Prepare:** Build an appropriate risk management programme to remove or reduce risks.
- 2. Report:** It is a policy obligation that you take all necessary steps to mitigate the loss and prevent further damage. Notify your insurance broker of any loss as soon as possible. If your claim is related to a theft, report the issue to the police.

**3. Check:** Check your policy to find out if you are covered for the loss, and what procedures you need to follow – it may be that your policy requires that you use a contractor or service approved by your insurer.

**4. Collect:** Gather all relevant documentation – in the case of a theft make sure you have copies of relevant receipts for stolen items, estimates for like-for-like replacement items and a crime reference number.

**5. Record:** Set out the circumstances surrounding the loss, detail the facts and, if appropriate, include photographs. Provide information on what you are claiming for, including values.

**6. Claim:** It is important that you do not leave it too long before making the call, as some policies will have a strict time limit within which claims must be made.



Making an insurance claim can be a complex and stressful time – sometimes it can also become contentious. This is when the value of working with a broker becomes apparent. Crucially, your insurance broker will have a duty to work on your behalf, so you will have expert support when it comes to negotiating settlements.

**For further information, please visit: [www.rfu.com/ManagingRugby/Insurance](http://www.rfu.com/ManagingRugby/Insurance).**

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# GREAT EDUCATION!

**STEPHANIE GILES**

Last month (January) saw a pioneering and popular Education Landscape Conference at the Holiday Inn, Coventry, which was addressing the challenge of keeping players engaged in rugby throughout their education. The first of its kind, the event drew more than 50 delegates from across schools, colleges and universities rugby.

The two day event offered workshops to identify common concerns across the sector and develop solutions with rugby at their core. A dinner also brought a Rugby World Cup themed quiz and fierce competition.

Said Tim Stirk, ERFUSU President: "The conference was a great opportunity to engage with colleagues in other areas of education and to share experiences and ideas that will support our vision for rugby in schools, colleges and universities."

Mark Saltmarsh, Head of Education Development added: "This highlights the enthusiasm for the game in the education sector. Bringing together those actively working in institutions and volunteers from our Constituent Bodies resulted in some exciting and innovative concepts which will help to inform our strategy as we seek to keep more young people playing throughout their education and beyond it in our clubs."



## IS YOUR CLUB MISSING A TRICK?

Running a rugby club and keeping costs manageable can be a challenge but the RFU can help as their team of professional buyers have negotiated discounts with market-leading suppliers allowing clubs to gain from over £1billion of buying power.

All your club has to do to access great RFU partner offers and discounted deals for everyday spending is visit [www.englandrugbydeals.com](http://www.englandrugbydeals.com) and use the three simple steps that could bring big savings.

There's a full support service too. If you need help email [support@englandrugbydeals.com](mailto:support@englandrugbydeals.com) or call 0870 755 2579 in normal working hours.

All this and more help to grow your club is in the Club Benefits Guide to be found at [rfu.com/cbg](http://rfu.com/cbg)



### Club Benefits Guide

We have designed this guide to help you grow your club. Inside you will find ideas and support available to help you deliver a quality rugby experience for all.

[rfu.com](http://rfu.com)



## NEWTON AYCLIFFE TAKES ACCREDITATION TO 500

**MELISSA PLATT**

Newton Aycliffe RUFC, Darlington, recently welcomed RFU President Bob Reeves who presented a special plaque in recognition of them becoming the country's 500th club to gain RFU accreditation.

Said Bob, "Having been an integral part of their local community for 55 years, the club richly deserves this recognition. I am delighted to be here to help Newton Aycliffe RUFC celebrate this fantastic achievement and a significant milestone for the RFU and everyone involved in grassroots rugby. Club rugby lies at the heart of rugby in England and the RFU is committed to supporting and strengthening clubs and growing the game in the communities around them."

The RFU Club Accreditation scheme aims to help all rugby clubs in England become stronger, more effective, more efficient and more enjoyable places to play rugby. Accreditation earns advantages including the Sport England Clubmark, together with increased credibility with local authorities, educational establishments and potential sponsors. Newton Aycliffe's success means that all County Durham clubs are now accredited.

Newton Aycliffe RUFC President Rod Shepherd said: "Accreditation has confirmed the club's commitment to the development of rugby and its standing in the community as a respected club, where enjoyment comes first and everyone is welcome to take part in whatever way they are able. We'd like to thank the RFU President for joining us to celebrate this historic day. We'd also like to thank RFU Rugby Development Officer Matt Bryan who has been instrumental in enabling us to achieve this success. He has guided



us through the self-assessment process and his dedication and commitment to the growth of rugby in the North East deserves recognition.

"The club is dependent on a small dedicated band of volunteers, most undertaking more than one role and giving a considerable amount of their time to providing an affordable and enjoyable rugby experience to the local community. We are also very lucky to have local sponsors including; Boola Clothing Aycliffe, Service Force, Honest John's Aycliffe Community Kitty, The Mortgage Advice Centre (Darlington & Bishop Auckland). Without them, replacing playing kit, keeping training

equipment up to date and organising tours would be impossible."

Matt Bryan said: "The club is forward planning for the recruitment and retention of players. They have already welcomed 10-12 more players for their 1st team squad and are now putting plans in place for a second team and a youth section for the 2014/15 season."

Added Chairman Bryan Parsonage: "With a home Rugby World Cup in 2015, we expect to attract even more members. This is a great time for our sport and we can guarantee that anyone getting involved at Newton Aycliffe will have a marvellous time and make lots of new friends."

## TASTY RUGBY IN NORTH DEVON

Ilfracombe rugby club on the North Devon coast typifies the small community club with just one senior team. Until now they haven't catered for youngsters but that is set to change after a recent rugby taster day saw 40 children turn up to try the sport.

The RFU's Community Coach for North Devon, Wayne Reed, worked with volunteers at Ilfracombe and the taster day was, he says, "really successful and great fun for the youngsters and parents."

Every player received an Ilfracombe Sharks hoody and RFU goody bag and Paul Prideaux of neighbouring Lynbay chip shop provided tasty, warming sausages and chips at a special

rate. Ilfracombe are now planning to host a tag tournament for local primary schools.

Wayne is now working with Torrington RFC, also playing in Tribute Devon 2, to arrange a similar taster day there. Beyond that the hope is to get training going at both clubs and provide training games between them as teams get established and move on to play fixtures against other teams.

Miles Higginson Ilfracombe's chairman said, "We had been talking about this for a while but Wayne's involvement was a catalyst. His motivation was what made the difference and it worked out really well. We'd be delighted to work with Torrington as the more kids we get involved in rugby the better."



# SWANS SAIL ON

Having had their match against Sherborne postponed due to a flooded pitch, Swanage & Wareham 1st XV finally entertained the opposition at Bestwall determined to overturn the season's earlier 27 - 13 defeat. The Swans went into the break 17-0 ahead and, despite a downpour, at the final whistle had secured a bonus point 29 - 7 victory, soaking up supporters' applause.



Photograph: Idris Martin

# FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

The British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) rugby championship finals will be hosted under floodlights at Twickenham on the evening of Friday 28th March. The perfect opportunity to catch up with friends, support your former university or enjoy an event at the Home of England Rugby. Two finals at just £10 at [www.rfu.com/fridaynightlights](http://www.rfu.com/fridaynightlights).

# STUDENTS SPREADING THE NEWS

TALYA ROSE VARGA

Six students, newly appointed by the Rugby Football Union as regional media interns, were at Twickenham Stadium recently to discuss the promotion of student rugby and take part in a number of workshops.

The Student Rugby Union, with responsibility for the game in universities, decided to appoint in each RFU area an undergraduate with media skills both to tell the story of student rugby and develop their communication skills for the future. The students' enthusiasm and expertise was apparent as they discussed social media, rugby and its core values.

During the day they met RFU staff that they will be working with and Professional Rugby Director. Rob Andrew, told them about his experience from his playing days to his current position and answered questions,

including stressing the work done by the RFU to educating players throughout the game on concussion.

The internship aims to further promote the student game and ensure that more students continue to play rugby during the transition from school to university and once they leave higher education.

Patrick Craig, Sports Development Manager at Leeds University and SRFU Development Committee Chair said, "Having students telling other students about university rugby makes a great deal of sense. The competition for these internships was considerable and the six appointed impressed with their ability, experience and enthusiasm. They bring new energy and ideas that we need to celebrate the student game and I'm sure these media interns will

build on the momentum generated from the launch hosted at Twickenham"

Since the training day Mike Stanton, from the South West Region, has been to Portugal with the England Students team and Talya Varga from the South East region was in France to report on the Students match against France Students.

Follow them all on Twitter @studentsRFU

**If you have news about student rugby worth spreading contact them as below**

## Area SRFU

## Media Interns

**1. Cornwall** .....Mike Stanton: [mike-stanton@live.co.uk](mailto:mike-stanton@live.co.uk)  
Somerset  
Devon  
Dorset & Wiltshire  
Gloucestershire

**2. Middlesex** .....Danoush Mohajeri: [danoush.mohajeri@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:danoush.mohajeri@kcl.ac.uk)  
Hampshire  
Oxfordshire  
Buckinghamshire  
Berkshire  
Hertfordshire

**3. Kent** .....Natalya Varga: [TRV.Journo@gmail.com](mailto:TRV.Journo@gmail.com)  
Sussex  
Surrey  
Essex

**4. Notts, Lincs & Derby** ...Sophie Freestone: [s.e.l.freestone@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:s.e.l.freestone@hotmail.co.uk)  
Eastern Counties  
Leicestershire  
East Midlands  
Warwickshire

**5. Lancashire** .....Matt Raybould: [m.j.raybould@gmail.com](mailto:m.j.raybould@gmail.com)  
Cheshire  
Staffordshire  
North Midlands

**6. Northumberland** .....Callum Corley: [callumcorley@gmail.com](mailto:callumcorley@gmail.com)  
Durham  
Yorkshire  
Cumbria



# CARROT FOR MILLWALL CLUB

It's carrot not stick for Millwall Rugby Club's teams as Canary Wharf based Minicab company Carrot Cars become a sponsor, enabling the club to develop and offer players, coaches and referees the opportunity to progress.

Sophie Morris, Communications Officer for Millwall Rugby Club said: "Carrot Cars' sponsorship will make a real difference to the

contribution we can make to sport, fitness and community engagement in the run up to the 2015 Rugby World Cup and beyond."

Adam Wiltsher, of Carrot Cars added "We are very excited to have begun this relationship with Millwall Rugby Club. It is great to be able to support such a well-run organization committed to making a difference in the community where we are based. Sports is such a great thing to get involved in and so it's fantastic that we can help the rugby club in their continued efforts to get people in our area into rugby."



# BLACK & WHITE HISTORY OF NEWTON ABBOTT

Formed as Newton Volunteers in 1873, Newton Abbot Rugby Club and its All Whites team have had an interesting history.

New Zealand's All Blacks early visit to these shores in 1905, saw a small party of players arrive by ship in Plymouth and make their headquarters in Newton Abbot, staying at the Globe Hotel and training with the Newton team at the Recreation Ground. They pioneered the first of a number of visits by sides like South Africa and Australia.

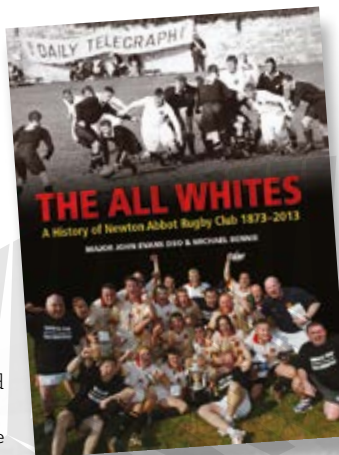
But it was the All Blacks who excited most interest and when they visited again in 1924, they were given a tumultuous welcome and were led to the Globe Hotel, with people lining the route and hanging out of windows, waving and cheering. Similar scenes took place during a visit in 1935.

Stories of these visits are among the highlights of a book put together by the club and its former President Major John Evans and by local historian Michael Bennie. The club worked with the publisher Halsgrove to capture the spirit of sporting life in Newton Abbot since the club's founding.

"It's important to celebrate the past," said current club secretary and former player Mike Brooks, "but it's just as important for people to recognise the growing importance of a thriving sports club that is open to all. The All Whites have been an important part of the lives of many generations of families in South Devon and now should be proud not only of its successful men's teams but of the opportunity given to boys and girls to participate in this wonderful game."

And current times are certainly more peaceable, the book describing past arguments: disputed match results leading to walk-outs and boycotts; internal disagreements about selections and the great rumpus caused by a brief flirtation with rugby league. The club weathered these storms, as well as two world wars, to become today's vibrant club at the heart of its community.

The book is available to pre-order at [www.halsgrove.com](http://www.halsgrove.com) or by calling Halsgrove Publishing on 01823 653775 at £19.99 (£24.99 after publication) for the standard edition or £45.00 (£50.00 after publication) for the limited slipcase edition



## RICHMONDSHIRE ENJOY RETURN HOME

Richmondshire rugby club, having played all their matches away for the early part of the season, are enjoying their fabulous new clubhouse in Richmond's Theakston Lane. Built thanks to an RFU grant of £95,000 and £50,000 from the Sport England London 2012 legacy programme, the home ground is welcoming more and more players. The club also received £150,000 from the Ministry of Defence Community Covenant Grant to create links between the military and local community, the Catterick Garrison lying just three miles south of the Yorkshire Dales market town.

The new home base was officially opened by Rob Andrew, with junior fixtures followed by The President's XV v The Garrison XV match and a gala dinner. Said club President, Nick Hunter, said: "We are really proud to have a clubhouse that is fit for purpose which will hopefully help us grow and encourage more youngsters to join us."

The clubhouse now has four changing rooms, a formal bar, large social area and fully fitted kitchen. Playing in Durham/Northumberland Division 3, the club is making some fantastic inroads especially since moving back home. With recruitment at all levels, they are already putting out a second men's team every weekend, have started a girls' section and have three Young Rugby Ambassadors Matty

Bateson, Reece Bradshaw and Megan Ryder. Linking with Risedale School in Catterick Army Garrison and St Francis Xavier RC School in Richmond, they are really making a difference and giving adults and youngsters the chance to play and enjoy rugby.

Said Rob Andrew, "This new clubhouse and the great effort by all involved is a perfect example of the difference we can make. To see the efforts of so many volunteers who literally make this sort of thing happen is truly inspirational. The game is in safe hands as we continue to build resources in people and facilities which will last for generations."

Alec Porter, North Yorkshire RDO said: "Linking with the school in Catterick Army Garrison gives boys and girls the opportunity to play at the new rugby club and youngsters there and at St Francis Xavier have benefited from RFU funding, receiving new rugby kit and equipment. All the pupils are enjoying sessions delivered by the North Yorkshire CRC Tom Gilchrest and the schools will have teams in the North Yorkshire Girls festivals in March. We've already had four members of staff, male and female, gaining RFU Coaching Awards, including QBE Level 2. It's an excellent example of a rugby club and schools working together to grow the game in their local community."

# STUDENTS PASS PORTUGUESE TEST BUT FALL TO FRANCE

MIKE STANTON & TALYA ROSE VARGA

**Portugal 16 – 30 England Students**  
**France Universities 39- 10 England Students**

It was a see-saw situation for England Students with two away matches in two weeks. The 16 – 30 victory, their second successive win against Portugal 22 in IRB World Ranking, was a less stern test than that against France Universities which was underlined by the results.

In Portugal Head Coach James Farndon's side started with a penalty from fly half Sam Katz. A further penalty given on the opposition's five metre line saw captain George Messum (Loughborough University) opt for the corner, the English backline's expansive play culminating in Jake Henry (Cardiff Metropolitan University) crossing the whitewash. Katz added the extras putting England 10-0 up.

Portugal's Pedro Leal then kicked two penalties before England wing Jake Henry powered through making the score 15-6. Portugal answered with a try from second row Rui D'Orey, lifting their tempo and resulting in prolonged periods deep in English territory. England's defence held firm, however, and they went into half-time leading 15-11.

After the break Rodwell crossed for a well-deserved try, which Katz was unable to convert. Portugal responded ten minutes later their pack driving over the line and No. 8 Vasco Uva scoring an unconverted try. Five minutes later Sam Katz extended the English lead with a penalty and both sides looked to their benches to bring on some fresh legs.

The English subs in the pack had a strong impact as they marched the opposition back to their own line, the solid platform allowing Katz to glide through to score and convert his own try to make it 30-16, which is how it stayed.

Head Coach Farndon said: "It was a thoroughly deserved victory. We played with intensity, tempo and physicality, and took the chances we were given."



In France, however, despite a strong opening ten minutes and the first points on the board courtesy of a Katz penalty, England started to lose their composure under pressure and at

19 minutes France Universities were 5 – 3 up after a try from centre Regard. The next fifteen minutes saw England defending desperately and with less than ten to the break England's Tom Hall (7) was sin-binned after repeated offences by the team. The French were awarded a penalty try as the English pack struggled to cope with one man down. The conversion by Perraux took the score to 12-3 and a further converted try, this time by number six Quercy made it 19-3.

After the break France continued to pile on the pressure. Perraux kicked another penalty on 50 minutes and the French pick and drive game constantly asked questions of the England defence. Clarke and Messum were outstanding in the battle against the powerful French pack. They were rewarded when Tom Crozier finished off a drive over the line on 58 minutes. Katz added the conversion to make it 22-10 and give a glimmer of hope.

With front row Tom Crozier stretchered off with a dislocated shoulder and Stephenson returned, the French closed the game out with two tries from their captain Brousse both conversions making the final score 39-10.

Captain George Messum said, "In terms of the first 20 I couldn't fault the effort but credit to France who played a really good offloading game getting behind the defensive line. There were a couple of things we gifted them but we'll learn from this game."

The squad takes on Wales Students on the 7th March.

# MEET THE ENGLAND TEAM WITH #CARRY THEM HOME

NICOL McCLELLAND

For the 2014 RBS 6 Nations England Rugby is calling on fans to get behind their team by Tweeting messages of support using #carrythemhome.

As well as sending the team their motivational messages via Twitter, England fans will also be in with a chance of having their words printed on the Twickenham

tunnel wall as the players run out during the RBS 6 Nations home games.

During England's away games against France, Scotland, and Italy, the best #carrythemhome messages will be retweeted to over 200,000 @EnglandRugby followers, including the team themselves! Then, as we approach both home games against Ireland

and Wales at Twickenham, the top 50 most motivational tweets will be shortlisted to appear on the tunnel wall and one lucky winner for each game will receive the ultimate money can't buy prize.

The most inspiring tweet will be chosen by a member of the England Rugby team in the week leading up to the Ireland and

Wales games, with the lucky winner being invited to attend a training session at Pennyhill Park, to deliver their message in person to the team and receive two tickets to the game.

Before the roar of the crowd, the national anthems, or that first whistle, your words will inspire England. Be the First Contact.



To be in with a chance, simply tweet your motivational messages using #carrythemhome during the 2014 RBS 6 Nations.



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THE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION WOULD LIKE TO THANK  
THE FOLLOWING WHO GENEROUSLY SUPPORT THE GAME



Heathrow  
Express  
The smarter way



The Daily Telegraph



Attenda

