



## A word from our President

All the feedback suggests that our Autumn Dinner on 21st November was one of the best yet!

The 60 plus Members and their guests enjoyed a really delicious Dinner and accompanying wine before settling down to a lively panel debate.

Chaired by “The voice” of rugby south of the Border, the one and only Sam Roberts. Sam was joined by Ex Scottish rugby Captains Bryan Redpath and Jason White who contributed massively to the debate with a mixture of sagacity, humour and the experience gained from 137 Caps between them. The session could easily have continued and in fact did so in the comfort and ambience of the Club bar!

Space doesn’t allow me to say much more other than what a joy ‘twas to see the magnificent Lady Jean Macpherson back with us and indeed also Gregg Cottrell, the Grandson of our founder Donald McNab.

I suspect Donald was keeping a watching brief on events from afar!

**David Mackay**

At the Autumn Dinner 63 members and their guests were piped to dinner in the Johnnie Walker Room of the Caledonian Club by Ralph Potter. Grace was said by the Reverend Alastair. After a fine dinner Ian Black gave the “Loyal Toast” and President David Mackay introduced the three speakers two former Scotland captains, Bryan Redpath, a scrum half, and Jason White a lock forward, and the interviewer Sam Roberts.



Ian Black gave the “Loyal Toast”

There was a distinct change from the normal format of the Friends Autumn Dinner, and one which by the end of the evening left the audience asking for more of the same at future Dinners.

Sam Roberts played good ball to each of the former captains, and both picked up and sped off with the question-and-answer session, as would be expected from a combined 137 International Caps for Scotland, and one former British Lion.

Many of the current issues in the game were discussed. The current issue around head injuries was discussed and the panellists felt that the game today is much safer than in their playing days when they were often encouraged to play on. There is more immediate medical care available, and players are far more likely now to be taken off following a head collision.

Scotland’s recent disappointing form was discussed, not being able to play at “full tilt” for the duration of the game was an issue coupled with not fielding the best available team in the pool of 23 for the World Cup.



(left) Bryan Redpath, Sam Roberts and Jason White (right)

Scotland are in a very challenging position. All felt that Scotland could never rely solely on kicking to win games. It was agreed that the loss of Finn Russell would put a significant dent in the Scottish team.

On the positive side Scotland are current fifth in the world and can produce two professional world class teams.

There was a lot of discussion around personal motivation and outstanding moments. Two of Jason's outstanding moments were beating Toulon while playing for Clermont and in 2006 beating England in the Six Nations.

Towards the end of the evening Sam Roberts asked what advice they would give their eighteen-year-old selves. Bryan's was: don't drink, be good at what you're good at, don't be average at everything, make what you're good at your super skill whilst Jason's advice was: find the ability to enjoy the moment. Take ownership and learn.

The vote of thanks was given by Paul Boyle who congratulated both former Scotland captains on making the transition from being elite sportsmen into successful careers as Director of Rugby at London Scottish (Bryan) and Director of Sport at Loretto School (Jason). Special thanks was made to Les Fordham and the organising committee for producing yet another superb evening.

A Dundee Collection was made for the Wooden Spoon Charity, chosen by Jason White. The charity supports children and young people living with disabilities.

The President closed the meeting by inviting all present to retire to the Members bar for further refreshment.



Paul Boyle gave the "Vote of Thanks"



*Left* Ralph Potter piped us to dinner

*Right* Les Fordham, Gregg Cottrell, Jane Mackay, Lady Jean Macpherson and Simon Frost



Members and Guests dined in the Jonny Walker Room



David and Jane Mackay **Neil McNair**

## CEO Sleepout

Every year Business leaders unite to fight homelessness, sleeping outdoors for one night alongside their peers, giving up the comfort of a warm bed to raise funds charities on the frontline of homelessness. CEO Sleepout events take place in cities across the UK

Long time FoSR member Paul McFarland has been raising money for Scots in need for some years, but this year Paul wanted to add an extra element of difficulty to the challenge. The homeless generally don't drive to their shelter... they walk!, so this year Paul decided to start the sleep-out by walking the 4 miles from his home to the event being held at Lords cricket ground.

After spending the night away from his normal warm and welcoming bed, and having showered and changed attire, a very weary looking Paul arrived at the Caledonian Club to join us at the dinner.

Members and guests made generous donations to the cause and Paul smashed his original target.

Congratulations to Paul... well done and keep up the good work.



Not the most comfortable piece of concrete on which to spend the night!

**Les Fordham**

## Corstorphine Cougars

Readers will recall that in May 2021, FoSR made a donation to Corstorphine Cougars RFC to support a Pitch Draining project. The project continues to be a success and the pitch is now normally playable all winter (except for frost).

But the hard working off-field team were not about to rest on their laurels. After several hundred hours of work from many at the club over the past five years, they recently announced that they had secured £250,000 of funding from the SRU. President, John Peden, said "This allows us to start planning for our approved development of Union Park pavilion which will include:

4 modernised and enlarged changing rooms, changing area, toilets and showers; A new match officials changing room with two changing and showering areas to facilitate male and female referees; A new strength and conditioning area to help players reach their playing potential and improve the performance of both men's and women's teams on the park; Additional rooms for let to help generate income to cover the additional costs; More storage areas to help support our increased activities; "This is a real game changer for Corstorphine Cougars giving us facilities to compete with the best clubs in Edinburgh and beyond"

**Les Fordham**

(All photos courtesy - John Nicholls Photography)

**Happy New Year to all our readers**

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