



# Friends of Scottish Rugby

*Supporting grass roots Scottish Rugby*



## A word from our President

**B**y the time this Newsletter reaches you, hopefully, like Jane and me, you will have enjoyed a very pleasant Easter break. Certainly up here in Scotland Spring is really on the march at last and the "cabin fever", caused by the prolonged snow, wind and The Beast from the East, is now a fast fading memory.

I look back at our AGM on 22nd March with warm and mostly positive vibes. It was well attended, vocal, largely supportive and perhaps more important, really enjoyable.

Malcolm Offord's talk about the future of London Scottish was both thought provoking and stimulating. We actively continue to discuss how we might best support each other, which we surely will.

Ian Robertson's piece was sublime and indeed brilliant in every respect. He is a great and loyal friend and it was so good that we generously raised £1,000 for the Alastair Hignell MS Trust which Ian has so successfully supported for many years.

I also felt that it was so very apt for our founder, the wonderful Donald McNab, to plan, craft and then present his unique Scottish Cromach and Sgian-Dubh to our guest speakers who were visibly delighted.

Thank you all so very much and Lang may your Lums Reek!!

**David Mackay**

## The 2018 Annual General Meeting Dinner (Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March)

**L**ed, as usual, by our two stalwart pipers Ralph Potter and Mike McGlashan the Friends moved from the AGM in the Stuart Room to dinner in the Johnnie Walker Room. A large turnout of members were welcomed by our President, David Mackay, who reiterated more about the major new initiatives that are planned for later this year. These are the training balls for Scottish Schools, support for London Scottish community development and support for a number of schools in Scotland with rugby development, as well as our links to deserving rugby clubs. The President also welcomed former Scotland Internationalist Craig Chalmers to the dinner.

The Rev Alastair Cumming, who is a regular attendee at our dinners, said Grace.

Neil McNair Addressed the Haggis, wearing a Kilmarnock Bannet, presented to him by the late Andy Wilson, another sadly missed stalwart of FOSR.

After a fine Scottish dinner of Loch Var Smoked Salmon, Haggis and Neeps (of course!) from Cockburns of Dingwall, washed down by whisky provided by Glenfarclas, and a main course of Honey Roast Duck, the loyal toast was given by Kelso's most famous son Sir Willie Purves.

Malcolm Offord CEO of London Scottish was our first speaker. Malcolm talked about the incredible journey that Scottish have had, and how going forward the finances will be of a somewhat different order. Sponsorship is as usual being sought from Scottish companies, but going forward it is not the intention of LSFC that individuals will pay the wages of full time rugby players. Many were surprised to learn that the amateur parts of LSFC have been diminished almost in proportion to the success of the professional part of the club. Malcolm outlined his strategy for the next three years to re-energise the amateur part of LSFC, and to make LSFC the club of choice for minis right through to the 1<sup>st</sup> 15, for the largely untapped diaspora of Scots within and around the M25.

The Quaich Presentations were made: Lady Jean MacPherson presented The MacPherson Quaich to Issac Millar. Sir Willie Purves presented his quaich to Matt Fageron.

As neither of the recipients were able to be with us that evening, we had instead a video presentation of their thanks.



Left to right: Malcolm Offord, Lady Jean Macpherson and David Mackay holding the Sir Tommy Macpherson Quaich



Donald McNab presents Ian Robertson with a handsome hand carved cromach

The President also mentioned that next year a new presentation will be initiated to the most promising Scottish female rugby player. More details about this will follow later this year.

The second guest speaker was that well known BBC rugby correspondent Ian Robertson. Ian had just announced a few days previously that he will retire from the BBC after the autumn internationals.

Ian is well known to FOSR for his stories and his totally convincing imitation of voices and accents. My own guests, three police officers, found his story about Willie John McBride's retort to the hotel manager who advised Willie that he was calling the police in response to what the Lions players were doing to the hotel, hilarious: Hotel manager at 2.00 am (in strong South African accent) "I have had enough, I am calling the police" Willie John McBride (standing in his pyjamas and sucking on his pipe) "Will there be many of them?".

Ian kept the audience enthralled, as he has done through his 46 years of reporting on rugby for the BBC. He has covered every World Cup since its inception in 1987. Not so well known is his interview of Nelson Mandela in 1992 at an event where the press were specifically excluded!

In the light of Ian's retirement, Donald McNab made a special presentation to Ian of a cromach, painted white, and also presented Malcolm with a skean dhu. Both of which were created by his own fair hands.

The President stood to make a special presentation of Honorary Membership to Donald Shaw, in recognition of his long standing support to FOSR.

The vote of thanks was provided by Norrie Jackson. In his closing remarks the President, David MacKay, thanked all the members and guests for their support for the evening, and especially for the collection for the Alastair Hignell Multiple Sclerosis Resource Centre which raised £1,000 on the evening. The Friends and their guests retired to the bar of the Caledonian Club to continue the conviviality of the evening into the small hours.

**Neil McNair**

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## **Sir Colin “Pinetree” Earl Meads KNZM MBE**

**F**ollowing the sad passing of Sir Colin Meads to pancreatic cancer in August of last year, Donald McNab wrote to his family expressing condolences on behalf of the members of Friends of Scottish Rugby. In response, Donald received a note of thanks from the family and the remembrance card shown below.

### **The lighter side of life ... or Things My Mother Taught Me**

My mother taught me TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE.

"If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning."

My mother taught me RELIGION.

"You better pray that will come out of the carpet."

My mother taught me about TIME TRAVEL.

"If you don't behave, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"

My mother taught me about CONTORTIONISM.

"Will you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"

My mother taught me LOGIC.

"If you fall out of that tree and break your neck, you're not going to the shops with me."

My mother taught me FORESIGHT.

"Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."

My mother taught me IRONY.

"Keep crying, and I'll give you something to cry about."

My mother taught me about the science of OSMOSIS.

"Shut your mouth and eat your dinner."

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## AN ODE WITH A GLINT IN MY EEN TO A GREAT WIN 26-13

Well I headed from London to the north  
to Edinburry for the match on the twenty fourth  
a game billed in advance  
with England on the up and the Scots with no chance

And ilmet up with an old pal from afar  
In Morrisons Street Thompson's bar  
Andrew Gardiner a mate for over 50 year  
travelled down with no fear  
from Nairn and he wasnae cairin

And later joined by an Englishman so mild  
aye yon Bradford salem stalwart Jimmy Child  
a half Scot Yorkshireman full of front row grit  
he was sure for England it would be a victory hit  
but his lovely wife Debbie is from Kirkcaldy in Fife  
who of course was not so sure as we approached the magical hoor

To walk smartly and with pride and not prepared to yield  
to the Fird of Dreams...aye old Murrayfield

And with a packed crowd we started well and Laidlaw rang the bell  
and in the furious first half  
we had the amazed stand off Farrel and his mates over a barrel  
our pack put their front eight on the rack  
and we found holes in their defence at the back

At half time the ever optimistic crowd thought we had done it  
but I had been there before and I was certain not one bit  
and as sure as nuts are nuts England flew out with gusto and guts  
and with a body gripping the rails I was hard biting my nails  
till at the whistle we enjoyed a delirious joyful and happy flood  
but it wasn't so good for the pressure of the blood

So Andrew and I were unco happy and got down to cheerful boozing at the nappy (apologies to Robert Burns)

whilst Jimmy magnanimous in defeat gritted his teeth on the way to their hotel in Leith  
so to Dublin and Rome we next go  
and will we be hard fast but fair and hawkish?  
aye.....cos we are the great and famous team rugby Scottish

**Jock Meikle** February 27th 2018 — remember it was 26 -13!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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