

# In Touch



The Official Newsletter of **COVENTRY RUGBY SUPPORTERS' CLUB** Issue 11 March 2020

Honorary Members: Harry Walker (1915-2018) & Ted Wainwright



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## Coventry Rugby Supporters' Club

Proud sponsors of **Coventry Rugby Under 18s**

[www.crsc1874.com](http://www.crsc1874.com) • [email: crsc1874@gmail.com](mailto:crsc1874@gmail.com)

### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Cov's second Championship season since our return continues apace.

The loss of our unbeaten BPA record in the last home match against a strong Ealing Trailfinders side was very disappointing, but not entirely surprising given our visitors own unbeaten record since the start of 2020.

But we move on. Following our good win over Doncaster Knights, just the small matter of runaway league leader's Newcastle Falcons coming to the BPA awaited. A massive day and game with lots of entertainment was planned. Sadly however the worrying situation regarding the spread of coronavirus has led to the

cancellation of this eagerly awaited fixture and the uncertainty regarding the rest of the season.

The club's statement, issued on 17 March, follows.

A lot has been said, spoken and pontificated recently regarding the projected RFU Greene King Championship funding cuts. These thoughts have been expressed by those far more qualified than me. Suffice to say, all I will say is, if the RFU think that the Championship will roll over and have their collective tummies tickled, the RFU have seriously misread the situation. Judging by the collective protest howl, I think their PR advisors will be lucky to stay in that role.

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On the Supporters Club front we continue, we hope, provide a valuable service for you.

Away trips to Ampthill, Hartpury, Bedford and of course, our Championship Cup Weekender to Cornish Pirates. No victories in that lot, disappointments shared by all of course.

Your Committee continues to work on your behalf, booking and arranging these trips, liaising with the Club on any issues and having regular supporter meetings with the club. Any issues that you wish raising at these meetings please email us at [crsc1874@gmail.com](mailto:crsc1874@gmail.com).

CRSC are also tremendously pleased at the progress of our Under 18s - reported on later - and hope you will all be able to attend the remaining Coventry Under 18s matches this season, mostly now at the BPA, with the reminder that admission to ALL home Coventry Under 18s is free for all attending.

Think I have kept you long enough, enjoy

this issue and feel free to comment on any of the articles. Thanks to all contributors and Geoff Kennedy for pulling it all together.

### **Update...**

Due to the Coronavirus, Covid-19, situation things have obviously moved apace. The Rugby Club, owing to the RFU's suspension of all rugby activities, is obviously shut down until further notice. On behalf of all of your CRSC Committee I would like to wish everyone good health and wishes at these very challenging times. CRSC will still be around and hope to keep you involved and updated through various different social media outlets, our CRSC twitter account, [@RugbyCoventry](https://twitter.com/RugbyCoventry), [crsc1874.com](http://crsc1874.com) or updates on the Unofficial Coventry Rugby Message board.

*Paul Ingleston*

Chair

Coventry Rugby Supporters' Club

***Thanks to John Coles, Nick Meredith for photos and to Chris Wearmouth, Hal Sparks, Tim Smith and Eric Richardson for contributions. To Rob Knox, Dan Lewis and all players involved in community activities – keep up the great work – you make a huge difference to so many young lives. G.K.***

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Any suggestions as to how we can improve the Supporters' Club are always welcome, and should be made via our email address - [crsc1874@gmail.com](mailto:crsc1874@gmail.com) or via a committee member. Similarly, any suggestions as to how the match day experience can be enhanced by Coventry Rugby will be welcomed. We will add those suggestions to the agenda at our regular meetings at BPA.



# COVENTRY OPERATIONS STATEMENT



Coventry Rugby has today (Tuesday, March 17th) made the following statement regarding the club's operations during the ongoing and continually evolving situation regarding Covid-19 (coronavirus).

The welfare of all the club's staff, players, supporters and visitors is at the forefront of our thoughts, and we wish everyone associated with Coventry Rugby the very best of health during this time.

As such we are following the latest guidance from the UK government, Public Health England, the RFU, RFL and FA, including:

- Some of the Coventry Rugby management will be working from home for the foreseeable future, with key operational staff on site at Butts Park Arena. General queries can be emailed to the club via [coventryrugby.co.uk/contact-us](mailto:coventryrugby.co.uk/contact-us) or you can email the relevant member of the administration team via [www.coventryrugby.co.uk/meet-the-team](mailto:www.coventryrugby.co.uk/meet-the-team)
- The pitch is now closed for bookings, with grassroots rugby union, rugby league and football all now on hiatus under the instructions of their relevant governing bodies
- We are not accepting new conference and events bookings as per the latest guidance regarding social distancing. The Conference and Events team will be in contact with the organisers of events booked within this time period
- Match tickets remain on sale via the club's website. Tickets and hospitality already purchased for the games covered by the RFU's cessation period will be valid for new dates. Further information will be announced when it is possible. Coventry United and Coventry Bears supporters need to contact the respective clubs
- No decisions have been made regarding the completion of the 2019/20 Greene King IPA Championship campaign. Announcements will be made when possible by the RFU and tournament organisers
- Community work at Coventry Rugby venues has been cancelled, including Wheelchair Rugby and the Easter coaching camp. This also applies to junior clubs and Coach Development sessions
- Schools programmes are continuing as per schedule while schools are open; email [community@coventryrugby.co.uk](mailto:community@coventryrugby.co.uk) for more information

The Butts Park Arena site will have full security coverage during the entirety of the shut-down period. On-site security staff will not answer general queries, which should be made to the club via the details above.

We hope to resume full operations on April 14th and will keep you updated on a regular basis.

We thank all of our supporters, partners, clients and visitors for their continued understanding and patience during this uncertain time.



# HANDSOME TIME HAD

CRSC ran a trip the Championship Cup Quarter Final on 22nd and 23rd February, with a 9.00am BPA departure, with, eventually 26 supporters on board.

We had an excellent time, travellers had booked and paid for their own accommodations, travel courtesy of CRSC.

On the outward journey we had our usual raffle, 'Hood the Raffle' in charge and were lucky enough to have some Cup admission tickets (thanks to Coventry Rugby), with these winners being John Barrett, Steve Brown, David Horley, Mark Oddy and Mark Shergold. Other prizes won were a book for Colin Marshall and bottle of wine for Tim Smith.

Even in winter, Penzance is a good place to visit, hostelrys, bars in easy walking distance from most hotels. Saturday, weather wise, was a bit rainy and breezy.

Sunday started wet but then a strange object called the Sun put in an appearance for game time against Pirates. The hosts ran out as fairly convincing winners, Cov playing their part in an entertaining match.

Our party left immediately following the England v Ireland 6 Nations game and, despite a serious accident delay on the M5, arrived home safely at the BPA late.

*Paul Inglestone*

**Coventry Rugby Supporters Club are considering arranging something similar for the May Greene King Championship game - also a Sunday fixture - please register your interest asap by emailing [crsc1874@gmail.com](mailto:crsc1874@gmail.com). Many thanks.**



## DAN LEWIS COLUMN - Reading the Play



Pic: Charter Savings Bank, article courtesy of Chris Wearmouth

When you're on the pitch, defending a narrow lead with only seconds remaining on the clock – reading the play and what is in front of you becomes vitally important. Reading what the opposition team might do, where their fly half might be kicking the ball and what the next few phases of play might produce. Reading is crucial on the pitch, but that is nothing to its level of importance off it.

Thanks to my personal sponsor at the club, Charter Savings Bank, I can go into the local surrounding primary schools and lead a unique coaching scheme called 'Rugby and Reading'. As the name suggests, this is far more than a few passing drills before a game of tag at the end. This scheme encourages young 5 to 11-year olds to read more, whilst keeping them active with a rugby ball in hand.

When I think back to my days in school, which thankfully weren't a million months ago although they might feel it; the idea of a pro rugby player, football player or even tennis player coming in to help out in a PE lesson of mine wouldn't have seemed obscene. Rare? Most certainly, but possible. However, would we finish our session and then also show off our intellectual prowess with a reading book in the classroom – no way.

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# DAN LEWIS COLUMN - Reading the Play

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Not to blow our own trumpets; but it seems that there is something unique for a young kid, something special even about getting to read to members of their local sporting team instead of their Teacher. Admittedly, we may not have the same level of young educational understanding as their teachers, but sometimes a change of audience can do the trick for some children.

At times it's important for these youngsters to know that not just the members of staff in their school think that picking up a book is important. If a professional sportsman that they might be watching play on the weekend is telling them of the books they like and authors they've read – then surely reading must be a good thing?

I am extremely lucky to have the education that I've had; however, I believe at the age of around 16 I sub-consciously chose to put rugby firmly in the front seat of my life and whilst I kept my education strapped in a seatbelt... it was definitely somewhere in the back. Writing this now, it is this lack of 'follow through' regarding my education that dominates my source of adult regret.

I feel well and truly blessed to not allow these youngsters to make the same mistake as I did. No one wants to be playing catch up in anything – but especially education. So, I plan to keep working alongside the other community coaches at Coventry Rugby Club to spread the ever so important message that sport and education are not mutually exclusive, but in fact go hand in hand.

**There is no reading without rugby, and no rugby without reading.**

To find out more about Rugby and Reading email [community@coventryrugby.co.uk](mailto:community@coventryrugby.co.uk)

## 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 make contact via a committee member or our email address – [crsc1874@gmail.com](mailto:crsc1874@gmail.com)

## PHOTOGRAPHS

With so many supporters travelling to away games and for those attending the home games we invite members to send any photographs they take on their phones either before, during, or after the game that we can post onto the CRSC website. Please send your photos to [crsc1874@gmail.com](mailto:crsc1874@gmail.com)



# ROB KNOX - Local Lad Made Good



Photo courtesy of John Coles and article courtesy of Tim Smith

Rob was one of only 6 or 7 players to be retained when Rowland Winter took over the reins at Cov (he's the only player still at Cov who pre-dates RW's arrival}. At the time, there was plenty of discussion amongst supporters when RW took the decision to play him on the wing during that first pre-season.

Comments from the coaches suggested that they felt his distribution and decision making occasionally let him down – out wide this obviously wouldn't be such a problem. It took a while to convince many fans, but these days there is little talk of Rob moving back to 12.

One-on-one and the smart money is always going to be on him to score. Even from far out, Rob has the pace and balance to beat defenders and many of his tries have come from way out.

Rob has spent several seasons working with children for whom physical disability or health-related issues make it particularly difficult to enjoy any form of physical exercise. In his role as a coach at Sherbourne Fields, Rob is able to develop the wider key skills of teamwork and leadership to enable these children to enjoy aspects of physical exercise that otherwise might not be open to them.

***'Rob's...ability to coordinate activities that are accessible and enjoyable to all using these values at the core of their coaching has really enhanced and improved our pupil's communication skills, self-esteem and confidence. To have such positive role models in our school who can meet the needs of the hardest to reach children has a lasting positive influence. (S Duffy-Moriarty – Headteacher, Sherbourne Fields)'***

Great testament indeed and Rob continues to be a great role model for all local young players. Much loved by all Coventry supporters whenever he wears the shirt and much respected and feared by those who oppose him.

# COVENTRY UNDER 18s

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**Game 1** at the DeMontfort University Sports Ground, Bennion Road, Leicester on 26th Jan, where Coventry Under 18's overcame their Brooksby Melton College opponents by 26-19.



**Game 2** The Coventry Under-18s had a winning home fixture on 23rd Feb, beating the Independent School Lambs 17-5 at Butts Park.

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# COVENTRY UNDER 18s

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After the game some of the Under-18s also got to meet club, England and Lions legend David Duckham MBE, who was at Butts Park to preview the day's Six Nations game from Twickenham.

**Game 3** Mar 6th. Coventry Under 18s 17 Brooksby Melton College (BMC) 19. An under-strength home side fell to a narrow loss against a committed BMC at Butts Park Arena. Without players selected for England Counties under 18s and suffering an early injury to a key player – Coventry nonetheless fought hard and only lost by a two points margin. Great to see many young local lads given a chance to play for their local club.



Following the Midlands v North under 18s game, we are delighted to report that there are representative honours for some of Coventry Under 18s players.

Congratulations to the Coventry Under 18s players who have been selected for England Counties Under 18s squad for the two game series versus Ireland Clubs and Schools in April. The matches are taking place at Bedford's Goldington Road ground on 14th and 18th of April.

Take a bow **Sam Bayliss, James Crabtree, Sam Everett, Louis James, Ed Righton and Chris Romano.**

Well done to the successful six, but also congratulations to all the Coventry Under 18s players who took part in the two Aspirational Trial games at Stourbridge RFC and Warwick School and reaching this level.

To those who were not selected this time, keep reaching and striving.

Coventry Rugby Supporters Club are proud to sponsor Coventry Rugby Under 18s.

# FORMER PLAYERS' LUNCH – 01 Feb 2020



Photos courtesy of John Coles

A wonderful gathering of past players attended the annual get together of former Coventry players ranging from the greats of the 1960s right up to some very recent stars. **The photo above features just some of the players from yesteryear. The remainder were too busy inside the club recalling tales and beer drinking.**

It was particularly lovely to see some faces not seen too often since their playing days - the Coventry family feeling was wonderful. The recollections were plentiful, the banter, the memories and the craic - mighty. Seeing players from the past decade mixing with those from the 60s, 70s, 80, 90s and the first decade of this century was wonderful.

Simon Maisey and Matt Gallagher are keen to include a greater number of other players who were unable to attend. As Simon said 'Every player who wore the Coventry shirt is part of the club's history. Maybe a few feel they that having lost contact with the club – they feel apprehensive about meeting up with former pals - nothing could be further from the truth - we would love to see them joining us at our next reunion'.





# COVENTRY WHEELCHAIR RUGBY



West Way Nissan has signed on to be the new Mobility Partner for Coventry Wheelchair Rugby.

As well as providing a van for the team to transport its chairs to fixtures and tournaments, West Way Nissan will also supply vehicles for the Coventry Rugby Foundation to expand its work across the city of Coventry and broader area. Coventry Wheelchair Rugby has rapidly grown from its launch just over a year ago and won its first GB Wheelchair Rugby 5s tournament at the end of August 2019.

Wheelchair Rugby is one of the flagship projects of the Coventry Rugby Foundation, and Foundation Manager Hal Sparke says that Westway Nissan's support will help the team go from strength-to-strength in 2020. "Any team needs transport for matches and tournaments, but Wheelchair Rugby has its own specific needs, not least because there is a lot of equipment to transport," he says. "So, we're delighted that West Way Nissan have chosen to come on board.

"Their support will be a massive help for [Head Coach] Mandip Sehmi and the players, and also for the Foundation as a whole as we look to expand and improve our delivery to schools, clubs and the whole community in Coventry, Warwickshire and the West Midlands."

West Way's Head of Marketing, Chris Furness, said: "We love what Coventry Rugby Club are doing in the community, and as a neighbour and partner we wanted to get involved with their Wheelchair Rugby Team. We're looking forward to helping Coventry promote the sport locally for everyone." West Way Nissan is the UK's largest Nissan dealer, with 15 dealerships across the country. Whether you are looking for a new or used car from Nissan's wide range of over 2,000 petrol, diesel and electric vehicles, look no further than West Way! West Way are also a proud partner of the Government-funded Motability scheme. Their dedicated Motability specialists will help you find a car that will meet all your individual needs.



# MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT



## Message from Eric Richardson

“Hi ALL, just to let all supporters home and away that from now to the end of the season we will be operating a collection for **MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT**.

You will find 2 red wheelie bins with MACMILLAN stickers on them around the ground. These bins are for your used beer mugs. If you wish to donate your £1 deposit to a good cause **PLEASE** put your used mugs in the bins provided.. I have 2 members of my working gang who have in the past few months going through treatment and have been thankful for the help of **MACMILLAN NURSES**. So if you can donate the odd beer mug (£1) it would be appreciated by the cause. At the end of the season we will hand over all monies we have collected to this wonderful charity. We also collect the odd 1p 5p 10p

found in the stand after match day clean up and so far this season, we have another £150

The bins are located near the Elephant and Castle bar and the Purity bar (near the scoreboard) In addition there is a third bin located between the Jon Sharp bar and the Millerchip room in the main clubhouse.

## LIBRARY



The Supporters' Club has created a library of rugby and sporting books which are available for members to borrow free of charge. A list of the titles available can be found at the back of this newsletter. If you would like to borrow any of these books, or, have any books you would like to donate, please contact the Supporters' Club via E-Mail to [crsc1874@gmail.com](mailto:crsc1874@gmail.com)

# PARTNERS

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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](http://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.**



## 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.

<http://www.akbarscuisine.com>

**Akbars Indian Cuisine, 7-9 Butts, Coventry CV1 3GJ 02476 22213 / 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.

# PARTNERS



We are delighted to have reached a Partnership Agreement with the **Ramada Hotel**, in The Butts (less than 5 minutes walk from BPA) who are offering:

**Car parking** - supporters can use the Ramada car park on match days for a discounted price of £2.00. On returning to their car at the end of the match supporters will be required to go into reception and produce either:

- a current **Supporters' Club membership card**
- a current **season member ticket**
- a **date-and-game-specific match ticket**



**Restaurant dining** - upon production of a current Supporter's Club membership card the bill will be subject to a 10% discount

**Accommodation** - £75.00 for bed and breakfast and £125.00 for dinner bed and breakfast, for a couple sharing either a twin or a double standard room, and subject to availability. To take advantage of this offer supporters must book directly with the hotel either by telephone (02476 238110) or email [reservations@ramadacoventry.co.uk](mailto:reservations@ramadacoventry.co.uk) since this is a local agreement - the discount cannot be applied to reservations made online - and by quoting "Coventry Rugby". It may be necessary to produce your membership card to the reception staff.

This offer is also being sent to all Championship clubs and to their Supporters Club, for their visit to Coventry next season, in the hope that many supporters' in particular will take advantage and use their weekend stay to explore and appreciate the tourist features which Coventry has to offer. We are also extolling the fact that Coventry will be the City of Culture in 2021.

## PARTNERS

We are constantly investigating the prospect of setting up more Partnership Agreements with local organisations to provide benefits for members. If you know of any potential opportunity which you think we should explore, please email us via our email address - [crsc1874@gmail.com](mailto:crsc1874@gmail.com) or via a committee member.