



## **A word from our President**

**F**irst and foremost apologies again for our enforced absence from what I understand was a very successful Autumn Dinner. The photos look fabulous and heartiest congratulations to Les and Co. as well as of course guest speaker Bryan for managing and delivering such a spectacular evening.

After her dreadful accident in Portugal Jane is making steady progress; however the repair and recovery process is going to be both lengthy and complicated and unlikely to be completed until early next year!

Anyway she joins me in sending best wishes to you all. Believe you me wild horses couldn't keep us away from the AGM Dinner on 23rd March 2023!

The death of Her Majesty was of course a massive National tragedy. I thought it important to send a message of condolence to the Princess Royal and I am pleased to share the speedy response I received from her Private Secretary Charles Davies.

**David Mackay**

## Autumn Dinner

Our President David MacKay and his wife Jane were unable to be with us, as Jane had taken quite a serious tumble while on holiday the previous week, therefore our Secretary Les Fordham again took on the role as “Master of Ceremonies”, welcoming over sixty guests to dinner in the Johnnie Walker Room. Guests were piped to the table by Ralph Potter.

Among the guests were Donald Shaw who was 101 a few weeks previously and Willie Purves who will be 93 in December. The SRU were represented by Colin Rigby and his wife Christina.

The Rev Alastair Cumming said Grace. The assembled company sat down to Cockburn’s of Dingwall Haggis, followed by Elwy Lamb, concluding with Orange Curd Tartlet, coffee and Orkney Tablet.

The Loyal Toast was given by Colin Rutherford, the first time the Friends have given the toast to “The King”. Les Fordham gave the very poignant toast to “Absent Friends”.

Following a short comfort break the Friends were called back to the Johnnie Walker Room by the sound of the pipes, to hear the principal speaker of the evening Mr Bryan Redpath.

Bryan started by describing his upbringing in a farming family from St Boswells with his brothers and his twin sister and the importance of family in his life.



Ralph Potter piped everyone in



Reverend Alastair Cumming gave Grace

Both he and his brother played for Melrose, once scoring 5 tries together against Gala. Rugby was a way of life in the Borders and 7’s rugby in particular played an important role in his early career. In the days when there were four Scottish Districts, he trained four days a week in addition to playing on a Saturday and holding down a full-time job as a joiner.

Despite Jim Telfer telling him in 1990 that he would never play for Scotland he went on to have a stellar career for Scotland, including 60 International caps, 3 World Cups and 26 captaincies. Bryan recounted that he had had eleven operations with many parts of his body pinned together. In the era before professionalism, he was earning £11k per annum as a joiner and was sorely tempted to join Kerry Packer’s proposed Rugby World for £110k per annum. Bryan reiterated that the money may change, but it’s rugby values that are really important and they don’t change.

At the end of his presentation, Bryan took questions from the audience. Recounting his fondest memory was winning against England when Guscott and Leonard were opposing him, and that Bryan did not find Twickenham at all intimidating.

Further questions came from the audience about the safety of rugby and head injuries in particular, which Bryan intimated could be countered by good teaching skills, and by the review currently being undertaken into protective headgear.

*Continued overleaf...*

(All photos courtesy - John Nicholls Photography)

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Bryan repeatedly stressed the importance of grassroots rugby, which fortunately we at Friends of Scottish Rugby are all about.

The Tommy MacPherson Quaich for the most aspiring player at London Scottish FC was presented to Harry Shepherd who had been unable to be present to collect it in March of this year.

A Dundee Collection was made for Bryan Redpath's chosen charity "MND Association".

Ian Fletcher gave the Vote of Thanks.

The evening closed with Les Fordham reminding everyone to put 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023 in their diaries for the Spring Dinner and AGM.



Colin Rigby represented Scottish Rugby , Colin Rutherford delivered the Loyal Toast and Ian Fletcher gave the Vote of Thanks



Harry Shepherd (left) accepted The Sir Tommy MacPherson Quaich from our guest speaker, Bryan Redpath (right)

**Neil McNair**

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## What did you do during lockdown?

**W**hile many of us worked from home or used the time to redecorate the house, Ian Fletcher took the opportunity to further develop his music writing skills!

“I wrote an oratorio partly as an intellectual exercise to establish my capabilities in a substantial composition and it was suggested to me that Biblical stories might be a good place to start. The book of Jonah is only three pages long but I found to my surprise that it contains many philosophical ideas ranging from disobedience, Jonah being inside the belly of a fish for three days and three nights, obedience and repentance. The composition took just over a year to complete and since then I have managed to persuade distinguished professional musicians to participate in the World Premiere to take place in The Cadogan Hall just off Sloane Square in London SW1. “

### Key Elements to composing an oratorio?

An oratorio is a semi-dramatic work for orchestra and voices on a sacred theme and is performed without costume, scenery or action. I started with words from the Bible, the words of the Psalms, the use of the words of the Dies Irae and an important contribution from Jeffrey Lewis, a former student at RADA who completed the libretto (including the words for the children’s choir). The piano score extends to 102 pages and the orchestral score to 152 and the performance should last for about 45 minutes. Ticketing is being organised by The Cadogan Hall and may be obtained by phone **020 7730 4500**.

**Ian Fletcher**

## London Scottish Colts – 2022-23 – Season update

**I**t’s good to be back in full swing with the 2022-23 season well and truly underway. For the London Scottish Colts its going to be an interesting season as most of the squad are U17’s so will be playing against a lot of teams with more U18’s in the squad. Still, that’s not a problem for the lads who have put on some stature over the closed season, and honed their skills in pre-season training by training with the London Scottish Senior Amateurs. The hook up with the amateurs has helped them grow in confidence and ability, and has led to us challenging the Senior Amateurs to play a squad of Colts Old boys in December. It should be a good match with the old Colts having pushed on further with their respective university and college sides, so it’s a match I’m really looking forward to.

The league hasn’t started yet for this years Colts as they had a bye in the first round of matches, so they’ve been training hard at the new facilities in nearby Chiswick. It’s a great ground to play at with more facilities than we had previously, but if anyone knows how to get rid of the geese from the fields, let us know. So with the guys as yet untested we are eagerly awaiting our first round of matches. Once again they will be playing 15 man rugby, with pace, and slick handling, a style that has served us well in previous years and one that the squad really enjoy. Of course, none of this would be possible without the support the team get from Friends of Scottish Rugby who have now sponsored the team for the last four years. With the FOSR sponsorship the London Scottish coaching team are able to take the boys from U16’s, develop them both as a team and as individuals, so that by the their final year they are playing their best rugby. With some ex Colts moving to play senior rugby with the London Scottish Lions, and others planning on returning after university, we are helping develop London Scottish players of the future. In the meantime, they keep playing with a smile on their face, make some great mates, and show some great skills on the pitch. Thank you FOSR for making the London Scottish Colts team such a great place for exiled Scots to play when in London.

**Ian Hannah — Convener of Colts Rugby**

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