



Friends of Scottish Rugby

19th AGM Report - March 2015



AGM Report 2015

The following report is a summary of the 19th Annual General Meeting which was held on March 18th at the Caledonian Club in Halkin Street, London. The meeting was well attended and very inter-active, with many comments, questions and suggestions from the floor, particularly regarding membership and how this can be grown.

Matters Arising from previous AGM

There were 4 actions arising from last year's AGM and these were:

- 1) Simon Frost was asked to produce Treasurers report in larger print format.
The report was produced as requested.
- 2) Simon Frost to produce comparisons with previous years in Treasurers report.
Simon distributed the accounts 2 weeks prior to the AGM. The report contained comparisons against the previous year.
- 3) Simon Frost to investigate viability of FoSR applying for "Charitable Status"
By virtue of the size of the organisation, the additional costs and administrative burden, it would prove prohibitive to apply for charitable status at this time.
- 4) Les Fordham to produce a club tie.
Les produced his first attempt and the general feeling was that it was not what the members were looking for! Ian MacLeod volunteered to redesign the tie and come back to the members with a proposal.

President: David Mackay

David opened the Meeting and thanked Members for making the effort to attend. David went on to propose the appointment of two new VPs, Douglas Hutchison and Alan Laing. Both were robustly approved as was James Fairbairn's role as Events Co-ordinator. He will be ably assisted by Pam Durkie who has also, happily for FoSR, agreed to be the vital link not just for members but for secretaries, partners and wives etc. who are often needed to confirm attendance, or not, and queries regarding subscriptions.

David confirmed that Donald McNab had decided to stand down as Chairman. He will be very sadly missed but the very good news was that after unanimous and enthusiastic approval Donald will become Honorary Life President with immediate effect. Finally David spoke about the dilemma caused by our less than ideal membership curve. There followed much lively discussion on how best to tackle and correct the position, after which it was agreed a minimum target of 120 should be set for 2015/2016.

David thanked Members for their invaluable support.

Treasurer: Simon Frost

The accounts had been distributed by email two weeks before the AGM to ensure that members had a chance to consider them.

Simon began by announcing that a total of £34,500 had been distributed during the year. The breakdown of donations was £20,000 to London Scottish Academy with the balance distributed across a number of clubs (see website for details) in tranches of £2,000 and £3,000. A commitment had been made to one organisation for £2,000 per year, for 3 years.

During the year we had surplus of income over expenditure of £27,141, and a bank balance of £52,207. The bank figure is sufficient to meet our commitments for the year.

Great progress has been made during the year to update the controls and processes making for a more efficient organisation. Costs are under control and in line with last year.

The gala dinner was once again a great success and produced a profit of almost £20,000. There had been some concern from members regarding the cost to attend the dinner and it has been decided to reduce the cost for this year's Gala from £160pp to £125pp. This will perhaps also encourage more members to bring partners and guests.

David commended the accounts to the membership and these were unanimously approved.

Secretary: Les Fordham

Les focused on the need to maintain the drive to increase membership. Since taking on committee duties at the start of last year, membership has grown by some 20%. However, we are still not at the numbers we need to be, or indeed could be.

The website is a useful tool and has attracted not only 5 new members, but also requests for donations (which is what we are all about!). The website continues to be developed and any contributions or suggestions would be very welcome.

As a reminder, membership fees are as follows:

- i) Adult membership is £160 per annum.
- ii) Junior membership (under 25's or those in full time education) is £60 per annum.
- iii) Family membership (e.g. parents and any under 25's) is £250 per annum.

The annual Professor Minford Lunch has been arranged for 14th May. As this closely follows the General Election, it should be as informative and enjoyable as always.

We had a very successful gala last year and we are hoping to build on that again this year. To avoid clashes with St Andrews day and other events, we have brought the gala forward a few weeks to 15th October. We are always looking for prizes so if you would like to donate, please contact one of the committee.

Because we were still learning the ropes last year, we were not in a position to arrange any lunches. We hope to do better this year, so if anyone would like to sponsor a lunch please let Les or Simon know.

Les stated that he was looking for a back-up for secretarial duties (including newsletter production and website management). Alan Laing (one of our new VPs) has volunteered for this role.

From the floor...

As previously mentioned, there were many comments and suggestions regarding membership, which are summarised as follows:

- 1) Douglas Hutchison has visited Greenock Wanderers and Helensburgh RFC, both of whom have received donations from FoSR. Douglas reported how both clubs were extremely grateful and that the funds are being put to good use.
- 2) We need to devise a strategy for addressing our target audiences.
- 3) Every member should try introduce at least one new member.
- 4) Need to identify the drivers for potential younger members.
- 5) Better use of technology (especially Facebook and Linked-In) to attract younger members.
- 6) Send out regular updates with "clickable links" to information rather than just attachments.
- 7) Need to develop a profile of current membership (age, gender, etc.).
- 8) Look to produce an article for the Caledonian Club Magazine.
- 9) Produce a clear and concise "flier" that members could distribute to attract new blood.
- 10) Distribute fliers to targeted events.

At the dinner...

The Dinner was a lively affair which saw the introduction of technology (not entirely successfully!) in the guise of a video, screened to show Finn Russell, who was away on International duties, accepting the Sir Willie Purves Quaich. The Sir Tommy Macpherson Quaich was accepted by Corné du Rand, London Scottish - London Scottish Academy Manager and Club Development Manager, on behalf of Alec Coombes who was also away on International duties.

Jock Meikle gave the address to the Haggis and Ian MacLeod, presented the shafting stick to Donald McNab. It was Donald who created this wonderful staff which has now been retired and returned to its rightful owner.

The guest speaker was Ian Rankin - President of the SRU and Sheila Begbie, The SRU's Head of Women's Rugby answered questions from members.

The "Dundee" collection raised £1000 for the Murrayfield Centenary Fund which provides financial help to injured Scottish rugby players.

Finn Russell - winner of the Willie Purves Quaich

Position: Stand-off
Club: Glasgow Warriors
D.O.B.: 23rd Sept 1992
Birthplace: Bridge of Allan
Height: 1.83m (6ft)
Weight: 87kg (13st 9lb)

In 2011 Finn helped Stirling County Colts win the under-18 National Youth Cup and in 2013 it was announced he was a recipient of the MacPhail Scholarship to travel to New Zealand to develop his game. He signed a two-year professional contract with the Glasgow Warriors, from the 2014/15 season, after coming through the Scottish Rugby Elite Development Programme.

Finn became Scotland's 1056th capped player when he made his debut against the USA on the first match of Scotland's 2014 summer tour. It capped an excellent season for Russell who fought off fierce competition to become first choice stand-off at Glasgow Warriors on their run to the PRO12 final. He made his first appearance at BT Murrayfield for Scotland in the 41-31 win against Argentina in November 2014.

Alec Coombes - winner the Sir Tommy Macpherson Quaich

Position: Winger/Centre
Club: London Scottish
DOB: 26th Nov 1995
Birthplace: Hong Kong
Height: 1.85m (6' 1")
Weight: 94kg (14st 11lb)

The 18-year-old former Bath Academy player was part of Millfield School's highly successful Sevens team last season which dominated the national circuit, culminating in victory in the prestigious Rosslyn Park National Schools Sevens tournament.

Alec signed for London Scottish on an Academy contract in September 2014, after impressing in his pre-season trials at the Richmond based club. He opened his Scotland under-20 scoring account in style, covering over 60 metres, in a mesmerising run, to cross the whitewash in the last minute of the 45-0 defeat of Italy in the 2015 Six Nations Championships.



SRU President Ian Rankin speaking at Dinner



Lady Jean presents the Macpherson Quaich

Photos by James Finlay

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