



SUPPORTERS' CLUB

BATH RUGBY SUPPORTERS' CLUB

March 2004

MEMBERSHIP FOR 2003/2004

Prices will remain the same as last year, with many of the benefits also continuing. Full details can be found on the website.

For more information on any membership matter, contact Mrs Lesley Steeper (Membership Secretary), 15 Vyvyan Terrace, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3DG

DISCOUNTS & BENEFITS

(all for just £5)

Caffé Uno The Empire, Grand Parade, Bath, Tel: 01225 461140

A massive 15% discount off meals and accompanying beverages for up to 8 people. Every day of the week, except after 7pm on Saturdays.

The Litten Tree 23 Milsom Street, Bath, Tel: 01225 310772

£1.50 per drink (excluding spirits), Monday-Saturday, 11am to 11pm and Sunday 12 noon to 10.30pm (members only, not guests). Show current membership card when you order.

Nigel Dando, Jeweller & Goldsmith 11 Pulteney Bridge, Bath BA2 4AY Tel/Fax 01225 464013 www.nigeldando.co.uk

Preferential terms to all members of the BRSC, on production of current membership card.

Test Stationers 18 Union Passage, Bath Tel: 01225 444224/ Fax: 01225 311871

10% off Purchases over £10 (with some minor exceptions)

Only for Bath Rugby Supporters' Club Members, throughout Season 2003/2004. To obtain the discount, the member must show his/her current Supporters' Club membership card at the time of purchase.

Tuk-Tuk Tours of Bath www.tuktuktours.co.uk 10% off the price of this unusual method of travelling round Bath.

Telephone 01225 425866 for further details.

Spanish Villa to Rent www.our-spanish-villa.co.uk

John 'Tuk-Tuk' Taylor has a villa in Spain for rent. 10% Discount to members. Telephone 01225 445754 for further details.

Zoe Kenway Prints www.zoekenwaypublica.co.uk Discount off Zoe's exceptional prints featuring Bath Rugby.

Bath Rugby Shop 12 Argyle Street, Bath, Tel: 01225 311950.

You do not have to be a season ticket holder to receive your 10% discount at the Bath Rugby shop, just produce your membership card at time of purchase.

Plus

Reduced cost of coach travel to away matches.

Free or reduced admission to all BRSC functions.

NOT BOB the Builder but JACK the CONTRACTOR



Congratulations once again to our Director of Rugby for his successful endeavours in securing the services of the following for Next Season :-

Andy Beattie, Steve Borthwick, Alex Crockett, Spencer Davey, Rob Hawkins, Jonathan Humphreys, James Hudson, and James Scaysbrook.

'The announcement on Olly has now arrived and thus Jack has kept the Saracens at bay as we had all hoped he would.

Critically next up must be tying 'Knuckles' down. Then what about ?? and ?? and ?? to name but three out of contract shortly.

CHAMPAGNE DRAW

Once again this year the membership of Bath Rugby Supporters' Club has grown. At the time of writing we have just topped 1400 and, in order to celebrate, we shall be holding a prize draw at the Gloucester match on May 8th. All membership numbers will be put into a "hat"

and the lucky winner will receive a bottle of champagne and free membership for next season.

Thanks to everyone for your support- *Good Luck!*

Lesley Steeper, Membership Secretary

COUNTDOWN TIME AGAIN

This time last year we noted in our Newsletter that we had six games for Survival in Premiership Rugby. This year we certainly have Six games left of which 4 are the final rounds of the Zurich and two the Semi Final legs of the Parker Pen Cup but we are staring upwards this year. So here's the Countdown.

Round	Date	Bath W 16 Pts 69	Wasps W 14 Pts 64	Saints W 12 Pts 57	Gloucester W 11 Pts 51
19	Apr 3-4	Sale(H)	Saints (H)	Wasps (A)	Saracens (A)
20	Apr 16-18	Saints(A)	Leeds(A)	Bath (H)	L.Irish(H)
21	May 1-2	Quins (A)	Gloucs(A)	Leeds(A)	Wasps(H)
22	May 8th	Gloucs(H)	Leics(H)	Quins(H)	Bath (A)

Parker Pen Semi Final legs v Montferrand - Home April 10th and away April 24th
Then maybe:

Zurich Premiership Semi Final Play-off 15/16 May
Parker Pen Final at Reading 22nd May
Zurich Premiership Final at Twickenham 29th May

Another Restaurant for BRSC Members The Green Park Brasserie

Green Park Station Bath Tel 01225 338565

Website www.greenparkbrasserie.com

Magnificently located in the old station, the Brasserie serves excellent, fresh Anglo/French food. There's great live jazz to accompany dinner, Wednesday to Saturday evenings. In the evenings as well as the a la

carte there's a fixed price menu offering great value-especially for early diners, Tuesday to Friday. Between 12 noon and 6pm the Brasserie offers an extensive bar menu.

We have the same discount arrangement as with Caffé Uno, namely 15% off meals and accompanying beverages for up to 8 people. Every day of the week, except after 7pm on Saturdays. Please book by telephone and show your Membership Card for the Discount((Note Andrew Peters, the Maitre d'hotel is a Bath Supporter and does sing a mean 'Swing Lo Sweet Chariot'- only when requested!)

For all the latest news, visit the Supporters club web site at www.allez-bath.co.uk



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SIX NATIONS 2004

The Six Nations championship is done and dusted for another year. When we look back at the 2004 tournament, what will be the key things that come back to us? That France won the Grand Slam? Deservedly, they played the best rugby over the seven weeks. That Ireland won the Triple Crown? Again, a just reward, and they were the first to prove that the World Champions are beatable, even at home.

Perhaps that Scotland got the Wooden Spoon? Or that Italy didn't. The future of Welsh Rugby looks rosy after some impressive performances. But what about England? They went from the top of the world to mid-table average in four easy months.

It was never going to be possible to look at the Six Nations this year without thinking back to the World Cup. After all, it was the first chance the northern hemisphere teams had to play the World Champions, and also the first time England would come onto the pitch with that title so naturally everyone would be casting their minds back, and looking forward with expectation.

The shadow of November in Australia might have had a detrimental effect in some ways, but if it weren't for the English victory, what chance would there have been to watch a rugby match on prime time BBC1 television on a Saturday night? For those who were still standing at the culmination of "Super Saturday," whatever colour your shirt was, it must have been a great day.

England did play some good rugby in the championship, but not the sort of rugby we all wanted to see again. It must be a difficult time for England at the moment; it's an ambitious squad, many of whom have the memories of the ultimate rugby prize and the stardom that brought, which no-one had anticipated. On the other hand, inevitably there will be change and in the new Six Nations squad, there were players who hadn't shared in the World Cup glory. Is that an immediate division within the squad?

The only thing that might possibly be better than winning a World Cup is successfully defending it and that must surely be the goal in the minds of Sir Clive and some of

the younger members of the set-up hoping to be there. So where does that leave the in-between time, the present? The 'transition stage' was clearly visible in some of England's recent matches, most notably the two they lost against Ireland and France, arguably the stiffer competition for them in this tournament.

Their critics will undoubtedly be gearing up for another chorus of one-man show jibes suggesting that the lack of the likes of Jonny Wilkinson and Martin Johnson leaves England with a lot to be desired. In the past, that sort of negativity has served only as a motivation for England.

On a more positive note, the absence of such stars has left gaps that need to be filled and as is often the case, the championship has opened the doors for the new boys to show what they can do and offer themselves as the stars of tomorrow. The obvious example is Olly Barkley. With such mighty boots to fill, the media attention following the Bath player has been huge. At just 22 years old, it would

have been very easy to crumble under the pressure but Olly didn't. He played some terrific rugby and proved that he is a more than able deputy, which should cause some selection headaches before the summer tour once other contenders for the number 10 shirt reach fitness again.

Chris Jones was another 'find' for England. Not the conventional make-up of an international forward but an asset nonetheless for the

men in white this spring. How about Gordon D'Arcy for Ireland? He might stick in the mind for his two-try showing in Ireland's finale and the Man of the Match accolade to boot. Ireland have discovered a centre partnership with D'Arcy and Brian O'Driscoll that is as talented as any one could think of and that must sit well with them. They picked up the Triple Crown and will not be looking back.

It was Ireland's first Triple Crown for 19 years and going into the match against Scotland they were overwhelming favourites to pick it up. No-one had reckoned on the Scots putting up such a skilful fight though, more physical and committed than they had been previously this season. Indeed, with the teams level for a time at 16-16, a major upset was on the cards. 1985, 19 years ago, was significant for Scotland too; it was the last time they won the Wooden Spoon.

This year we saw Italy escape again and watched them celebrate as they defeated Scotland in Rome, yet the Azzurri are still chasing the elusive win away from home. Maybe 2005 will be the year for the Italians, who this year looked promising and put together some decent phases of play, but lacked penetration and creativity. It wasn't until the second half in their final game, against Wales, that they scored only their second try of the tournament.

The Welsh performance against Italy was not only a positive end to what was a very encouraging few weeks, but it was also a wonderful send-off for Steve Hansen as he ends his time with Wales, returning to New Zealand to take up a coaching post alongside Graham Henry and Wayne Smith.

Wales produced some marvellous running rugby, the same form they had found in the latter stages of their World Cup campaign, which was repeated in their opening game against Scotland in this Six Nations Championship.

Hansen's legacy to Wales then seems to be a settled squad that continues to impress the fans and a continuity in selection that can only bring stability to the squad and provide a platform to build on. Expect a lot more from Wales in the coming months.

There is no shortage of rugby now that the Six Nations is over though. There is still a very exciting premiership campaign to wrap up, European cups, and if you need your appetite whetted for southern hemisphere rugby before the summer tours, set your alarm early at the weekend at watch some of the Super 12 action!



BEZIERS (or EIGHT TO A ROOM)

The Secrets of Room 104

Our Saga group (sorry, Glyn, one exception) flew out from Bristol on Friday afternoon to a very wet Toulouse (no change there, then, from that experienced two weeks earlier). We had decided to travel light and therefore had crammed the weekend's needs into hand luggage. First mistake; our 'horns' (standard equipment on away trips) were classed as dangerous and consigned to the hold. Wish we'd known that before setting out - would have taken a suitcase and then had room for a hair drier, an essential item for we gels and not provided by the Hotel Ibis (in Toulouse, at least).

Having a quick drink at the Airport to regain our composure, we spotted a dapper bloke in leather jacket - Nigel Williams - and yes, he was on the same flight, heading straight for Beziers. Oh, horrors. A good ref in Biarritz but has done us no favours since.

We arrived at rain-soaked Toulouse at 9 in the evening, dumped our bags at the hotel and headed out for something to eat. We were nearly turned away from one establishment, as the manager obviously had memories of Bath beating Toulouse in the Heineken Cup.

On Saturday morning, we headed for the station and bought a discounted job-lot of tickets for Beziers. It helps to have OAPs in the party! Arriving in Beziers, we hired a couple of taxis and arrived at our hotel in time to meet up with other Bath supporters and enjoy an excellent lunch. The hotel was a few miles out of town but only a 10-minute walk from the stadium.

We had, earlier in the week, been contacted by the manager of the Clubhouse bar at Beziers, advising us that drinks and "hospitalities" would be laid on and asking what time he should open the bar. Whilst tempted to suggest the moment we arrived, with a 7.15 kick-off, 5.00pm seemed more prudent. Needless to say, when we got there shortly after 5, Jock and Mike S were already propping the bar. As more and more Bath supporters arrived, we heard that the team coach had been delayed due to an

accident on the motorway. Kick-off was thus put back half an hour. Whilst there was no rain, the wind was building up to gale force, such that when the team eventually arrived and we took our seats in the stadium, the confetti that had showered onto the teams coming out on to the pitch was swirling in all directions and, by 8 o'clock on that January night, it was bitterly cold.

Whilst the Bath boys fought hard all the way, the conditions evidently suited the home side and the ball, from our beloved Olly's trusty boot, swung away from the touch line and was not keen on splitting the uprights. The final score Beziers 24 Bath 19. The boys were as gutted as the supporters but it was a shame they did not come back on the pitch sooner to thank their away support as, by the time they eventually appeared, there were only about three there to witness it and the rest had made a beeline back to the sanctuary of the bar! As the evening wore on the Franglais improved

(or probably got worse) but it came to a pretty pass when we started trying to speak French to Chris Catling (ex Gloucester now Beziers) and he to us, so it was obviously catching.

By about 3am, it was high time we headed back to the hotel, which was out of the clubhouse, turn right, right again, along a bit, turn left and down the hill. Amazing how some of our number left before us and got back about 20 minutes after us. Apparently they had taken the more scenic route along the dual carriageway!

After breakfast on Sunday, two taxis took us and our luggage back into Beziers. Our train back to Toulouse was not until early evening, so we took our bags to the station and were not too surprised to discover that there were no left luggage lockers (bomb scares and all that). The thought of lugging bags around Beziers

for the day did not appeal, so after a little thought, we asked of the hotel over the road if we could leave our things in reception. Not a chance and so, for the princely sum of 25 euros we hired a room for the day. 8 of us followed the manager up the narrow staircase to the first floor and along a dingy corridor to Room 104.

Freed of our burdens, we set off up the hill towards the centre of Beziers. Be warned, if sightseeing round French towns not normally renowned for tourism, do not look around you - look where you are treading; pooper-scooper has yet to be included in the French vocabulary.

Although fine and dry, the weather was cold and we lingered long over a wonderful lunch; pity mine host and his chef had to advertise the previous night's result on the edge of one of the plates!



Be that as it may, Beziers proved to be a delightful town and we

took in all the sights from the covered market to a car boot sale; from the local bars to a magnificent church; from the fine end of town to the less fine end of town, where we found a house supported totally by acrow props and optimism. We went from a perfect viewing point looking across the flood plain of the River Orb towards the mountains of the Espinouse and then down to the river itself where five bridges spanned its width in the space of about a quarter of a mile.

So, with sore feet and a wicked thirst, we headed back to collect our belongings from their luxurious surroundings and made for the station to await our train back to Toulouse.

Back in Toulouse it was trying to snow. The following morning it was hammering down with rain once again. Flight back to Bristol and so home again by early evening. A wonderful weekend, despite the result and haven't laughed so much in a long time. Rugby weekends are always great weekends (and at least we clobbered the opposition the following week).

Penny Brunton



MAKE YOUR BID for A CHANCE OF A LIFETIME To become a HELICOPTER PILOT

ONE WHOLE HOUR OF FLYING IN THE THALES SIMULATOR

Under Expert Guidance - (Commercial Value £ 1,600)

This special one-off experience goes to the Highest Bidder. The 'Flight' will take place in July or August with a Free Lunch also included. The Location is at Middle Wallop on the Wilts/Hants border south of Andover. The Winner will have to arrange their own transport to and from the venue.

So Bids to Bob Carlton-Porter by 30th April and these should note your name, and the name of the potential Pilot (Must be 15 years old or more- Health and Safety Regulations). Winner will be announced at the Bath Youth Rugby Awards evening on 14th May. The proceeds of the Winning Bid will be shared equally between Bath Youth Rugby and BRSC' Community Funds.

Call or email Bob on 01225 484220 or bcp@lagganhouse.fsnet.co.uk with your Name and Membership Number and the name of the potential Pilot, who will experience flying in War Zones and round the various coast lines (without actually leaving the ground).



REQUEST FROM PETER HALL

History of Bath Rugby - Volume 2 "Beyond the Lemons"

Peter has decided to continue the history to the end of this season (rather than to the end of amateurism). This is a tentative enquiry regarding photographs.

He requires some good quality pictures from 1997 onwards. For instance, has anyone any interesting prints or j-pegs taken at the Heineken Cup triumph? Not a great number is required, just one or two to illustrate some of the action and celebrations - both amongst the players and supporters, etc.

The important thing is the quality of the picture. Without anyone going to a lot of trouble, are there any supporters who might be able to help, please?

Call Peter on 01225 317367 or email peteg.hall@virgin.net

CALLING ALL JUNIOR MEMBERS, MUMS AND DADS.

If any of our Junior members have a favourite player and would like the player's picture on their birthday card, then please contact Penny on 01672 563089 telephone or fax - both the same number and we will do our best to send you a card that you will like.

SUPPORTERS' CLUB COACH TRAVEL

Those who travel regularly with us will know of the pending retirement of Jan and Mike Warrington who have served us well through 4 Seasons both here and abroad.

As they still have at least 3 trips still to run we shall not spend time giving them a Valediction (yet) suffice to say that Mike has run out of jokes plus his knees are in tatters and Jan just wants to sit back for a change and to turn her answerphone off.

We have received so far 3 expressions of interest to take on what is seriously a heavy task. Those parties have all been asked to quiz

Jan and Mike about the plusses and minuses of the task as well as the actual detail. Of those three, one has now withdrawn.

It may well be that there are others of you out there who have the time and patience to undertake this vital function and if you would like to know more please contact Mike and Jan on 01305 779336 for the complete background and if this has not put you off then contact Jerry or Penny to put your names forward. Look forward to hearing from you as we do want to make this appointment prior to the end of May.

MONTAUBAN SUPPORTERS take an Aperitif at the Rec

A Coachload of Montauban Supporters in the Montauban Team Coach led by their Supporters' Club Treasurer Jacky, visited the Rec en route to support France at Cardiff against Wales.

Thanks to the generosity of Blackthorn and the Bath Football Club Trustees coupled with help from Dean and his staff we were able to greet them properly, give them a tour of the Rec and send them on to Cardiff in good form where of course the French triumphed, to their delight. *Entente Cordiale!*

