

TOUCHLINE

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THE FORCE AWAKENS!



EMMA KENNEDY

Darth Vader and a select squad of Stormtroopers will descend on the Home of England Rugby with the galactic-themed 2015 Marriott London Sevens on the 16th and 17th May. While scrum wars will be at play on the field, the number of spectators rocketing through the gates is set to be out of this world.

Darth Vader's appearance at Twickenham Stadium has been captured in a TV ad and can also be viewed on YouTube. Catching several people off guard, including a startled C-3PO, Darth Vader stood face-to-face with the England Sevens team who remained unmoved by the infamous Sith Lord. A showdown

between the forces of light and dark saw neither give an inch, ensuring the real action will be seen between the international teams on the pitch in May.

Sophie Goldschmidt, England Rugby Chief Commercial and Marketing Officer said: "We have chosen a galactic theme for the 2015 Marriott London Sevens and the famous faces from Star Wars will really help bring this to life in and around Twickenham Stadium.

"The atmosphere here at Twickenham is part of what makes the tournament so successful and such a big hit with fans. Last year's event was a cracking weekend full of fantastic rugby action, some wild moves, both on and off the field, and some brilliant fancy dress efforts. Now 2015 promises to take fans on a ride into galaxies far, far away with a weekend of action that is bigger, better and louder!"

The 2015 Marriott London Sevens galactic theme will see many of the spectators arriving in Star Wars fancy dress so expect plenty of Darth Mauls, Luke 'Try-walkers' and 'Jabba the Rucks'.

The fast-paced conclusion to the HSBC Sevens World Series will see the players using more mind games than mind tricks and will see displays of superb team play and (Han) solo brilliance.

Yoda - "Much to learn you still have."

To watch the video click [here](#)

Tickets are still available for the Marriott London Sevens (May 16 & 17), round 9 of the HSBC Sevens World Series. It will be out of this world!

ENGLAND TAKE TOKYO SEVENS TITLE

GARETH MILLS

England beat HSBC Sevens World Series leaders South Africa 21-14 to win the Tokyo Sevens final.

The gutsy performance and title win was the team's first tournament victory since 2013 and moved Simon Amor's side into the top four of this season's series rankings.

The two physical teams played in wet and slippery conditions and both made mistakes in the opening exchanges. England survived an early scare after South Africa's Seabelo Senatla dropped the ball just before he was able to ground it over the line.

However, it was England who capitalised on their first opportunity when Charlie Hayter burst through three defenders and dived in to score and take his side into the lead. Captain Tom Mitchell duly converted but South Africa swiftly replied and a good kick was collected by Justin Geduld to score and level the game up at 7-7.

With the scores all square at the beginning of the second half Mitchell booted the ball into space behind his opposition and chased down to score a fantastic solo effort to take his team to a 14-7 lead. South Africa instantly looked to respond but great England defence kept them at bay.

Both teams tried to take advantage with kicks over the top and South Africa came close before Phil Burgess picked up from a breakdown on his own line to sprint the length of the field to take England out to a 21-7 lead.



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ENGLAND U20S GET JUST REWARD

STEFAN CURTIS

England Under 20s lifted the 2015 Under 20 Six Nations trophy after a two-try 24-11 win against title holders France at Brighton's Amex Stadium.

In front of a record U20s crowd of more than 12,600 fans, Joe Marchant and George Perkins scored the decisive tries, while Rory Jennings added 14 crucial points with the boot.

Head Coach Jon Callard said: "I'm extremely proud of all of the players and the management. It was a challenging game - France were extremely well drilled but our players fronted up in the second half and ultimately deserved that win. We didn't get going in the first 40 but we kept in the game and kicked on well. It's great to win and to lift the trophy and it's just reward for their efforts.

"We're half way through our season with the Junior World Cup coming up in June, and we're looking forward to heading out to Italy to defend the title. We have a talented group of players and a huge amount of credit must go to the clubs and the academies who put a lot of work in with their guys."

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ENGLAND U20S GET JUST REWARD

Captain Charlie Ewels said: "It's an unbelievable feeling to lift the trophy. Last year we missed out on it and that hurt, so to come here and put in a second half performance like that was really pleasing. We knew that it would be a challenge and huge respect to France who were very good from minute one to 80. We had to address a few things at the break but thankfully we did and came through to get the win."

Man of the match James Chisholm added: "It's an awesome feeling to win this - we made it hard for ourselves, losing against Wales in the opening game, but we regrouped and came back really well. For me, as a local guy, to come here in front of an amazing crowd and to get the win is pretty special and will definitely live long in the memory."

As Callard said this was a "great event in a great venue" and one that will welcome Rugby World Cup 2015 matches later this year.

To view the highlights of the Under 20s match against France click [here](#)



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ENGLAND TAKE TOKYO SEVENS TITLE

The South Africans fought back with a try from Cecil Afrika after picking up a low pass and slipping between the defence with two minutes remaining. But England held out in the dying seconds. Mitchell cleared the ball into touch, after a successful England lineout take, to secure England's first tournament title this season.

Simon Amor, England Head Coach said: "I'm incredibly proud of the guys, they have worked so hard these last few weeks. It wasn't pretty rugby this weekend, from a lot of teams I think, but we carried on grafting. A key goal was to win a tournament and we have done that now. We haven't quite hit the levels we wanted to in previous tournaments and we have had a lot of injuries this year but the way they fought and got that win is great. It gives us something to build on."

Tom Mitchell, England captain said: "We are so grateful to deliver this title. Our confidence is always something we are trying to build. I'm glad we stuck to our processes and really believed in what we could do. South Africa are an unbelievable team as they have shown all series and we were always going to have to fight to the end."

FREE CURATORS TALK FOR YOUR GROUP & 25% DISCOUNT FOR RUGBY CLUBS

There has never been a better time to visit Twickenham Stadium and the World Rugby Museum. As Twickenham prepares to host 10 Rugby World Cup matches including the final, your group can enjoy a private behind the scenes guided tour of the world's most famous rugby stadium.

Visit the VIP areas, the Royal Box, Twickenham tunnel and England dressing room. At the Museum a curator will outline the highlights of the collection before the group explores the museum at leisure.

Book a group tour to be taken before 31/08/15 and quote your club name. Groups are 15+ and get 25% discount.

HAPPY AS HARRY



There were many happy England supporters at Twickenham as England lifted the Calcutta Cup but none happier than 100-year-old former international Harry Walker.

There as a VIP guest, Harry, who earned nine England caps in 1947 and 48, said he had "loved every minute", after being presented to HRH the Princess Royal and chatting with Helen Grant MP, Minister for Sport & Tourism.

Said Helen Grant, "Harry is quite inspirational. When he played for England against Scotland 68 years ago I am sure the sport was very different but his passion for rugby is still very evident. Harry is a fantastic example of the health benefits of playing sport, it was a joy to meet him and watch England set up a thrilling finale to the RBS 6 Nations."



LANCASTER THANKS FANS



Although England were six points short of taking the 2015 RBS 6 Nations title, their seven-try 55-35 victory against France was England's record highest points scored against them as TV viewers clocked up another top score, with 9.6 million viewers watching the match.

Super Saturday was epic and the last match of the day a tremendous display of open rugby. England's 18 tries in this Championship speaks of a real attacking game, equalling France's total in 2006 and England's total in 2003.

England have now won 15 of their 21 games at Twickenham under Stuart Lancaster, the win ratio of 71 per cent underlining Lancaster's view that the Twickenham fans provide extra power to the team's performance.

Said Lancaster, "The Twickenham crowd and the England fans have been amazing and I would like to thank them for all their support. We scored 18 tries without the likes of Tom Croft, Brad Barritt, Owen Farrell, Joe Launchbury, Ben Morgan and Manu Tuilagi, who will all be back with the squad for our training camp in June."

August 15th will see *Les Bleus* back at Twickenham before England take them on in Paris a week later. Limited number of tickets available [here](#)

RUGBY WORLD CUP 2015 OFFICIAL FANZONES

England Rugby 2015 have announced the 15 Official Rugby World Cup 2015 Fanzone locations across England and in Cardiff. Fanzones will be in each Host City, as well as the birthplace of the game, Rugby, and Trafalgar Square.

The free to enter Fanzones will be open on matchdays and at varying times across the six-week Tournament providing fans, residents and visitors with the opportunity to enjoy the build-up to matches and join in with the nationwide celebration of rugby. The locations range from iconic town squares to city parks, match venue surroundings, and waterside spaces including the Docks in Gloucester and on the beach in Brighton. With capacities ranging from 2,000 to over 10,000, and additional events planned outside of matchdays, over a million fans are anticipated to visit Fanzones throughout the Tournament.

Each Fanzone will include a big screen, some showing live Rugby World Cup 2015 matches; rugby activities, food and drink, entertainment and unique regional content celebrating the Host City and Match Venue's role in Rugby World Cup 2015. Trafalgar Square will be open from the weekend of the semi-finals until the Final and include entertainment, food and drink, and rugby activities on the semi-final, Bronze Final and Final matchdays. The Square and a number of other Fanzones will also play host to grassroots and community rugby initiatives and events to celebrate the game and the wider Tournament.

You can view the Fanzone locations and opening dates* at www.rugbyworldcup.com



100 DAY RUGBY WORLD CUP TROPHY TOUR

Rugby fans can look forward to the Rugby World Cup Trophy Tour in the UK and Ireland. Launching on June 10 – with 100 days to go to the opening match – rugby's greatest prize, the Webb Ellis Cup, will travel through Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Wales and England, counting down to the start of the Tournament before arriving at Twickenham Stadium on September 18 ahead of the Opening Ceremony.

The Rugby World Cup Trophy Tour follows the successful International Trophy Tour, The Webb Ellis Cup having returned to England will make its journey throughout the UK and Ireland to engage fans and give them the opportunity to build unforgettable memories as part of their own Rugby World Cup 2015 story.

Rugby is at the heart of the Trophy Tour schedule engaging with over 100 rugby clubs, organisations and rugby festivals, from grassroots to elite. Host cities, match venues, team bases, community and legacy programmes, sports



events, stakeholder visits, Worldwide Partner activations and iconic landmarks will also feature as part of the Trophy Tour, with over 300 events programmed across the 100 day continuous tour.

The Rugby World Cup Trophy Tour will launch on June 10 and make its way to the Scottish border for a five-day journey through Scotland. The Trophy will then travel to Belfast and spend five days in Northern Ireland and five days in the Republic of Ireland, finishing in Dublin and crossing the Irish Sea to Holyhead in Wales. Ten days in Wales will include visits to Host City Cardiff and the Millennium Stadium before the Trophy returns to England to countdown the final 75 days until Rugby World Cup 2015.

The Rugby World Cup Trophy Tour schedule can be viewed at rugbyworldcup.com/trophy-tour and full details on the locations and events will be updated in the coming months.

Tickets for Rugby World Cup 2015 are currently on sale through the official ticketing site tickets.rugbyworldcup.com

AWESOME ALL SCHOOLS EXPERIENCE

Prince Harry was at Twickenham for England's final match in the 2015 RBS 6 Nations against France and took the chance to watch students from Reigate School and Quest Academy, part of England Rugby's All Schools programme, playing in the curtain raiser.

This was All Schools' Patron Prince Harry's second visit to Twickenham this season, following his trip to watch England v New Zealand in the 2014 QBE Internationals. He chatted to the students pitch side about their time playing touch rugby at Twickenham before taking his seat in the royal box.

Hannah Reid, a student at Quest Academy, said: "It was so amazing. We were all really excited to play on the Twickenham pitch, but then to meet Prince Harry as well was just awesome."

Launched in September 2012 in partnership with the Rugby Football Foundation and supported by Principal Partner CBRE, All Schools helps state secondary schools over three years to start and sustain playing rugby union, with kit and equipment, coaching, young leaders training and links to a local rugby club. Quest Academy, like all the schools in All Schools, has been identified in a small cluster with others, allowing them to play rugby against each other locally.

One of the seven areas identified by England Rugby to deliver the greatest participation legacy for the game in the lead up to the World Cup and beyond, All Schools will cost £10 million to implement, raised through RFU investment, sponsorship and fundraising. The RFU has made an initial commitment of £2 million and put a fundraising campaign in action.

All Schools is generously supported by CBRE, Canterbury, Gilbert, OPRO, Comic Relief and ICAP. The programme was one of the main beneficiaries of ICAP's 2014 Charity Day. The donation received will fund training for young leaders to run rugby festivals for other students.

A keen sportsman and rugby fan, Prince Harry is also Vice Patron of the RFU and Patron of the RFU's Injured Players Foundation.



GREAT SCHOOLBOY RUGBY AT NATWEST SCHOOLS DAY

Bromsgrove's 30-18 victory in a memorable NatWest Schools Under-18s Cup final ended Dulwich's hopes of a fourth successive title.

Two tries in five minutes from wing Cooper Bent and substitute back Blake Edwards overturned Dulwich's hard earned advantage of 18-13 on NatWest Schools Day at Twickenham. Bromsgrove, given a pre-match pep talk from old boy in England prop Matt Mullan, deservedly gained their first title at this level.

Dulwich fly half Jon Waugh contributed 13 points, including a first-half try, and a second-half score came from lock Luke Bliss. Bromsgrove's fly half Luke White, was voted Man of the Match for his 15 points and pinpoint cross kick which brought the crucial try for Bent 10 minutes from time.

Bromsgrove led 10-0, White adding a penalty to the conversion of a try by lock Beck Cutting, before Dulwich flanker Tom Watling won possession and pressure led to Waugh breaking through and adding the conversion to cut Bromsgrove's lead to 10-7. Waugh's penalty levelled the match at 10-10, before White landed a penalty for a 13-10 lead at the break.

Dulwich's Waugh secured another penalty before the team gained a second try through a driving maul off a lineout, giving Dulwich an 18-13 lead. Bromsgrove fought back helped by the accurate kicking of White. The fly half kicked a third penalty before his cross kick landed in the arms of Bent. He then added the conversion from near the touchline to put his team 23-18 ahead. Bromsgrove's final try saw Edwards race 20 metres to score, White adding the extras.

Said Tony Windo, Bromsgrove Director of Rugby, "The boys have got their rewards for the tremendous amount of effort they have put in all season. They are credit to the school first and foremost but they are a credit to themselves as a group, they work exceptionally hard during the week and they have been a pleasure to coach."

Churcher's College, Hampshire, survived a late charge from Essex-based SEEVIC College to win their first final at Twickenham 13-5. Tries from fly half Seb Head and centre Zach Housden and a penalty for captain Seb Herold, kept Churcher's ahead in an evenly-fought NatWest Schools Under 18s Vase final. SEEVIC hit back late on through wing Amos Filson.

Seb Herold, Churcher's captain said, "It's just an amazing way to end a seven year experience. We have known each other a long time and it's amazing to get that result at Twickenham and to have the whole school come down to support us."

QEGS Wakefield ended Warwick's domination of the NatWest Schools Under 15 Cup by winning a tense final 15-6 thanks to a strong forward effort led by No.8 Edan Kelly and flanker Max Hanson.



It gave the Yorkshire school their first outright title in this competition and stopped Warwick completing a treble of Under 15 titles after beating QEGS for two successive years. Kelly scored his team's first-half try, while Hanson struck after the interval and added a conversion and penalty. Warwick's Will Tanner earned their points through two well-taken penalties.

Said QEGS coach Gary Pickersgill, "We played Warwick in the two previous finals but knew we mustn't impose those feelings on this set of boys. It was their first time at Twickenham. These guys have worked hard all year and they put into practice what we preached to them in training sessions."

Sherborne won the Natwest U15 Vase 34-24 after a non-stop contest had brought 10 tries and excellent individual contributions. Nick Jonas, the Sherborne captain, scored three tries and was matched by his Oakham counterpart Tyrese Johnson-Fisher who also grabbed a hat-trick. But it was Sherborne's cohesion which made the difference, gaining the Dorset school a first trophy in this national competition.

Sherborne led 17-12 at half-time, the first half bringing five tries amid some terrific rugby, and they posted a win by six tries to four. Oakham's points came courtesy of the three Johnson-Fisher tries and one from Archie Sumner, with two Seb Davies conversions. Sherborne's came from the Jonas hat trick and tries from Rupert Chetwode and George Sutton, Dom Prest also converting two.

Said Sherborne coach Rhidian McGuire,



"I thought it would be a close game but to put a show on like we did was the most impressive thing. It was a good showcase for schoolboy rugby."

Entry for next season (2015/16) is now open. Please visit englandrugby.com/natwestcup or contact Tom Price (tomprice@rfu.com) for more information.

STORMERS EDGE ARMY CUP THRILLER

12 Regiment RA 27-17 Royal Welsh

A tough and physical Army Cup final saw players digging deep until the very last play of the match. Both sides had done their homework and lined up the likely ball carriers. Tackling was on target and at half time the Welsh led by two tries to one and 12-10. Not always pretty but tense and certainly very exciting.

The Welsh created periods of dominance where they rocked the Gunners backward. Chris Budgen came on at prop to some effect in the tight and was invariably on hand for a thundering carry. Nearer to the line but never quite over. Flanker Will Jones towered at the lineout and presented bags of good ball. The backs ran strongly up to the point where they crashed into the heavy defence and then the pendulum swung back to the Gunners.

Welsh pressure during the final ten minutes led them to play a bit of an extravaganza - sevens style. Gunner No7 Ben Naiyanga, not unaccustomed to reading the abbreviated game pounced and hared to the line for the try that sealed victory. Owain Davies converted.

Owain Davies, Gunner No 10, despite ten minutes in the sin bin, scored 12 points through fine kicking and was awarded Man of the Match.





BE PART OF RUGBY'S BIGGEST YEAR! JOIN THE FESTIVAL OF RUGBY 2015

Rugby's biggest year is here and we want to remind people that the Festival of Rugby 2015 enables both events and event seekers around the UK to be part of the celebrations. Around 100 events have now been approved to be part of the Festival and we're expecting many more to join them in the coming weeks.

Launched in January 2015, The Festival of Rugby is open to any events with a link to the game or a rugby theme taking place between 10 June and 31 October 2015. Whether you are running a beer or music festival, a fete, fair or minis tournament, register your event at www.festivalofrugby2015.com

disability sports and family fun day; Rugby's Got Balls exhibition in the town of Rugby; Milton Keynes Rugby 7s Beer, Cider & Music Festival; London Stock Exchange Group's Charity Mixed Touch Rugby Tournament at the home of Saracens; Fleetwood Carnival and Newmarket's Touch Rugby Festival.

Since applications opened last month, a broad range of events have been registered and approved, including: Castleford RUFC's

To find out more about any of these events or others taking place in your region go to www.festivalofrugby2015.com

ESPECIALLY FOR RUGBY CLUBS

Register early to receive a free Festival of Rugby 2015 club starter pack.

If your rugby club is quick to register a rugby-themed event as part of the Festival of

Rugby 2015 you can receive an official starter pack full of fantastic Festival accessories! Festival of Rugby 2015 starter packs include flags, bunting and a range of Festival of Rugby themed decorations for your event.

This offer is limited to the first 200 rugby clubs that register an event. Event applications need to be approved to qualify for a starter pack.

THEY'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES



The banner across their website page says "You've got what it takes but it will take everything you've got". And recently Old Halesonians U15s, who only two years ago had a mere five players, gave it all they'd got to secure a place in the U15 North Midlands Cup final.

They have turned their fortunes around, recruiting players, so that they now have 27; hung on to more than 90% of their new recruits; have more than 75% playing for the county and are undefeated at home.

With a new coach, Matthew Williams, the squad has made great strides not just on the pitch but spreading the word in local schools and taking up leadership roles, helping to coach and motivate younger teams. All players and parents had a one to one session with Matthew at the start of the season, bought into the team's objectives and values and picked their own captain and vice-captain. An extra weekly session gave those who don't play rugby at school the time to develop their individual skills.

Last month (March) saw them take on Old Silhillians for a place in the Cup final at Stourbridge RFC this month. The game was played at Old Edwardians and, on a superb pitch, it was a great showcase of youth rugby, with over 55 points scored. After a single point lead at half time, Old Hales took the honours 31-25.

"It was," said coach Williams "a fantastic game of rugby with both sides giving everything they had. At the end all 27 players were there to share in this fantastic team performance and it meant so much to me as coach. We have come a long way and have bought into something very special. To see these players make history for our club by becoming the first U15 side and also junior side to make a final in the North Midlands Cup makes me very proud of what they have achieved."

Said captain Jack Freeman "I had been thinking about the game all week. I wanted to do the best possible job for the lads and I am so happy to be in a final that I can't describe it!"

Ollie Lunn added, "To be the vice-captain was a great honour for me as this team is awesome to play in. I have been working really hard to get the starting 10 shirt and I had such great players around me that offered up and made my job easy."

BRONZE FINISH FOR ENGLAND U18S

GARETH MILLS

England beat Italy 39-12 in the bronze final of the 2015 Rugby Europe Under 18 Championship in Toulouse. The age-group side started brightly, despite difficult and wet conditions, scoring four tries in the first spell to go into the break 29-0 up.

The second half proved tougher as the young *Azzurri* began to work their way into the match and play to their strengths. The Italians hit back twice in response to England's two tries scored in the half.

The result put England in third place behind France and

Georgia and said Head Coach John Fletcher: "We came out here with the ultimate goal of winning all three games and to continue to improve our performances. We are obviously disappointed not to win but overall it has been a pleasing competition for us in terms of players improving and spending time together. We will be looking forward to the Under 19 games coming up and then the South African tests in August."

England convincingly beat Portugal 85-5 in the opening game of the tournament before losing out to a strong French side 21-17.



A WARWICKSHIRE WIN ALL ROUND



Talk about getting the most out of one event! A recent girls' schools festival at Berkswell & Balsall RFC not only gave 280 girls from years 5/6, 7/8 and 9-11 a great day playing competitive rugby but also saw Coventry University Students refereeing, teams selected for the forthcoming regional tournament and players recruited for the club.

Girls' rugby is proving a tremendous success in the Midlands as some 31 school teams and 280 girls competed in three age groups for years 5/6, 7/8 and 9-11 at at Berkswell & Balsall RFC.

Berkswell & Balsall RFC girls section started this year and RFU Community Rugby Coaches have been helping both the clubs and local schools by coaching, and at the club, mentoring and helping school teachers and club coaches with coaching qualifications.

With 31 teams enjoying the event, the club gained 17 new players straight away and said Community Rugby Coach Ant Collins, "With huge interest from the girls following the festival more are likely to sign up and I'm now helping the schools to create a network of opposition for regular fixtures."

If you know someone who could feature among Real Rugby Stories on englandrugby.com, please email charliemorgan@rfu.com

MISS G PASSES ON PASSION FOR RUGBY

PATRICIA MOWBRAY

When Sue Gillingham was asked to make up numbers for a touch event on Boscombe beach she hadn't expected to get quite so badly bitten – by the rugby bug.

PE teacher Sue came from what she describes as “a football coaching background” but is now a true rugby ambassador, who has coached her junior school to Dorset tag champion status and reached the O2 Touch finals at Twickenham herself last year.

Now playing touch for Oakmedians at their O2 Touch Centre, Sue says, “It is such an amazingly accessible sport. I'm playing with and against others half my age. When the Oaks reached the Twickenham final we had a combined age of 440 and beat Loughborough along the way, despite their combined 201 years!”

And it was a great inspiration for the youngsters she coaches at Branksome Heath Junior School in Poole. “I took back lots of pictures from Twickenham and the children were very impressed. I'm sure they thought if Miss G can do it so can we.”



And they did. Recently, her Year 6 team, who she has coached for the past three years, lifted the Dorset tag title. They beat five other teams in their group, emerged victors in a tight semi-final and winners against St Katharine's, Bournemouth, in the closest of finals, winning 3-2 in the last minute.

“St Katharine's were a very good team and all the players from both squads were impressive in the final. When the match was over our children were ecstatic. Ours is a very mixed catchment area and they had trained so hard and came back into school with eyes shining,” says Sue, who learned to teach tag at a course put on at Wimborne RFC.

“It is so encouraging for the team to win this tournament and, as they are off to senior school in September, I hope it will inspire them to stay involved with rugby. They have got so

much out of the sport and being part of a team.”

Branksome Heath captain Harry Reynolds was overwhelmed by leading his team to success. “I'm so proud of what we achieved,” he said. “We will always remember it and we are so glad to win for Miss G who has trained us at lunchtimes and helped us so much.”

It's amazing what an unplanned game of beach touch rugby can lead to. Says Branksome Heath Executive Headteacher, Sarah Lee, “Sue is such an enthusiastic and supportive coach here at Branksome, giving up lunchtimes and afterschool time to coach and support the children to develop and refine their skills. Her passion for the game rubs off on the children, they are so motivated to do well for themselves, the school and Miss G!”



SIXTY OF THE BEST

Sixty volunteers, including Young Rugby Ambassadors and students from Sussex and Kingston Universities and Raynes Park High School, were VIPs at the England v France U20s match at The Amex Stadium, Brighton. They were welcomed and thanked by RFU Junior Vice President Peter Baines, before watching England Under 20s hold on to the Six Nations title, having beaten France U20.



HERTFORDSHIRE COLLEGES TAKE TO TOUCH



England Rugby took part last month (March) in the Hertfordshire Inter FE Games, a multi-sport, multi-ability mega-fest of activity at the University of Hertfordshire. The games are not for elite athletes, with the focus on enjoyment, fair play and the integrity of sport. The aim is to give more than 500 students the best possible sporting experience in one venue, and the Sports Village did a great job of hosting.

Hertfordshire has just four FE colleges, one of which is Oaklands College, an AASE centre working with Saracens. It can be challenging to find appropriate competitive opportunities for all students wanting to play rugby. The Herts Inter FE Games offered a touch rugby competition to engage the colleges in a rugby format that was active and inclusive. All four colleges took part and by adjusting the competition regulations (the dummy half being unable to score) excellent rugby was played.

PRESIDENT THANKS VOLUNTEERS

RFU President Jonathan Dance, recently hosted a lunch, followed by a tour of Twickenham Stadium, to recognise and thank volunteer rugby coaches and referees. The 30 guests, were also welcomed by RFU Junior Vice President Peter Baines, Professional Rugby Director Rob Andrew and Head of Club Development Simon Winman.

Dan Winfield, who coaches Colts at Southam RFC, said “I really felt part of the rugby family. It was just fantastic how we all think alike and how well we all get along. I coach for the love of the game, so being invited meant an awful lot to me. The whole day was fantastic and something my wife and I will never forget.”

REMEMBERING 100 YEARS AFTER GALLIPOLI

Major Blair Inskip Swannell, who played rugby for both the British Lions and Australia, was born in Weston Underwood, Buckinghamshire in 1875 and died, aged 39, in Gallipoli on 25 April 1915.

That date is ANZAC Day, when Australia and New Zealand remember their fallen from the First World War, much as the UK marks Remembrance Day in November. More than 44,000 died in the Gallipoli campaign, and of the fallen 8,709 were Australians and 2,701 New Zealanders.

On the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings Blair Swannell's great nephew, Robert Swannell, Chairman of Marks & Spencer and, until summer 2014, Chairman of Rugby School's governing body, will be remembering him at a Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey.

He said, "The appalling casualties at Gallipoli are unimaginable today. My great uncle was, by all accounts, quite a character but despite being 39 years old answered the call and paid with his life. I feel privileged to join the service in Westminster Abbey on 25th April to be able to honour quietly Blair and all those who gave their lives for our freedom at Gallipoli. I will also be thinking of the 680 Rugby School boys who gave their lives in the First World War, from a school then of only 550 boys. It truly makes you weep to think of the devastation among so many families."

Major Swannell, a pupil at Repton School and a rugby forward for Olney RFC and Northampton, won seven British Isles caps before settling in Australia and earning a cap for Australia. A tough and uncompromising forward, he apparently turned up for training in unwashed kit and played in dirty breeches.

He toured Australia with the 1899 British Isles squad and played in their 1904 tour of Australia and New Zealand (above right), scoring a try against Australia. His playing style in this final Test was met, it's reported, with equal ferocity and he left the pitch with two black eyes and bleeding, but with his spirit undaunted.

The son of William and Charlotte Swannell, he grew up on his father's farm and attended the Thames Nautical Training College, making his first visit to Australia, as a mate on a schooner. He later joined the British Army and served in South Africa during the Second Boer War, where he was commissioned as a lieutenant in the 35th Battalion (Buckinghamshire) Imperial Yeomanry.

When the touring British team returned home after the 1904 campaign, Swannell remained in Australia, joining Sydney club team Northern Suburbs. In 1905 he was selected to play for Australia on their first overseas tour, despite having played against them on six occasions.



When he retired from playing Swannell coached at youth and school level, coaching the St Joseph's College team to a number of championships. In 1909, he became Secretary of the Metropolitan Rugby Union, later resigning to save them expense but continuing in an honorary capacity. He also served as a referee from 1911 to 1914, earning praise for his control of games. Often approached by the Australian sporting press, especially when the British played Antipodean teams, he wrote for the Star on forward play and scrummaging.

At the outbreak of the First World War, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force, was appointed to the rank of Major and posted to Egypt. He was among those sent to the Gallipoli Campaign, landing with D Company of the 1st Battalion at the peninsula on 25th April. He and his men were immediately pinned down under heavy enemy fire and he was shot in the head and killed. He is commemorated at Baby 700 Cemetery in Gallipoli and with a plaque at Weston-Underwood church.

Blair Swannell's great nephew has also been invited by Northampton Saints to the last game of the season at Franklin's Gardens next month (May) to celebrate his life. So 100 years on his tale is still being told at his old club.



PLAYERS' SACRIFICE COMMEMORATED

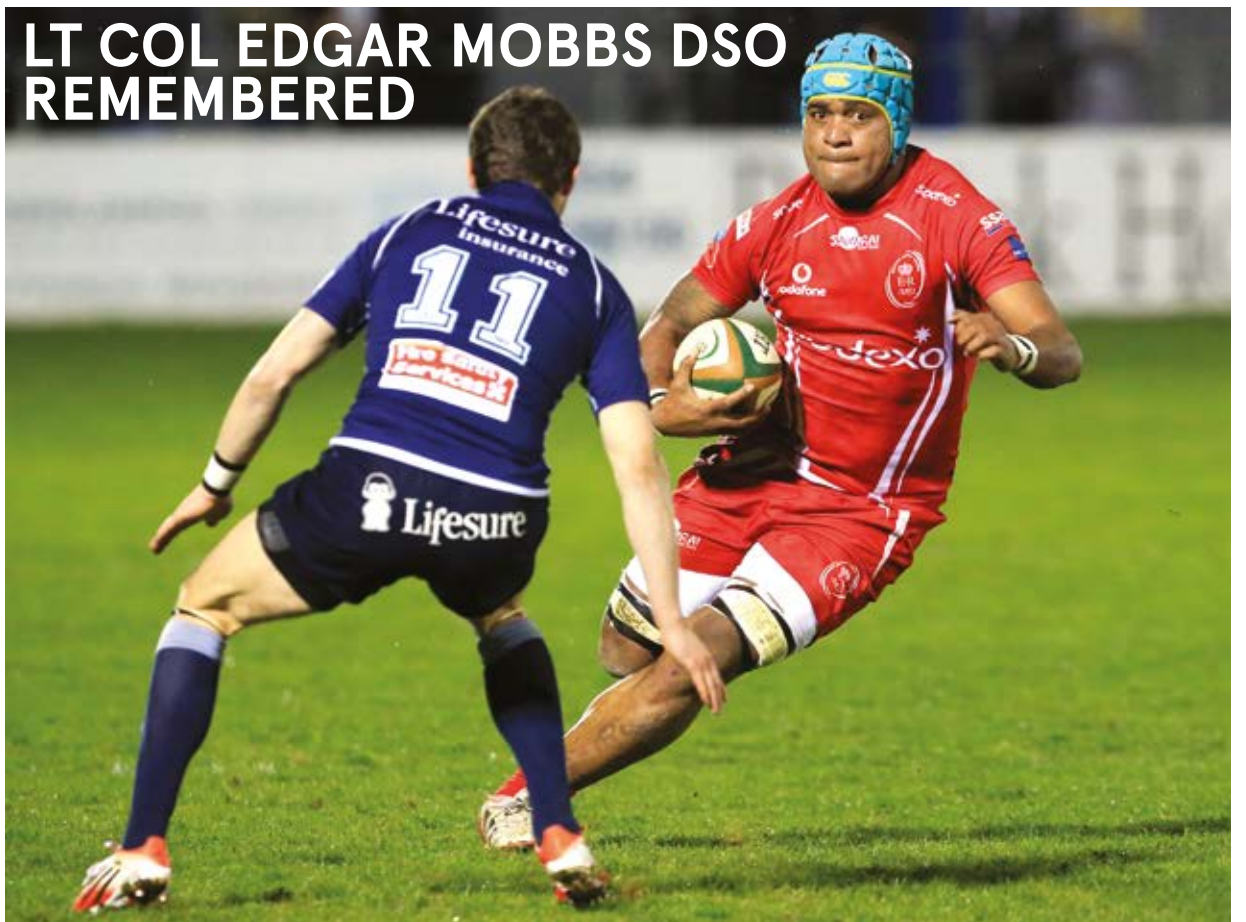
Members of Trinity Guild Rugby Football Club turned the clock back 100 years at a recent vice-president's lunch when a plaque commemorating members who died in World War 1 was unveiled in their memory.

A chance discovery of a newspaper cutting from 1919 reporting the first meeting of the Guild Committee, after hostilities ended, and reporting their intention to reform the club for the following season contained reference to nine members who had died during the Great War.

After several months' research and investigation, the nine members were identified and a commemorative plaque was created, which was unveiled by club captain Andy Gayton, and is displayed in the clubhouse in permanent recognition of past members' sacrifice.

Those who never returned to play again were: Alfred Bailey, George Evans, Leslie Hutchings, T. Percy Jackson, H. J. Payne, John King, Herbert M. Shaffir, Frederick W. Webber and John Wilkins.

LT COL EDGAR MOBBS DSO REMEMBERED



Bedford Blues XV 47-24 Army

The Mobbs Memorial Match at Goldington Road at the end of last month (March) celebrated the life and courage of England rugby star Lt Col Edgar Mobbs DSO who was killed in 1917 at the Battle of the Somme.

In true Mobbs' spirit the ball was thrown around expansively. The Blues probably executed the common strategy to greater effect but did not have it all their own way. They crossed for their first of seven tries on seven minutes and the Army response was first class, if a little risky. Quick ball across the face of their own posts enabled wing Jonasa Bulumakau to put his opposite number under pressure. Pressure led to points as James Dixon at fly half kicked a penalty. With exchanges up-front pretty even, a mighty hoof followed by a strong forward surge allowed Army No9 Tom Chennell to cross.

In the second half the Army went down three tries to two. Hooker Mattie Dwyer made penetrating runs and thundered over for a great try. Centre Peceli Nacamavuto once more showed his class to cross through the posts. Dixon converted both.

The Mobbs Memorial Match was a 'friendly' with an historical morsel of zest. It was a test of the Army's willingness to confront a very good team and draw something positive from the match. At 33-10 adrift going into the final quarter, the can-do spirit was one of fighting to the end and taking lessons to the training camp in Portugal in advance of the already sold out Army v Navy match at Twickenham on 9th May.

BIRTHDAY BOY BEN'S BIG DAY



In front of a crowd of 82,000, one nine-year-old Twickenham boy undoubtedly had goose bumps. Ben Church will remember the evening for a very long time because his love of rugby brought the chance to be the one carrying out the match ball before England beat Scotland and lifted the Calcutta Cup.

As the teams lined up Ben, wearing a replica England kit, was last to leave the players' tunnel, walking out with the French international referee Romain Poite and standing with him for the anthems, while a military band accompanied the singing.

Then, as the crowd waited for the whistle, Ben walked with Poite to the centre spot to place the ball before running back to watch his England heroes from the stands, where mum Eileen, dad Pete and his four-year-old bother Eoin were waiting.

Said Ben when he entered a Junior Supporters Club competition to carry the ball out, "It would be such an honour for me to be a ball carrier

Membership of England Rugby Junior Supporters Club costs only £10 and comes with a chance to be an England mascot or ball carrier at Twickenham. Why not sign the kids up at www.englishrugby.com/supportersclub

because I love playing rugby. I play for a team not too far away from Twickenham Stadium called Teddington RFC and have been to a few international games. When I have been to an England match I always sing along to our National Anthem but my favourite moment is singing along with the crowd to Swing Low, Sweet Chariot. It gives me goose bumps."

Having watched his England heroes win by 25-13 on that Saturday night, Ben was running out with Teddington for the U9 Middlesex Festival at Wasps FC's home ground in Acton the next morning, after taking mum breakfast in bed for mothers' day. His brother Eoin has also played at the club with their youngest team, Teddington Mini Titans. Ben is a pupil at St James' Catholic School in Strawberry Hill, where he has played tag rugby in PE, which is, of course, his favourite lesson!

Having heard on his ninth birthday that he was to carry the match ball at Twickenham, Ben said, "It was the best birthday present I could ever have had!"

GIRLS' RUGBY GROWING IN EAST YORKSHIRE

The annual East Yorkshire Girls Schools Finals, for U13 and U15 school teams, started three years ago with four schools involved. Last month at Driffeld RUFC 18 teams from 11 schools were competing.

There were both U13 and U15 teams competing from Sirius, Wolfreton, Archbishop Holgate, Headlands, Lady Lumleys, Malton and Eskdale schools, as well as U13 teams from Kelvin Hall and Hornsea, and U15 teams from Kingswood and Ryedale. Some strong, experienced teams were there together with others getting their first experience of rugby. The ability on show was exceptional, regardless of experience, and the day was thoroughly enjoyed by all with

the Women's Rugby World Cup Trophy paying a visit.

Sirius Academy from Hull won both age groups and will progress to the Yorkshire Finals together with the second placed finishers at each age group Kelvin Hall School at U13 and Wolfreton and Headlands Schools at U15.

Yorkshire RFU President Ted Atkinson was there to enjoy the matches and present the trophies. Pete Taylor, Womens Rugby Development Officer for Yorkshire, North East & Cumbria said, "I firmly believe that this is just the beginning of a huge increase in demand for women's and girls' rugby both in East Yorkshire and further afield."



HARVEY RECEIVES U18 CAP HALF A CENTURY LATER

Sixties rugby league professional player, Peter Harvey, was recently presented with his U18 rugby union international cap some 56 years after playing against France at Twickenham.

The cap was given to him at the recent Lancashire Schools U18 Cup finals evening at Liverpool St Helens FC by Tim Stirk, the President of England Rugby Football Schools Union (ERFSU). Tim was assisted by the President of Lancashire CRFU, David Matthews and Ken Andrews, Lancashire RFU Council member.

Peter attended West Park Grammar School where he started playing rugby and went on to have an illustrious career in both union and league. He played throughout his school years - representing Lancashire U18s with local rugby league legend Ray French in 1958. A year later he became the first player from Lancashire to captain the England U18s team, taking on France at Twickenham and Wales at Cardiff Arms Park.

He played rugby union for St Mary's Twickenham and Loughborough Colleges and then joined Liverpool FC and was selected to play for the full Lancashire team, playing 22 matches for the Red Rose county, taking part in England trials and selected as a reserve on three occasions.

In 1963, he signed professional forms for St Helens

RLFC and played until 1967, winning many major competitions including the League Championship and Challenge Cup double in 1966. Peter's rugby career ended at Warrington RLFC after two seasons with the Wires in 1969.

When Peter captained the England U18s in 1959, he didn't receive an international cap as caps were not then awarded but he had always dreamed of the honour of having a cap marking his schoolboy achievements. Ken Andrews, former ERFSU Vice President and current RFU Council member managed to secure a cap for Peter, whose recent book, 'A redhead with fire in his boots' describes his rugby journey.

Ken Andrews says in the early days boys were selected for county and international teams through the county on schoolmasters' recommendation and after very little coaching and match preparation were expected to perform at the highest level. Nowadays boys from schools and clubs go through a thorough process of coaching, training, selection and preparation over an extended period to reach the elite level at U16 and then on to U18 and the professional game.

An international cap is still treasured, especially if it arrives, as it did for Peter, more than half a century late.



O2 TOUCH AT TWICKENHAM

SUZI MURRAY

Six O2 Touch volunteers were treated to the ultimate England Rugby experience at Twickenham Stadium at the RBS 6 Nations finale between England and France.

Jim and Laura Perrin from Fylde RFC, Dave and Keith Hillier from Portsmouth US RFC and Rich Hill and Ashley Targett from Milton Keynes RFC went behind the scenes on a VIP tour of the stadium on match day culminating in being part of the guard of honour for England and France and walking a lap of honour pitch side at half time in front of the 82,500 fans.

"Waking up at home on Sunday I began to reflect on the surreal events of the previous day. An immersive Six Nations experience that few will ever experience and I will never ever forget," said Jim Perrin.

The success of the O2 Touch programme relies on

dedicated O2 Touch operators and ambassadors to not only establish and operate O2 Touch centres throughout the country but also continually recruit new members to the game. As acknowledgement of the hard work and dedication of O2 Touch operators and ambassadors, clubs are regularly rewarded with VIP experiences and offerings.

Touch is one of the UK's fastest growing sports and at present there are over 9,550 O2 Touch participants playing in over 255 centres nationwide. O2 Touch allows you to turn up on your own, or with your mates, to learn the ropes, get fit or play informal games, with qualified coaches on hand to help you get to grips with touch rugby. Get involved today, visit

www.EnglandRugby.com/o2touch

STUNNING SCHOOLS SEVENS



Rosslyn Park HSBC National Schools Sevens saw some stunning rugby and Dulwich College lift the Junior Schools silverware, having beaten Whitgift School in the final, while Dulwich Prep lost out to Caldicott School in the Prep Schools final.

Reigate Grammar School secured their first ever Rosslyn Park title following a thrilling extra-time Colts Competition victory. They raced into a 12-0 lead in the final only for Eton College to level matters at 12-12 before extra time with the scores tied at 19 apiece. Reigate finally took the honours 24-19.

Stowe School marked their first ever Rosslyn Park HSBC National Schools Sevens final in style in the Festival Competition beating Tonbridge School 15-12 in front of the live cameras and England full back Mike Brown.

Wellington College brought the curtain down on this 76th tournament, edging out John Fisher School 12-7. John Fisher will get a chance to turn the tables in a replay at Twickenham in May during the Marriott London Sevens, the last of the HSBC Sevens World Series.

In the Girls AASE competition a round robin format saw Hartpury College take the title with a superior points difference of 152, while the Girls Tournament final was an all-Welsh affair with Amman Valley School beating Ysgol Bro Dinefwr 19-10.



SURREY RETAIN NATIONAL U20 SHIELD

ROSS MARTINOVIC

A late rally could not prevent Staffordshire slipping to a 30-12 defeat against defending champions Surrey in the final of the RFU National U20 Shield at Ealing Trailfinders Sports Club.

Tries from Ryan Travers, Mikey McDonald and Ben Bowen and 15 points from the boot of Alex Seers saw a clinical Surrey home. Seers had a penalty kick drift wide in the first minute, but it was all Staffordshire in the opening stages.

The Midlanders, making their first appearance in a national final for 45 years,

demonstrated impressive ball retention, with captain Jack Fielding leading by example at hooker. Surrey held firm, though, and the reigning champions punished their opponents as Travers burrowed over from a driving maul, Seers adding the extras.

Staffordshire's Tom Phillips and Jack Newton-Taylor then both received yellow cards, and Seers booted his side 16 points clear at the interval with three further penalties.

Staffordshire, with the wind at their backs in the second period, didn't let their heads drop but Surrey struck with a long-range try

as lively full back McDonald and wing James Hanson combined for a score in the corner. Seers' superb touchline conversion bounced over via the crossbar. Ali Wade saw yellow for Surrey, but scrum half Bowen brought the 14 men up to the 30-point mark when he darted over from close-range, Seers converting again.

Staffordshire mounted a late fight-back as Joe Nixon and replacement Eddie Nicholls went over in the space of a minute, with Fielding adding a conversion, but it was too little, too late.

PERFECT RETIREMENT GIFT

PAUL BOLTON

Dave Reed, lead coach of England Counties Under 18s, praised his players after his side ended the International Triangular Festival at Hartpury College by following up their win over a France Regional Academies Under 18 with a thrilling 13-11 win over Irish Clubs Under 18s, with wing Myles Bean snatching victory with a last-gasp try. The victory marked a successful end to Reed's nine year involvement in coaching England Under 18 teams, the last five as lead coach.

"They are a top squad. It was done professionally, it was done well. That was the ultimate reward for me and the ultimate achievement for

them, they are a top squad," said Reed, who works as the RFU Rugby Development Officer for Northumberland.

"They built their own culture and their own values, they built everything themselves. The coaching team have come and just shined a little bit here and polished a bit there. But the players have made their own day and their destiny.

"This is about keeping people playing. These lads will have formed lifelong friendships and it is just about keeping them in the game."

FESTIVAL FUN AND BIG AWARD FOR BOGNOR

When Bognor Rugby Club received their Club Accreditation Award recently it was cause for celebration by both VIPs and some very enthusiastic young players.

Rugby's Core Values, Teamwork are at the heart of all aspects of Bognor Rugby Club and now this RFU award underlines their excellent standards in forming links with local schools, giving young players a safe and happy environment, developing players and coaches and managing the club well.

There to mark the occasion were local MP Nick Gibb, Bognor Town Mayor and Mayoress Tony and Sandra Gardiner, RFU Council member Allan Butcher, Sussex Rugby Vice-President Dewi Vaughan, Sussex Rugby Development Manager Steve Briscoe, and Sussex Rugby RDO Mal Chumbley.

All were impressed by the enjoyment and skills of more than 300 young players being hosted at a festival which included Chobham, Chichester, Shoreham and Bognor.



ENGLAND CALL UP FOR FANS



O2, proud partner of England Rugby, is bringing the first fully immersive 360-degree virtual reality sports experience to local rugby clubs across the country. Using the revolutionary Oculus Rift technology, the experience gives fans the chance to train with the England Rugby Team without ever setting foot on a blade of grass. The tour has already visited over 25 locations across the UK in 2015 and the WTR truck tour heads to Canterbury RFC, Sittingborne RFC, Chichester RFC, Chipping Sodbury RFC, Wharfedale RFC and Chinnor RFC this month (April).

Look out for the tour arriving near you. It is part of O2's on-going commitment to bring rugby fans closer to the action as it calls on the entire country to Wear the Rose and get behind the England Rugby Team in 2015 and follows an O2 competition offering rugby clubs the opportunity to win the unique experience designed to make people feel as though

they have just joined training following their first England call-up.

With the recent addition of Samsung Gear VR technology, it is now hitting the road to visit the winning clubs in a custom built, one-off, live, mobile truck. The truck also features an exact replica of the England Rugby changing room at Twickenham.

The virtual reality experience allows users to be fully immersed in a multi-sensory take-over and feel as though they are part of an England training session, participating in genuine drills directed by England Attacking Skills Coach Mike Catt. Surrounded by familiar faces from the England Elite Player squad, fans will have the chance to experience a team talk from Captain Chris Robshaw, get tackled by hooker Tom Youngs and receive a pass from full back Mike Brown.

For more information about Wear the Rose and the power of support visit o2.co.uk/weartherose

REAL RUGBY HEROES

The NatWest Real Rugby Heroes are representative of all those working behind the scenes in schools and colleges rugby and the ten at Twickenham on Schools Day received their awards in a special pitch-side presentation.

NatWest is committed to supporting rugby, from the grassroots up to the England team, and are proud to support the NatWest Real Rugby Heroes Awards, recognising the unsung heroes of the game.

The dedication of some very special people brings the kind of success we see on rugby pitches in schools and colleges up and down the country. They deserve recognition for all the work they do, from coaching the team to driving the minibus. Congratulations to the ten winners!

Andy Blaylock, Thomas Keble School, organises fixtures, training and coaching, working hard to ensure rugby is played by boys and girls in all years and is a firm part of the School's P.E. curriculum. He regularly gets over 30 girls training each week thanks to an enthusiasm passed on through his coaching.

Simon Hammond, Budehaven Community School, has over the past 15 years worked tirelessly to develop rugby both within the school and at the local club. Simon has inspired many young people to take part in rugby, having a positive effect not only on their sporting ability but in other areas of their lives.

John Humberstone, Durham Johnston, has built up the school's rugby, students in all years having the opportunity to play, referee and coach. With a strong leadership element, he produces confident, capable students who help at the local club and in the rugby community, ensuring Durham City RFC's youth section flourishes

Ted Heaton, Mullion School and Landewednack Primary School, is a volunteer coach delivering sessions at Helston RFC. He has helped students of all ages develop their skills and passion for rugby. His encouragement and enjoyable sessions mean that many students now play rugby at the club, so that the youth section thrives.

Luke Honeybourne, Bishop Bell CE School, introduced rugby to the school and has worked hard to ensure it remains a firm fixture



on the curriculum. By providing tailored support to pupils of all sporting abilities and backgrounds he ensures that each student has an enjoyable rugby experience, inspiring them to continue playing.

Dave Hill, The Parker E-ACT Academy, has over the past 12 years transformed a footballing school into a proud rugby playing one. Through his dedication to the provision of rugby Dave has influenced many young people to take part, having a positive effect on their sporting and life skills.

Seán Kenneally, The Piggott School, introduced rugby at the School five years ago and provides rugby for all ages and abilities. Sean ensures everyone enjoys and excels in the sport, often running sessions before school to meet demand and encouraged school teams to pack bags at local supermarkets to raise money for extra playing kits.

Wayne Charnock, Wallington County Grammar School, gives

up a tremendous amount of time mid-week and at weekends to coach the school Under 15 team. His commitment and organisation has led to an increase in numbers of students taking part. As a parent and volunteer he is an outstanding role model for the students.

Matt Leek, Bristol Brunel Academy / Cabot Learning Federation, regularly has 40+ students from across six Bristol schools attending 7am sessions. His support has created disciplined, committed individuals, many seeing rugby as key in their personal development, whether achieving their sporting or leadership potential.

Liam Shanahan, Rutlish School, is the driving force behind their rugby, ensuring that they deliver rugby to students from year 7 through to 11. His high quality sessions focus both on the game and the development of the individual. Liam helps all students to realise their potential, using rugby as the vehicle to achieve this.

BARRY HAS BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE

Want to join him on a Twickenham match day?

It's a short stroll to work for Barry Aherne, whose job is to make sure everything runs like clockwork when 82,000 fans and two international rugby teams hit Twickenham Stadium.

Long before a match kicks off Barry is busy planning and promoting the event, he's responsible for a multitude of things, from which military band accompanies the anthems and what entertainment precedes the match to parking outside broadcast trucks at 1am on the morning of the event.

On a match day he's there at 6am for a 3pm kick off, running through final checks of big screens, LEDs, liaising with the production team to make sure "the whole show is the best it can be."

When he sits in one of the best seats in the house, just in front of England Head Coach Stuart Lancaster and his management team, Barry is busy managing the show, the overall experience,

the PA, screens, the entire production.

Says Barry, "I'm passionate about rugby and being part of running matches at the Home of England Rugby is awesome."

"I first came to Twickenham as a fan 13 years ago with my dad. It was England v Australia and a really close game. In the last few minutes Ben Cohen scored a try under the posts. I had never heard anything like it, the crowd went crazy. It's such a privilege now to be part of encouraging that enjoyment and passion for the England team, especially as Stuart Lancaster says the crowd adds 10% to the team's performance."

When he's not at his desk or in the stadium, Barry can be found out pounding the Twickenham pavements. "I'm training for my second London marathon. I wouldn't say that I'm enjoying it but I'm determined to improve on my last time. I'm raising money for the RFU Injured Players Foundation."



Barry is offering a young person the chance to be a runner at Twickenham Stadium for England v France in August or England XV v Baabaas in May. If you know someone aged 16 or over who would be interested tell them to send a few lines saying why they want to take up this opportunity to extras@therfu.com by 15th May.

COALVILLE'S CUP RUNNETH OVER



What do you do if you find you are losing mini and junior players and the gaps are starting to show?

If you are Coalville RFC you roll your sleeves up and, as part of your development plan, you start forming links with your local schools.

Four years ago they held the first of what was to become an annual match between two high schools. Now, in its fourth season, for the first time games were played between all three year groups. Newbridge High School won the Year 7 and Year 8 encounters, while Castle Rock High School won the Year 9 match in the emh group sponsored Coalville Cup.

Coalville coaches John Bartlett and Shane Fox have been leading after school rugby sessions at Castle Rock for four years and have just started doing the same at Newbridge. "We had over 90 children enjoying themselves playing rugby today and this, in conjunction with a whole raft of initiatives, means that our playing numbers are once again looking healthy," said Mini/Junior Chair Shane Fox.

As well as being the first Kids First club in Leicestershire, the successful school-links form part of the Satellite Rugby programme that Coalville have also taken up as a pilot club. After the matches there was a presentation in the clubhouse and all of the players enjoyed a hearty meal.

"We really hope we've set up a long-running tradition. None of our local feeder schools were playing competitive rugby but now it's looking much healthier with most of them playing regular games against each other," added Club Secretary Paul MacMillan.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE WOMEN FROM BUCS ZERO TO HERO



SOPHIE FREESSTONE

A meteoric rise from being unable to field a starting XV to BUCS rugby champions in the space of just five years was certainly something for the University of Gloucestershire women's team to celebrate after their 28-12 Twickenham victory over defending champions Cardiff Metropolitan.

Vice-captain and player of the match Sarah Nicholas said, "All of our girls wanted this victory so much that the desire and belief was there. We had nothing to lose and dealt really well with the pressure. Our win will inspire a lot more women to come and play rugby."

Gloucestershire led for the entire match in their first ever appearance in the BUCS final, with full back Nicholas opening the scoring in the sixth minute with a try that she subsequently converted.

Just six minutes later Gloucestershire extended their lead to 14 points thanks to a superbly worked cross field kick to the right wing. Millie Wood touched down under the posts and Nicholas once again added the extras.

Defending champions Cardiff Metropolitan had to wait until the 19th minute for their first points, with number eight Ellen Moorey crashing over from short range after a great break up the right wing from Elli Norkett. Full back Amberley Ruck added the conversion to make the score 14-7.

Gloucestershire extended their lead eight minutes later with Wood scoring her second try of the game following an interception just outside the Cardiff Metropolitan 22. The conversion from Nicholas made the score 21-7.

Cardiff Metropolitan responded through scrum half Jessica Ann Roberts, as a drive from a lineout allowed her to break away and dive over the whitewash. The conversion was missed, with the score 21-12 to Gloucestershire at half time.

The second half saw Gloucestershire prop Abi Parsons sin binned but defence held firm under sustained pressure from Cardiff Metropolitan. The final try of the match came in the 65th minute from Gloucestershire lock Courtney Gill, with Nicholas once again adding the conversion to give the West Country side a 28-12 victory.

Cardiff Metropolitan captain Siobhan Longdon-Hughes was confident that her side could come back strongly next season. "The freshers and second years now know what it's like to lose that final, so they need to take that into next season and make sure it doesn't happen again," she said.



PIRATES IN THE PINK

When the Cornish Pirates played Plymouth Albion at home last month (March), the team were wearing pink shirts as part of their Ladies Day At The Mennaye celebrations.

Besides the attraction of a local derby match, supporters joined in the fun and excitement, wearing a hint of pink on a day when funds were raised for Cornwall's specialist breast care unit, The Mermaid Centre.

Ladies were offered complimentary, welcome glasses of rose, canapes and cupcakes and mini beauty treatments. Then there was the chance to bid for the players' shirts in a charity auction. The hosts prevailed 27-16 at a wet and windswept Mennaye so, despite the mud, really finished in the pink.

More on the Cornish Pirates at www.cornish-pirates.com



GAME OF TWO HALVES FOR VICTORIOUS LEEDS BECKETT

HANNAH HIRST

Leeds Beckett Carnegie overturned an 18-point half-time deficit to be crowned the BUCS men's rugby champions with a stunning 31-23 victory over Loughborough University.

The Yorkshire university were beaten in last year's final by Hartpury College and seemed to be heading for the same fate after being outplayed in the first period. But it proved the classic game of two halves, with Leeds dominating after the break to lift the silverware.

Man of the Match Alessandro Ricci said, "I've had the honour of playing at Twickenham twice before and lost so this was definitely third time lucky. At half time our coach basically told us we had to wake up and play like we wanted to win."

Leeds came out fighting from the kick-off and scored in the opening five minutes through No.8 Daniel Grange, who spotted the smallest of gaps to score under the posts. The conversion was charged down. But the rest of the half was all Loughborough as they ran wild with the help of scrum half and captain Tom James, who slotted three penalties.

There were also tries from prop Harry Elrington, who took two defenders over the line with him and winger Yiannis Loizias, who scored a wonder try on the stroke of half-time.

"I saw Sam, our full back, make a mad dash from our own 5m line" said Loizias. "The clock had ticked over and I thought he'd just kick it off but he ran so I ran with him. I realised that I could score and the feeling was unbelievable as I'd never played at Twickenham before so it was amazing."

It was to be Loughborough's final flourish though, as Leeds won the second half 26-0 with four impressive tries. The first came from an inspired cross-field kick from skipper Will Cargill to put



Ricci in at the corner. Then five minutes later it was the forwards' turn to push flanker Josh Longston over the line.

"That's when we knew we could do it. That was the turning point" said Ricci, "When we scored that second try we got the kick we needed to make a comeback."

The forwards had the next say as a forceful scrum saw the referee and TMO call for a penalty try with 10 minutes to play and one point in it. Leeds then finished as they started, with lock Sam Brady sealing the victory.

"They were the better team. I'm not quite sure what happened," added Loizias. "We couldn't keep up in the second half and you've got to hand it to Leeds because that was a mighty comeback."

POCOCK PROMOTES GIRLS' RUGBY IN SOUTHWARK

England Women's Fiona Pocock recently provided inspiration to youngsters across three satellite clubs in Southwark which are outposts of community sports clubs based on school or college sites, giving young people opportunities as they move from school to community sport.

They aim to reduce numbers of 14-25 year olds dropping out of sport and grow numbers taking part for at least 30 minutes a week. Development of satellite clubs is overseen by Sport England, working in partnership with National Governing Bodies and County Sport Partnerships by investing over £49 million of Lottery funding between 2012-17. Sport England will offer every secondary school in the country the opportunity to host a satellite club, with the aim of creating 4,000 new satellite clubs by 2017.

As a Sport England Sporting Champion Fiona visited three new satellite clubs at Harris Girls' Academy East Dulwich, Charter School and Kingsdale Foundation School; all delivered by Give it a try! in association with Old Alleenians Rugby Club.

Having just won her 25th England cap, scoring a try in their defeat of Scotland, Fiona said, "I have really enjoyed being involved in Sporting Champions, assisting the Give it a try! coaches and encouraging the girls to continue to play rugby outside the school environment."

"It was fantastic because the girls showed a lot of potential and it reminded me of the fun I had when I was learning rugby for the first time. The Q&A session gave the girls the opportunity to picture how rugby could become part of their everyday life. These satellite clubs are essential for the development of girls' rugby and I'm glad to be a part of developing the girls' sporting aspirations."

Spike Kenny, Founder of Give it a try! and lead coach said "The girls at all three schools were extremely excited about Fiona's visits, we had record numbers at each session and



more than 50 girls had a great experience. Fiona's input and coaching added incredible value to the girls' knowledge of the game and it was also great to see her score against Scotland. We hope that Fiona will keep in touch with us as we target development and growth in girls' rugby."

Jayne Molyneux, the Strategic Lead for Youth at Sport England, said: "It's great to see sport development partnerships working with schools to create a brand new satellite club where young girls can come and try out rugby. Our satellite clubs initiative is all about creating new and appealing opportunities to help young people make the step into community sport and set them on the path to creating a sporting habit for life."

The satellite clubs are open to the community and run at:

- Harris Girls East Dulwich every Monday 3:15 – 4:45pm
- Charter School every Wednesday 3:30 – 4:30pm
- Kingsdale Foundation School (on Mary Datchelor Fields) every Tuesday 3:30 – 4:30pm

To discover more contact spikekenny@alleynian.org or www.giveitarty.org.uk

NATWEST RUGBY FORCE SHARE THE EXCITEMENT AND CREATE THE MEMORIES

NatWest RugbyForce, now in its third year, has already helped hundreds of rugby clubs to become more welcoming and sustainable. In this, the biggest year for rugby in England, NatWest RugbyForce 2015 is ensuring that clubs across the country are the place to watch England take on the world.

To help clubs prepare to maximise this once in a generation opportunity, 350 selected clubs have attended one of the 36 NatWest RugbyForce workshop evenings run across the country. Four representatives from each club have attended workshops on: Being the Best Host (Customer Service), Developing Commercial Revenues, Volunteer Recruitment and Project Planning. These clubs all receive a grant of £500 towards their NatWest RugbyForce weekend, 27 – 28 June, 'Get Behind England' materials to dress their club and the opportunity to be in line for further enhanced awards. In addition, support resources are being made available for all clubs involved with NatWest RugbyForce including downloadable materials and access to partners' special offers.

Clubs can still register to take part in NatWest RugbyForce 2015 at www.englandrugby.com/NatwestRugbyForce



THE RFU AND O2 LAUNCH 'TRY FOR CHANGE' SUZI MURRAY

At the England v Scotland match at Twickenham the RFU launched 'Try for Change', a flagship social responsibility programme supported by founding partner O2, to raise awareness and grow rugby as a tool for social good, by bringing together and supporting leading rugby charities and organisations.

The six charities initially enrolled in Try for Change for 2015 will have access to support and mentoring, in order to help transform and deepen the positive impact they can achieve through rugby programmes. These charities are: All Schools (RFF), the Dallaglio Foundation, the RFU Injured Players Foundation, Restart, the School of Hard Knocks and Wooden Spoon. Try for Change will assist in broadening and deepening their existing rugby-focused programmes through opportunities such as introductions to sector leading experts and awarding a members' kite mark.

O2 has committed to raise £350,000 through its Recycle for Rugby campaign to support Try for Change. The campaign is part of O2 Recycle, a scheme offering both O2 and non O2 customers cash payments of up to £260 for unwanted gadgets. Up until September 2015, it will generate funds for Try for Change. And it's not just mobile phones which O2 recycles but also tablets, MP3 players, handheld consoles, digital cameras and SatNavs. With an estimated £3 billion worth of devices left unused around people's homes, there is still plenty of recycling to be done, to help raise money for Try for Change.

Try for Change is supported by Prince Harry, RFU Vice



Patron who commented; "I'm delighted to support the RFU's new initiative 'Try for Change' which brings together all the organisations involved in social change through rugby. Rugby has the ability to unite people together through shared values and respect, this has a hugely positive impact on the lives of individuals both on and off the pitch and the communities in which they live.

"By working together, I believe that Try for Change has

the potential to make a lasting impact on communities. This collaboration is a fantastic example to others and I would like to commend all these organisations for coming together in this way. I am very much looking forward to seeing what we can achieve."

Ian Ritchie, RFU CEO said; "The Try for Change programme is first of its kind for the RFU with the objective of creating a lasting social legacy through rugby. We know that rugby has the power to positively impact communities and improve lives; we only have to look at the impressive initiatives currently being implemented by rugby charities and clubs across England. Through partnership, Try for Change will help build capacity within the rugby charitable sector, broadening and deepening the difference rugby can make to society."

Ronan Dunne CEO for O2 in the UK, added: "With a heritage in supporting young people through our Think Big programme and as official sponsors of the England rugby team, Try for Change was an important cause for us to support. We are proud to be using funds raised through O2 Recycle to support this initiative. We always encourage customers and non-customers alike to get rid of their unwanted tech in a sustainable way and get cash back for doing so through our recycling scheme. Now there is more reason to do so than ever before."

Discover more on Try for Change and how you can get involved at www.englandrugby.com or www.o2recycle.co.uk

COMMUNITY AMATEUR SPORTS CLUB (CASC) NEW GUIDANCE

HMRC have released new guidance for CASCs. The guidance has been updated to reflect changes brought about by the new Community Amateur Sports Club regulations which were agreed by Government in March 2015. Details on the new guidance can be found at [here](#).

All CASC registered clubs will need to review their circumstances to ensure they continue to qualify. Existing CASCs can leave the scheme during the 'year of grace' if they wish and they will not suffer a Capital Gains Tax exit charge if their only reason for leaving is not being able to comply with the changes to the scheme and they were fully compliant before the 1st April 2015. Clubs will have 12 months from April 2015 to assess their position and take appropriate action. HMRC will be writing individually to every CASC club later this year explaining the situation and options available.

The CASC scheme will continue to be important for many rugby clubs because of tax benefits such as 80% mandatory rate relief, gift aid and corporation tax exemptions. There are also improved benefits for CASC registered clubs including an increase in the corporation tax exempt thresholds from 1st April 2015, the introduction of corporate gift aid for CASC's and a relaxation of payments and expenses which can be provided to players. However the qualifying conditions for CASC registered clubs will be more prescriptive.

The RFU are currently working with advisors to ensure that we continue to provide rugby specific information and guidance to assist clubs who are reviewing the new CASC guidance. This guidance will be made available to the game shortly. From 13th May the RFU is running a series of workshops/road shows across the country which will be an opportunity to understand the implications of the new CASC guidance and start to provide and share the RFU guidance that is being developed.

For further details or to book on to a workshop please contact Dave Stubblely davestubblely@rfu.com 07736 722387 or Alex Thompson alexthompson@rfu.com 07894 489756.

MEET RUCKLEY & SHAUN THE SHEEP AT TWICKENHAM IN MAY HALF TERM



With the world coming to Twickenham Stadium in 2015, Ruckley has invited Shaun The Sheep, the latest recruit to the Rugby World Cup 2015 team, to join him and lucky young fans behind the scenes before testing their rugby skills in the World Rugby Museum.

Ruckley and Shaun The Sheep will greet the kids on this tour which will take in a trip to the very top of the stands, sitting in the Royal Box, photos with Ruckley and Shaun in the England dressing room and running out of the players

tunnel to pitch-side, before heading off to the World Rugby Museum to learn all about the game and get to grips with the interactive Play Rugby Zone.

This special half term tour will also see all children given a special Ruckley tour pass and autograph book.

Tour and Museum visit lasts approximately 90 minutes and will run on May 26th and 27th. To book, visit englandrugby.com/museum. Places are limited, if demand requires more slots will be opened up.



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THE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING WHO GENEROUSLY SUPPORT THE GAME

