



A word from our President

Well the Beast from the East arrived with a vengeance in Fife the other evening. We haven't seen snow like this since our school days — — happy memories then, but backbreaking now!

Anyway it is always good to try to keep in touch and another Newsletter is probably appropriate.

Two events have helped to cheer us up this week; firstly Jane and I have received our first jobs and no after effects apart from a mildly tender arm. Secondly, I am not a bit ashamed to confess, we were feeling distinctly sluggish to say the least on the Sunday morning following the Calcutta Cup game! 'Twas a wonderful result from Twickenham and a superb performance from Gregor Townsend and the boys. Mark you our breathing controls in the last six minutes we're tested to the extreme, but at the end of the day an epic victory and indeed a fine tonic to the Scots in these extraordinary times!

Post the match the brilliant Douglas Hutchison revealed the attached photograph of dear Donald McNab enjoying the Calcutta Cup being held aloft following the 19 - 13 points victory lead by our friend Andy Nicol at the sodden Murrayfield in 2000.

That wonderful memory serves as a very appropriate introduction to the following superb Tribute, penned by Alan Laing, who has agreed we can share it with our Members. No further words are required apart from perhaps that Donald thoroughgoing enjoyed Twickenham too!

Forgive me if we close with a gentle reminder that, in this climate, our only revenue source is the invaluable support we enjoy from our loyal Members. Unfortunately there are still quite a few outstanding annual subscription renewals. Please, please continue to support our cause.

Many thanks and hope to see you all again soon,

David Mackay

Donald -The Legend- A personal Tribute

There is so much to say about the wonderful Donald McNab . Many people will have known Donald a lot longer than me but for the 30 plus years I have had the pleasure of knowing him I think the title provided by Douglas Hutchison is the most befitting.

Above all else Donald was a great friend and inspiration to many, many people. I am sure his spirit was at Twickenham for the Calcutta Cup and just sorry he didn't live to see it. One of his final farewell actions which typified his mischievous sense of humour was sending his Christmas cards for last year to arrive the day before his funeral (posted by his amazing Grandson Greg on Donald's instructions) and then at the funeral to choose Swing Low Sweet Chariot Played by the Royal Marine's. He was as you all know a proud and passionate Scot! Supporter of all things Scottish from the infamous Langholm Shepherd to rugby but never nationalism under any circumstances.

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Donald -The Legend- A personal Tribute *(continued)*

Donald regarded himself as a Forfar lad. His mother had been sent home from South America to give birth to Donald under strict instructions that she had to get to Scotland. He was born in Greenwich! Donald said he thought his father never knew. Probably first hint that the life of Donald was always going to be intriguing and exciting from that point on.

His early military service in the Black Watch and then the Royal Marines Volunteer Service taking him to Korea and Laos was something he was rightly proud of and he retained many friends from this part of his life (see the SRU obituary).

Donald not only held his many friends dear to him but he worked hard at maintaining those relationships and he was a master at connecting people with each other especially through the Number 9 Society in the Caledonian Club and then through the wonderful Friends of Scottish Rugby which he founded, nurtured and managed over many years with his hard work. He brought us together and raise money for a great cause. That being said in his introductions of people to one another he didn't always stick to the facts and he was a master at embellishing things. His infectious good humour and sense of fun meant that dignitaries from Royalty to Prime Ministers and umpteenbusiness leaders and cabinet ministers could not refuse a request to attend or speak at the many events he organised. His early royal connections seemed to start with Princess Margaret and then the support of the Princess Royal who described Donald's leadership of the Friends of Scottish Rugby as "unusual". Donald treasured those connections.

Age was until very recently never a barrier to Donald doing things and achieving things. I remember " Pounding Provence " as he called it with him in his late 70's. We hiked for a week with 20K a day never a bother and Donald being well up for several glasses late into the evenings. I recall in his 80's entertaining him in Dublin for the Ireland Scotland match when he sang at the piano and danced with the ladies until 4 am not on one night but two!

Never a dull moment and lest I forget and many of you will recognise this, always charming and sometimes ever so slightly flirtatious!

When he moved to Tavistock he founded the " Holy Mowers " a group of friends he had made as soon as he arrived in the town. They met before the pub to maintain the local Church Yard. This was typical Donald, he made friends easily and with his sense of fun and duty made it into something special.

Then there is " the Step"! Many of you will have experienced after the evenings formal entertainment finished in the Caledonian Club, Donald would retire and hold court on the third bottom staircase step. Stories, songs and friendships just happened and the Caledonian Club was good enough to place a plaque there several years ago to mark the many occasions where this happened. Douglas tells me that Fiona, Donald's daughter and his grandson Greg will visit the Club before they return to New Zealand courtesy of the Club . A fitting tribute .

And so to Fiona and Greg who nursed him so wonderfully during the last year of his life. I know he was very pleased and felt safe and comforted by their devotion and care. Greg mentioned how he had got to know his grandfather so much better during his health struggles and I am sure Donald regaled him with his life stories. Fiona and Greg will return home soon but they did an amazing job of caring for him until he passed away peacefully at home. There is definitely a book to be written !Donald, our friend, leader, inspiration and sparring partner. How we will all miss him but never forget him. The Legend !

Alan Laing

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Corstorphine Cougars RFC update

Corstorphine Cougars RFC is a community rugby club which has been in existence for 100 years based at varying locations in the north west of Edinburgh. In May 2017, and in difficult circumstances, the club returned to its spiritual home at Union Park in the Carrick Knowe area of Corstorphine.

Since then the club has managed to re-invigorate itself and now runs 2 men's senior XV's and a women's team. The women's team has been consistently ranked as one of the best in Scotland in recent years and has managed to play some 2nd XV matches in the most recent season. The men's teams play in the East Regional Leagues.

Starting recruitment in 2018-19 with the youngest age groups at both primary schools (P1-P4) and secondary school (S1-S3) the club now boasts over 60 mini rugby players and 70 youth members who attend the local high school (Craigmount HS). The club is also affiliated with the Edinburgh branch of the "Clan" who play "unified rugby" which enables players with and without disabilities to play and compete in the same team. The Clan train and play home matches at Union Park and use the club's social facilities.

The rugby development described above has been considerable in a short period and player growth is anticipated to continue at pace particularly amongst the youngsters and female players. To be able to facilitate this growth the club is engaged in attracting funding and support to upgrade the changing and playing facilities. One of the first priorities is to complete a drainage project to render the floodlit training pitch fit for purpose. It is essential for it to be able to cope with the training demands from the growing numbers described above but also to be able to host matches on a regular basis.

David Gillespie VP (Rugby), has now informed us that after months of various delays, the drainage project start date of 22 February was recently agreed with the contractor, Groundwater Dynamics. If all goes to plan this would mean that the project will be completed by late March.

David will keep us updated with progress.

Les Fordham

Donations during past financial year

Friends of Scottish Rugby made donations to the following clubs and organisations:

- London Scottish FC
- St Augustine's RC High School
- Corstorphine Cougars RFC
- Kingussie High School
- Leith Rugby Club
- Balls for Schools
- Doddy Weir Foundation

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London Scottish Colts

With the untimely end to last season, and the disappointment of not being able to play at the Melrose sevens, the squad started back after working hard on their fitness through pre-season training.

As the season started and the playing restrictions eased we managed to get some competitive games in against our near neighbours in Richmond. It was evident in these games that the coaches (bolstered by drafting Sevens International Emma Uren into the set-up) had made great progress with the squad. All the teams we put out showed far greater speed, vision, and game management as well as the players having significantly better basic skills than the opposition.

The change in rules, and the 10-a-side format to the game, worked well for the squad and helped the new joiners from the U16 age group bed in and get to grips with the Colts structures and approach. Their confidence grew rapidly as a result. The forwards also improved considerably as the emphasis on handling and speed allowed them to develop their skill levels beyond where they would have been in a normal season.

All looked well, the teams had a 100% record, and we were looking forward to the rest of the season and all that was to come. Sadly, we then had to re-jig the season along with all other teams. So for the past (too many) weeks the players have been getting fitness and coaching tips from the coaches online. They are now champing at the bit to be able to show their skills on the pitch again, and we are hopeful that they will get the chance shortly. We are still hoping to make our debut at Melrose, but it looks unlikely to be this year. However, when the restrictions lift, if there are any sides who want to venture down south for a game, we'll be ready for you. In the meantime, stay safe, and we'll have to content ourselves with the progress of the Scottish national side in the Six Nations.

London Scottish Colts would like to thank Friends of Scottish Rugby (FOSR) for their continued support of the squad, and the opportunity this provides us to provide a great environment for the players to develop, even in these strange times.

Ian Hannah
Convener of Colts Rugby

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