

In Touch



The Official Newsletter of COVENTRY RUGBY SUPPORTERS' CLUB Issue 2 June 2017

Honorary Members: Harry Walker & Ted Wainwright



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A warm welcome to this second issue of *In Touch*, the Official Newsletter of Coventry Rugby Supporters' Club.

What a season it has been! On the playing front we have all seen the significant improvements in our performances which culminated in a winning run of 8 games, a significantly more focussed and dynamic management infrastructure - which includes an absolutely logical and well deserved three year contract for Rowland Winter and the appointment as CEO of Philip Crossman.- and the emergence of the newly re-launched Supporters' Club. Next season promises to capitalise on the giant steps which have been taken this season.

We have every right to consider it a successful first year, having swollen the membership numbers to 179. A great many supporters have already renewed membership for next season and we are delighted that new members are also signing to join.

We held a number of very successful and very much appreciated events during the season, and we have plans for more during the summer and for next season. Notifications of future events will be send out by email, and will also be posted on our website – www.crsc1874.com

We provided a supporters' coach to all but two away games and witnessed a growth over the season in the number of supporters booking seats. The final game against Loughborough Students was oversubscribed to the extent that, firstly we had to order a larger coach, then we had to put a number of supporters onto a waiting list, then we had to decline supporters who wanted to book seats on the coach and we had to advise them to make their own plans and, finally, we know that a number of supporters made their own journey plans in the knowledge that they stood no chance of having a seat on the coach! In all, there were probably 20-30 supporters in total who weren't able to have a seat on the coach. Won't it be nice next season to need to order two coaches for away games?!

We were also instrumental in the re-opening of the club shop.

On behalf of the committee may I wish you a very good summer. We will see some supporters at the events which we have planned during the close season, and we look forward to the 2017/18 season with a sense of anticipation.

Cliff Bennett (Chairman)

HARRY'S BIG DAY

The sun shone, Cov won and 'H', as Harry Walker is still affectionately known, was in his element surrounded by well-wishers post-match. A fitting and happy end to the Harry Walker Tribute Game at the BPA.

The Cov/Rosslyn Park match was designated Harry Walker Tribute Game by the resurgent Coventry Rugby Supporters Club as a fitting tribute to the 102-years-old, England's oldest living international.



Current Cov President Peter Rossborough led the tributes, wishing Harry well, running through his playing career for Coventry, Warwickshire and England, his time spent at the helm of Warwickshire and his love of the game. Rossborough added, "Harry is one of the greatest players Coventry have ever produced and may he live even longer." Coming from another Cov legend, high praise indeed.



Never at a loss for a word or two, Harry commented, "Keep supporting the club, the club is in good hands with the people running the club now. COME ON COV".

Following the National One thriller, the current playing squad, former players including Steve Thomas, Kevin Hickey, Paul Bryan, Bob Massey and Stuart 'Louie' Hall and past presidents Eric Blackburn and 'Bomber' Evans all gathered on the pitch for a presentation.



Presenting an award from the CRSC, President Rossborough raised a smile when he announced that Harry had been awarded an Honorary Life Membership of the CRSC, the gesture summing up the affection 'H' will always be held in. The number of Coventry supporters who stayed to wish Harry well was a fine testament to the esteem and warmth he is held in, this Coventry legend.

CRSC WEBSITE

Following a great deal of work on our part and funding from CPHS, one of our partners, we are delighted to announce that our website is now up and running.

We will keep it up to date to provide as much information as we can. Notices as to forthcoming events, coach trips to away games, etc, will be posted in the "Posts" tab.

Please visit our website on -

www.crsc1874.com

and add it to your "favourites".

CHANGE OF BANK DETAILS

We have changed our bank account from Barclays to Lloyds. The details, for BACS payments, are as follows -

Sort code 30 99 15

Account number 27006060

Please delete the previous details for the Barclays account from your records.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

We are taking membership renewals for next year. Your membership number will remain the same, but the new card will have a different colour strip on it to enable us to distinguish it from this year's card. You be given your new card for next year when you give us this year's card, so that we'll be able to keep a check on who has been given their new card.



MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

Please remember to always quote your membership number when contacting us, most particularly via our email address -

crsc1874@gmail.com

as it's important to us.

ARTICLES FOR IN TOUCH

If you wish to submit an article for publishing in In Touch, or you would like to see something included, please contact us via our email address –

crsc1874@gmail.com

Notes from The Coach...

I am writing to you all from the beach on my family holiday, Cliff Bennett is such a slave driver he didn't even give me a week's break!

Despite Cliff's harassment, I am grateful for the opportunity to write to you all and I am also very appreciative of the what the Supporters' Club has achieved over the last 12 months. Similar to the developments on the playing front, I am sure now that the foundations have been added we will see the Supporters Club grow and enhance the overall package for a Coventry Supporter, which can only be a good thing!

I thought I would take this opportunity to give you all a bit more insight into what the new recruits will offer our team when we begin pre-season next Saturday (10th June).

Recruitment is a constant process throughout the season, and it is so important that new additions have the right personality, characteristics and skill set to join our team and complement our current players. It's tricky to get 100% right but becomes easier each year as the team evolves and the gaps in the squad get smaller.

Below I have listed some of the new players in positional order...



Harry Morley

With Boris retiring from playing, we needed to bring another loosehead prop in, somebody who could compete with Andy Brown, and who has more game experience than Jake Byrne. I have worked with Harry before when he was at Moulton College as part of Saints U18s. Since then he has picked up around 50 appearances for Nottingham but has had limited minutes on the pitch. If he works hard over the summer he will get the game time he is looking for and will be a young talent for Deacs & Boris to work with.

Phil Nilsen

Phil is a no nonsense hooker who will graft hard for the team. His accuracy and detail at the set piece has made him one of the standout hookers in the Championship this season. It is a position we've lacked cover in, and because of that, Matt Price and Scott Tolmie haven't always had the competition for a squad spot that I have wanted. They will both need to now work very hard to keep Phil out of the matchday squad.

George Oram

We've missed Brendon Snyman's weight in the scrum since his departure, and we've been lucky that Tom Poole has been so durable & consistent. It's important that we have balance in the engine room and part of that means we always need enough weight to help the scrum perform. George is very mobile & athletic, but he is also a big guy and that will create competition for Tom Poole or allow us to play them both and increase the size & physicality of our pack. Watch out for his great lines of running in midfield.

Nile Dacres

Nile is superb in the lineout, he pretty much single handedly destroyed us when we went away to Plymouth. He replaces Rob Conquest's lineout skills, but offers far more around the park - similar to Darrell Dyer - so will be comfortable either in the second row or in the back row.

Latu Makaafi

Latu has been one of the most consistent back rows in the Championship for years now. He is a Tongan International workhorse with a great skill set, and we'll be looking to get him on the ball a lot. He'll offer a ball carrying option similar to Ali Bone, but has a more rounded game in both attack and defence - and I am sure he'll be a crowd favourite.

Cont...

Jack Preece

Jack's ability to get over the tackled player and win the ball back is second to none in this league. He is a proven performer at Championship level, and his England 7s background gives him a great skill set to link in open play which will suit our game. He replaces Eoghan Grace in the squad and I hope he will bring similar levels of leadership to the team.

Luke Narraway

I have been looking for a clever footballer at Number 8 who can control our dominant pack and provide leadership in a key position. Luke gives us that, plus he will bring lots of detail to our defence in a both a playing and coaching role. His playing career gives him plenty of experience which we have lacked at times this season - so his influence will be vital as we look to improve.

David Brazier

To have two of the best 9s in the league is great for squad depth and the battle for the starting shirt will be fascinating to watch. It's also important that both 9s know this unique league and the oppositions we will face, as they are central to our game plan. David has a great all round skill set and has been very impressive this season for Moseley, his pass is sharp & consistent and I know that Nick Walshe is looking forward to working with him.

Alex Grove

To have a centre with Alex's experience of International and Premiership rugby, still aged under 30 and to have a season's experience of playing National One is great for the club. He offers a similar style of game to Corey Hircock, but has more creativity in attack, and has previously played alongside Tom Wheatcroft, Heath Stevens and Sam Tuitupou at various times during his many years at Worcester.

Sam Tuitupou

Sam went to the same school as Boris, and when we found out that he was looking for a less full time option we didn't hesitate to make him an offer. We didn't have enough depth of quality options in midfield last season so to add Sam to an already enhanced midfield is going to create some very positive selection headaches. His experience & leadership skills at the very top levels of the game will help us progress, and I am sure he will be another crowd favourite.

James Neal

James will compete for a 1st XV spot with Max Trimble and with a couple of really exciting wings that we have also added to our Gold group within the Development Academy. They all possess speed and great footwork, but what sets James apart from the others is he is a Coventry kid. It's important that over the next few years we work hard to get more Coventry home grown players into the 1st XV.

On a personal note, I am delighted to have signed a new contract which will keep me at Coventry at least until 2020. This is very much a long term project, with promotion to the Championship part of a set of challenges we face. We have to evolve and enhance every aspect of the club quickly, we must continue to professionally develop. Jon Sharp's overall vision for the club is exciting and the addition of Philip Crossman to the club is very much welcome, and could be the best recruit of the lot.

A final thanks to Steven Hood who has loaned me a book by Michael Blucher called Bubble Boys, now I've got Cliff off my back, I am looking forward to reading it! Back to the beach.

See you soon.

Rowland

END OF SEASON AWARDS DINNER



This was a very pleasant evening', '...it made a nice change, not so formal' were just two of the comments received at the BPA on Friday 5th May. The very well supported evening, sponsors, players and their families and supporters enjoyed the season's finale. Club President Peter Rossborough, in full MC mode, introduced Club Chairman Jon Sharp, Jon giving his views on the season and his hopes for the new season.

Highlight for many was the talk by Coventry born polar explorer extraordinaire, Mark Wood. Mark's slideshow and tales gripped the guests and was an excellent idea and part of the evening.

The awards included the Try of the Season, Darrel Dyer's effort in the Macclesfield home game (good luck Darrel), Joint Top Try Scorers Tom Howe and Max Trimble, two awards for 100 game recipients, Cliff Hodgson and Tom Poole, both very warmly received and an award for Clubman of the Season award, Brian King the richly deserved recipient for this coveted prize.



The main interest for CRSC members were the awards for Supporters' Player of the Season, The Jack Blenkinsopp Trophy, voted for by over 400 Cov supporters', this was won by Will Maisey. Will then 'made it a double' by landing the Players' Player of the season award, this a resounding approval from his playing peers.

On receiving his supporter's award, Will said, "This is very much appreciated, it's always great to see and hear our supporters. We can go anywhere and all we can hear when we are playing are Cov supporters, very often all we can see are Cov fans. It's great."

The first winner of the CRSC Travellers' Player of the Season was Pete White, based on man-of-the-match polls on away trips.



A clearly chuffed Pete White said, "Thanks for this. I didn't really get started until November after my injury, and I have really enjoyed it. We have had a great run recently, and it has been good for me, including playing for England Counties. Thank you."

A good night was had by all, thanks to all who attended and see you in the summer.

AWAY DAYS...

Travel to the first away game of 2017, back in January, proved to be somewhat more eventful than either planned, expected or, anticipated.

The Supporters' Club coach departed from the car park, BPA at 11.30am, and was scheduled to arrive at its destination no later than 1.30pm, enabling those travelling time to get something to eat & drink prior to match kick-off at 3.00pm.

After waving goodbye to the players coach the Supporters' Club coach duly set off some 20 minutes later, heading M6 Northbound to the tropical paradise listed as 'Macclesfield' on the fixture list. The assembled travellers were in good spirits and sat back to enjoy the picturesque scenery offered as the coach passed Corley, Chelmsley Wood, Fort Dunlop and the stunning views offered from Gravelly Hill and the Industrial Park, more commonly known as Birmingham. It was whilst enjoying the 'view' a phone call was received from the Team Coach stating a technical issue had forced their coach to pull into Hilton Park Services, could the Supporters' Club please help. After a brief discussion, it was agreed by all those on board that we too would pull in at Hilton Park & donate our coach to the team, whilst waiting for a replacement coach, which was already en-route from Nuneaton to enable us to complete our journey. In the meantime we were able to enjoy an impromptu Costa Coffee, soft lighting, ambiance and unique atmosphere of M6 Services (Birmingham) in January.

The enforced pit stop lasted circa 50 minutes, after which we continued onward to Macclesfield arriving 30 minutes prior to kick-off and were treated to a rare away 37-14 Coventry win. After the match spirits remained high and in the bar the



team management thanked the Supporters for all they had done that day to support the team, "Above & beyond, our supporters' are without doubt the best in the league, today proved it" Tony Gulliver.

Following an uneventful return to Coventry, Rowland Winter made the following offer to those who had travelled on the Supporters' Coach that day...

In recognition of your kindness & willingness to donate the Supporters' coach to the team and subsequently wait for a replacement coach, and by way of saying a sincere thank you, and to show the appreciation from the players and staff, for what you did for the team on the day, we would like to offer you the following opportunity at a team training session:

- **Listen in to pre-training talks between the coaching staff & players**
- **Watch the players train & how the coaching staff interact**
- **Chat with Rowland Winter during training**
- **Listen to the after training talks between the coaching staff & players, including discussions about strategies, etc, and to have an open Q&A session between yourselves, players and coaching staff**

The invitation was accepted and the event subsequently held on Tuesday April 4th at BPA, starting at 6.30pm, being well attended and very much appreciated by those present. Indeed, the event was so informative & interesting that consideration is being given to running similar events throughout next season, but open for all supporters to attend. Details will be announced in due course.

ILLUMINATIONS & RUMINATIONS

Here are a few questions which are typical of the quiz which is available on the Supporters' Coach to away games.

Test your knowledge and skills to see how knowledgeable you are. Answers are provided later in this newsletter

- A In which London Park is there a statue of Peter Pan?
- B Complete the lyric, 'I love to love.....'
- C What name is given to a young beaver?



CAPTION COMPETITION

For all the wits amongst our members, here's a chance to enter our caption competition and tickle our funny bone.



Just send your caption for photo A or B or both to -

[**crsc1874@gmail.com**](mailto:crsc1874@gmail.com)

Prize winners will be announced on the CRSC website.

PARTNERS

We have been very fortunate in agreeing partnerships with local organisations who have agreed to work with us to the benefit of members.



Coventry Plumbing and Heating Supplies (CPHS)

www.covplumbing.co.uk

Coventry's largest independent plumbers merchants have been trading for over 30 years and have showrooms in Swan Lane and Curriers Close, Coventry, and in Weddington Road, Nuneaton.

CPHS have made a significant financial contribution towards the costs of setting up our website, for which we are extremely grateful.

Since the first issue of In Touch we have successfully negotiated a partnership agreement with Akbars Indian Cuisine. Full details are on our website.

<http://www.akbarscuisine.com>

Akbars Indian Cuisine, 7-9 Butts, Coventry CV1 3GJ 02476 222213 / 228899

An organisation which has been in business for over 30 years, this is a high quality restaurant serving contemporary Indian Cuisine at its best, as well as Indian tapas. It has modern décor, a bar, a lounge and a terrace.

Upon production of their membership card, Supporters' Club members will benefit from a discount of 15% off their food bill.

Please note: a party of 4 or less receives a 15% discount on their food bill. For parties of more than 4 people the 15% discount is applied to 4 of the party, the additional attendees receive a 7.5% discount on their food bill.

Members are asked to show their CRSC membership card to staff both when they order from the menu AND when they ask for the bill, in order to assist staff in their preparation of the bill.



Builders Supply Stores

<http://www.bsscov.co.uk/>

Archways House, Spon End, Coventry CV1 3HG. 02476 712000/412733

Established in 1931 BSS is an independent builders and plumbers merchant.

BSS have agreed to pay 1 1/2 % of the total value of sales purchased by CRSC members into the CRSC bank account each quarter.

They will set up a monitoring system at their sales points and will give the customer, who must show his CRSC membership card, a receipt accordingly.



CARDS

We have produced Supporters' Club cards and have sent:

- A get well card to Eoghan Grace and to Andy Brown following the injury to each
- A Get Well card to Dr Beryl Smith, member number 14 and a very long time supporter, who at the grand age of 92 has been in hospital following a fall and has subsequently been given a new hip
- A Birthday card to Ted Wainwright (Honorary Member) for his 85th birthday
- A Wedding card will be given to Cliffie Hodgson who is to marry Sarah in the summer, at the Awards Evening.



It is our intention to give Get Well cards to players who suffer an injury, including those from the opposition. Unfortunately the injury to Chris May of Old Albanian was too early in the season and before we had this plan in place. We also plan to give cards, using our discretion, for special occasions.

SPONSORS

We are looking to expand the number of organizations with whom we can achieve a Partnership Agreement for the benefit of Supporters' Club members. If you know of any organization with whom we can work in order to obtain an agreement, please let us know via our email address –

www.crsc1874.com

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Proposed events Summer 2017

MEET THE PLAYERS

Open Training Session & BBQ

Saturday July 22nd 2017

This will be an opportunity for supporters to see the players in a light training session, be introduced to the squad and coaches; grab a beer & burger in the summer sun!

REF'S EVENING WITH RHYS DAVIES

Late August/ Early September 2017 (TBC)

After our first 2 very successful Ref's evenings, Rhys will be giving an overview of new laws that have been implemented in the summer, & looking at current ones with players and coaches.

AN EVENING WITH THE 2 JOHNS

Late August / Early September 2017 (TBC)

We are particularly excited about offering supporters the opportunity to spend the evening in the company of John Wilkinson and John Butler, as they reminisce their experiences with Cov RFC over the years.

All events will be open to members and non-members of the Supporters' Club. However priority is given to Supporters Club members, and where a charge is made, non-members will pay more. We will be confirming these events by email, on Cov RFC's Facebook and web pages, on the unofficial forum and on our own web page www.crsc1874.com over the summer.

Here are answers to the quiz questions asked earlier in this newsletter:

- A Kensington Gardens
- B 'But my baby just loves to dance....' Tina Charles
- C Kitten