

Feature

RUGBY
QUIZ

FORMER LEADING WELSH
REFEREE ALUN WYN BEVAN
TESTS YOUR KNOWLEDGE



Q14: Cardiff Blues win the 2018 Challenge Cup

- Which post war captain of the British and Irish Lions was born on a Mediterranean island?
- One of rugby's true greats but born in Caracas, Venezuela. Name him.
- Name the British and Irish Lions international who starred with Peter O'Toole, Charlie Drake, Bill Maynard and Leslie Caron in various cinema productions?
- The British and Irish Lions, on their way home from New Zealand in 1966, were defeated by a Canadian province. Which one?
- Only one player in the 20th century has scored a hat-trick of tries in a Five Nations Championship match and ended up on the losing side. Name him.
- Name the only two post-war players to score 4 tries in Five/Six Nations Championship matches.
- A talented footballer, he played 595 League matches and represented England at full international level on 11 occasions. He also appeared in the film *Escape to Victory*. However, he was also a gifted rugby player who captained and played full-back for England U16s. Name him.
- Gareth Edwards partnered five outside halves at Test match level. Name them.
- The British and Irish Lions defeated South Africa 28-9 in the third Test in Johannesburg in 2009. Who were the two centre three-quarters for the Lions?
- List the seven replacements who scored tries during the 2020 Six Nations Championship.
- What have the following in common?: Gordon McCrae (Scotland), Mick Hipwell (Ireland), Tim Dalton (England), Phil Bennett (Wales), JM Esponda (France)
- Which former Test cricket captain played at outside half for England? Who partnered him at scrum-half?
- Who were the French half backs selected for the 2011 Rugby World Cup Final at Eden Park, Auckland?
- Cardiff Blues have been crowned European Challenge Cup winners on two occasions in 2010 and 2018. Where were the final matches played?
- Who was suspended for 12 weeks following foul play in a Heineken Cup semi-final and played full-back for England U16s. Name him.

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I'm now Granny to boys I saw grow up

MY CLUB

RICHMOND

WE SPEAK TO A NUMBER OF WELL-KNOWN RUGBY FIGURES ABOUT THE CLUB THEY CALL THEIR OWN. THIS WEEK JEN GADBSY-PEET, A STALWART OF THE CLUB

FORMED in 1861 as the second oldest club in England and later one of the founder members of the Rugby Football Union, Richmond's history is well documented.

But outside of the south-west London club, the unsung work of one key individual in ensuring the club has not only survived and thrived, before and after professionalism, may have largely gone unnoticed.

Jen Gadsby-Peet has fulfilled a plethora of roles, from club shop assistant/retail manager through to secretary and treasurer – many held concurrently – over the best part of three decades.

While the club have had many ups and downs during that time, with administration and its climb back up the leagues, Jen's presence has been one reassuring constant at the Athletic Ground.

"The minis that I see on a Sunday morning are the children of the boys that were at the club when I first came. I am now a Granny figure to them," she jokes.

It was mini rugby, and a chance encounter at an off licence, that prompted her 28-year association.

"I'm a widow now, my husband Tony died five years ago, but he was a great rugby fan and player and we have three sons. At the time, they must have been six, five and two and Tony happened to meet his friend John, who also had three boys, in an Oddbins one Sunday morning buying wine for lunch, and he said to him, 'I've found this fantastic place to wear the boys out on a Sunday morning which allows me to sit and snooze on a Sunday afternoon'. That's where it started."

"We went down and the two older boys joined the mini rugby. The youngest had to wait a while but all three went on to play for various Richmond teams. James played in the development team, Ed in the U21s and William in the Saxons, the 3rd team."

Unable to find Richmond shirts for her boys, Jen made some enquiries and discovered a family friend ran the club shop on a voluntary basis. Before she knew it, she was assisting there on weekends.

"William remembers Richmond as his playground. I used to take him down to the shop on a Saturday



We'll drink to that: Jen Gadsby-Peet, bottom right, hands out tankards to celebrate Richmond's promotion from London1 South in 2008

afternoon and he'd play on the swings at the bottom of Pitch 3, and I could see he was alright."

Soon the printed names on the back of the shirts would become a lot more famous as the advent of professionalism was fully embraced by Richmond, bankrolled by Monaco tax-exile Ashley Levett.

"When we went professional, I took over the shop as retail manager and my position became salaried. We had to get clothes specially made for the Quinells (Scott and Craig)," she says.

"Eden Park was one of our sponsors, our kit suppliers. We had an Eden Park shop at Richmond. We had 70 boxes turn up, shopfitters came from Paris ... everything had to be done in a certain way; they were so brand specific. They even sent me over to Paris two or three times, so I knew how to do it their way."

With losses of around £1.5-2m a year, professionalism was unsustainable and in March 1999 the club went into administration.

"I think we got so excited about what was happening, we sort of lost track of reality and with us being the first club to go properly professional, there were no guidelines, no parameters that you could relate to because it had never been done before; you were writing the rule-book as you went on."

"I remember we were sitting in the sports bar, they had all the players and support staff in there for a meeting, and I could see the three administrators coming across Pitch 4 from the main gate, they had black coats on, and it felt like they were the harbingers of doom because they were coming to tell us 'you're sacked, you're sacked'."

Instead of ending her ties with the club, administration strengthened the bond between the two.

"Everyone who'd been involved with the club came together and said, 'we can't let this happen ... what can we do to stop the club folding?' We put together a management committee and I was involved on a voluntary capacity. I have a financial background, I worked at NatWest, so I said I'd take on the books."

"We started to employ people, we employed Andrew Gordon as secretary/general manager in 2000 and I became his assistant on a part-time basis, which then grew into a full-time role as the children got older, and I still did the treasury job and looked after the club shop on a Saturday/Sunday."

"When you grow something from the beginning like we did, and you don't have many resources, the resources you have tend to fill in the gaps, so I took on stuff that I was quite happy to do."

When Gordon left in 2010, Jen became secretary in her own right, and has continued in that role to this day, albeit now as a caretaker. Her first year in the position coincided with the club's successful 150th anniversary celebrations, and the arrival of current DoR Steve Hill.

At that stage, the club had worked their way back up from Herts/Middlesex 1, after a drop of nine levels following administration, to the National Leagues.

"We had an unbroken record of 83 wins; you were used to winning, it was wonderful," she says, looking back fondly on those halcyon days. "Everyone was involved for the right reasons. It was really

where we strengthened our 'One Club' ethos.

"One thing we were very certain on was to never become financially insecure again; rugby would always be driven by the finances not the other way around."

Jen says such financial prudence, led by chairman Peter Moore, will stand them in good stead for surviving the current Covid-19 challenge.

"We've been very lucky that our financial prudence brought about by the event 20 years ago means we are in a better position to weather what is going on than many clubs are. A lot of that is down to Peter Moore, he really took a grasp of the finances 20 years ago and has managed them ever since."

"He has always felt we should make sure we had financial reserves in place in case of an event that we cannot control."

The pandemic means Jen's multi-tasking days are not quite over: "I was going to retire on June 20. The treasurer and finance roles had already been passed over to someone else, and the shop had gone online, and just as lockdown started, we were beginning to advertise my job as secretary/operations manager."

"Now it's the wrong time to go because we have no idea what the job going forward will look like. I am happy to stay in a caretaker role until there is more clarity."

Regardless, Jen will stay on as membership secretary. "I'm not going cold turkey completely!" she insists.

'Her boys', as she refers to the players at the club, will be happy about that.

JON NEWCOMBE