



NEWSLETTER

**SUPPORTERS'
CLUB**

DECEMBER 2010

DISCOUNTS & BENEFITS (all for just £7.50)

For just £7.50, you will have either free or reduced admission to all BRSC events; £2 per head reduction on all your away coach travel (unless fixed prices for weekend stays, etc), in addition to the following discounts that can be obtained on production of your current Membership Card:

Abbey Ales & Star Inn, The Paragon, Bath.

Abbey Ales offers a 10% discount off a 36-pint pack of Bellringer. Just click on www.abbeyales.co.uk or www.star-inn-bath.co.uk for details.

Apartment in Dubai - www.apartmentonthepalm.co.uk

BRSC member, Melanie Edwards, owns a luxury apartment on The Palm Jumeirah in Dubai and is offering a 10% discount to members. Contact Melanie on melanie.edwards80@virgin.net.

Bath Aqua Glass, Walcot Street, Bath.

Tel: 01225 463436/428146 20% discount off any non-sale products (jewellery, glassware, mirrors and hangings). <http://www.bathaquaglass.com/>

Bath Rugby Clubhouse Recreation Ground, Bath.

Tel: 01225 469230
5% discount off your booking for the hire of the Clubhouse.

Bath Rugby Shop, 1 Argyle Street, Bath. Tel: 01225 311950

5% discount off your purchases, if you are not already a season ticket holder.

Chez Gérard (formerly Caffé Uno)

The Empire, Grand Parade, Bath.
Tel: 01225 461140. Reservation by telephone is recommended for peak times. 15% discount off food (not drinks) for up to 8 people; every day of the week. This offer is limited to the Supporters' Club member and up to seven guests at any one sitting.

CoralQuay Fairtrade

8-9 New Bond Street Place,
Bath BA1 1BH Tel 01225 446 362
www.coralquay.co.uk
10% discount offered on all crafts, jewellery & furniture. This does not include goods already discounted.

Gascoyne Place

Opp The Theatre Royal, Saw Close, Bath.
Tel: 01225 445854
Offering, with immediate effect, 15% off total food bill for member + up to 7 guests, except on Saturday evenings (bookings required for 6+). <http://www.gascoyneplace.co.uk/>

Nigel Dando - Jeweller & Goldsmith

11 Pulteney Bridge, Bath BA2 4AY
Tel/Fax: 01225 464013
Preferential terms on selected items only for Bath Rugby Supporters' Club members throughout the season.

Golf and Beach Holidays in Costa Almeria, Mojacar, Spain

2-bed apartment to let, overlooking the course at the Valle del Este Golf resort. Generous discounts are being offered to Bath Rugby supporters. To find out more, go to: www.golf-holidays-spain.net.

Icarus Photography

Weddings and family occasions photography by Bath-based professional. 10% discount offered to BRSC members, please email us on enquiries@icarusphotography.co.uk or visit our website www.icarusphotography.co.uk.

Ivy House Complimentary Therapies and Tisserand Products

Ivy House, St. Annes, Bristol.
Tel: 0117 9771807 Remedial treatments, manicures, pedicures. 10% off treatments; 5% off Tisserand products.

Royal Hotel, Manvers Street, Bath.

Tel: 01225 442931 (opp Bath Spa Station)
10% discount off all meals, any day except Fridays and Saturdays.
<http://www.royalhotelbath.co.uk/>

The Really Expensive Chocolate Company

Farmers' Market, Green Park, Bath
Contact Tel: 01179 616629
The market is held next to Sainsburys in Bath on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month. 10% off all products.

Squeeze Juice Bar

7 Pulteney Bridge, Bath BA1 1HZ
10% discount to Supporters' Club members.

Test Stationers

Tel: 01225 444224. Fax: 01225 311871
(Test Office Limited), 18 Union Passage, Bath. Suppliers of raffle tickets to the BRSC. 10% off purchases over £10 (with some minor exceptions).

The Green Park Brasserie

www.greenparkbrasserie.com
Green Park Station, Bath. Tel: 01225 338565
15% off meals and accompanying beverages to BRSC members for up to 8 people; every day of the week, except after 7pm on Saturdays.

Yak Yeti Yak Nepalese Restaurant,

12 Pierrepont Street, Bath BA1 1LA
Tel: 01225 442299
This Nepalese restaurant near the station is offering a 10% discount, Monday to Thursday, to Supporters' Club members. The discount applies to members and their guests, up to 4 people in total.

Zoë Kenway Prints

www.zoekenwaypublica.co.uk
20% off Zoë's exceptional prints featuring Bath Rugby.

The BRSC is always looking for further discounts for its members. If any local outlet wishes to get involved, please contact Mike Senior on 07766 166999.

Introduction

Welcome to the November edition of the BRSC Newsletter. As many of you know I have recently taken over the role of Chairman from Steve Eades. Steve did a sterling job standing in for most of last year following the untimely death of our friend and Chairman, Penny Brunton, a hard act to follow in any circumstances.

Following the AGM we have a new Committee of mostly tried and trusted campaigners who are working hard to spread the gospel far and wide. Membership has decreased over the years and it is our ambition this year to get it back over the 1,000 mark and beyond if possible, after all that is less than 10% of a match day crowd at the Rec: and for a Club which prides itself on being rugby's largest Independent Supporters club the numbers should be higher. So please at the next home game ask the person in the seat next to you if he/she belongs to the Supporters' Club and if the answer is "No" send them around to the Supporters' club table by the Clubhouse or suggest they look at the "Allez Bath" website for more information.

We will be distributing advertising material over the next few matches to aid this campaign, and with your help we can achieve our aim for the year.

The Committee was invited to hold its' October meeting at Farleigh House, and what a splendid building

it is. When the works to convert it into the proposed multi-purpose headquarters are complete it will be, or may even be now, the envy of all other Clubs and Supporters. If I were a player looking to change clubs it would certainly influence my decision.

To date the season which started with such high expectation has stuttered somewhat and we hope for better things as the new players continue to bed in the Bath system and the season settles down after the interruption caused by the Autumn Internationals and the LV Cup. Talking of the LV Cup, what a great performance last week, firstly by the crowd for turning out in such large numbers on such a foul night, and by some of the fringe players such as Jack Cuthbert and Josh Ovens, who starred in a good all round performance against a feisty Cardiff side similar in many ways to the Bath team on the night.

In closing I do hope that you enjoy this Newsletter, the first to be produced under the Editorship of Charles Reeves. If there are topics that you would like covered in future additions, or you would like to make a contribution please talk to Charles or any other member of the Committee and we will make every effort to include your thoughts or article. After all it is your Newsletter.

Enjoy the rest of the season

Barry



45 Walcot Street Bath BA1 5BN
Tel: 01225 442000 www.minutemanbath.co.uk

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE LIONS' KING

AN INTERVIEW WITH SIR IAN MCGEECHAN by Glyn Edwards



He may be rugby's latest knight of the realm, but to most supporters in Britain he is also both 'The Lions' King' and just plain 'Geech', and I was privileged to indulge myself in a lengthy chat with Bath's recently-appointed Performance Director at the Rec Clubhouse. Sir Ian's playing career was as a "one-club man" with 300 appearances for Headingley (a fore-runner of Leeds Carnegie). A 'Scot' with Yorkshire roots, he also represented Scotland 32 times (captain on 9 occasions), the Barbarians and, most notably, starred as the Test centre for the Lions in the 1974 series win for Willie John McBride's 'Invincibles' in South Africa. As a coach he then remained with Headingley, before going on to lead Scotland and cementing his reputation with the Lions. He also coached Northampton and Wasps with conspicuous success in the Premiership and Europe.

Personal Highlights ?

"The 1990 Grand Slam with Scotland was a massive achievement, and the 1997 Lions tour was something special, with that group of players, and playing the rugby that nobody expected us to play. There was a high degree of trust built up between everyone on that tour – including those who made the 'Living with the Lions' video – and it was a landmark tour, being the first one in the professional era and with a higher press profile than previous tours. Questions had been asked about the future of the Lions – beforehand nobody expected us to win – but support grew as the tour progressed and it was a huge step change from anything that had happened before with the Lions."

"The fact that we won was so important, as it would have been easy at that time for the Lions to disappear, but 1997 changed the perspective on the Lions, and now in a Lions year the jersey is the biggest seller for Adidas – even bigger than Real Madrid - an incredible phenomenon ! Martin Johnson as captain was a big call, as he hadn't captained any side at that point, but for me he was the stand-out person with the impact he had not only on his own players but on opponents. It was the best call I made; he has huge respect and

was one of the best captains – if not the best – that I've had the pleasure of dealing with."

"The core group of English players that were on the '97 tour were the core group that won the World Cup in 2003, so you knew the chemistry was right, and also with the quality of players from Scotland, Ireland and Wales. It was a special group, and the five players who came back from rugby league were used to training and playing

professionally; they were a good influence on and off the pitch. Talent is one thing, but the attitude they all showed is far more important for me."

Major changes to the game over your long career ?

"When I first played for Scotland I had to pay for my own jersey – your first one was free, but if you swapped them you had to buy the next one – my first season cost me £44 ! It was strictly 'amateur' at that time – we had to pay for tracksuits and boots. At Headingley, you put half-a-crown in for the club (as playing subs each week) and half-a-crown to buy your opponents a beer. Also, I was playing international rugby on a Saturday, and was then back in school – teaching – on a Monday morning. Now, everything is managed; players are a different shape, different size, with just such different fitness levels. The game is analysed in such a critical way that it has become – in the true sense – very professional."

"We are still coming to terms with governing bodies that are amateur and a professional arm that wants to, and does, drive the game forward. There's also an amateur community heritage – nobody starts the game as a professional – and that 'mix' is very important. Linking schools with the professional clubs' academies – there's a network of connections right down to those who just play for the love of the game. I'd like to think that even here at the Rec the players are out there first and foremost because they just love playing rugby. For more than half of my life I've been in rugby as an amateur, and I lost money. 'Professional' (for me) means I can be involved full-time in some thing I just love doing."

"But you have to respect the differences as well. We've still got issues between club and country in managing players **[as do supporters !]** – we've still got to try and win a Premiership without those players. In a perfect world you wouldn't want your international game and your top club games in opposition on the same Saturday – it needs resolving. It should be a joint venture at the very top between the Union and the professional clubs. If England do well everybody feels good **[except the**

Scots and Welsh, perhaps ?] like after last weekend against Australia, and that has an impact right through the game."

Turning to Bath – what was your view of the Club before you joined ?

As a player I never played against Bath – probably because Headingley was too far away. When I was at Northampton in the '90s Bath were totally dominant, with that great group of players, and that tremendous decade – the last of the amateur era – was dominated by this Club. Northampton was a rugby town – the same as Bath. Playing Bath was one of the measures to say 'how good are we ?' – comparing yourselves and your performances against Bath. They played a lot of rugby, but there was also a really hard core as well – a really hard edge to the side. You don't often get 'fancy' or 'total' rugby without that really hard grafting core at the coalface. Your forwards will determine how good your backs become, and the really successful teams integrate the two."

"I keep getting the messages across here: when the forwards are going well then they're giving us the best chance to be playing the rugby we'd like to see. Without that it's a tough game, a really tough game, and you generally don't win anything." I remember at Northampton times when we were probably the better team, but that we lost in the last 10-15 minutes because Bath were used to winning and pulled through at the end."

How would you describe your role as Performance Director ?

"Similar to a Director of Rugby; it's looking at everything that's associated with the rugby side of the Club. Trying to coordinate, and keep developing our first team performances, whilst ensuring that in support we have the best set-up, including the Academy. This is a great rugby area for the Club to be in, and it makes business sense to be producing your own players. They also then have loyalty, and a very special feel for the Club and what it's about. If you've got those coming through on a regular basis then it makes the Club stronger and stronger. That talent identification is part of our 'rugby performance' programme."

"It's more than just performance on the field; it's how we develop in our whole performance - the way we're coaching, training, the medical, strength and conditioning, the Academy, everything – to be where we want to be. It might take us a year, two years. One of the problems we've got is agents – and we've got to accept it – who do things for their own reasons, and sometimes it's making money rather than looking at what's best for the player. As a Club, you've got to be very supportive of the players, and very honest with them as well, and if you do that there is no reason you can't have players at a Club for 8-10 years. I see that as

an important part of my role – creating such a positive environment that people want to be part of it. In the past, that's always been important wherever I've been – that environment, and the chemistry.

So how does your relationship with Steve Meehan work?

"It's different to what I had with Shaun Edwards at Wasps, because I was more 'hands-on' at Wasps with the coaching. I'm working with the coaches here and I'm on the training field most days, but it's more working through them – and actually developing the coaches, and just using my experience. I'm trying to be as helpful and supportive as I can, just pushing out ideas to try and make the best environment possible for everybody: for coaches, strength and conditioning and players. That, to me, is the whole rugby environment, then you put analysis onto that. Everything is then about how we, as the rugby part of the Club, relate to the rest of the Club and, very importantly, to the supporters."

"You want people coming here because they're looking forward to every visit to the Rec. We've an owner who is a rugby person as well, and who is very passionate about wanting things to be right for Bath. It's his Club, his area, and he wants to leave something that is meaningful, and he wants rugby to be a meaningful part of the city. If the new stadium comes off here on the Rec it'll be magnificent. Farleigh's tremendous – that's going to be fantastic; the admin staff are there, we've now got the first of the pitches laid out, and we'll be moving the rugby there - probably in January. It's going to be a great environment to work in."

"When you've got somebody like Bruce it enthuses everybody. Nick Blofeld's the same. Those two are friends, and I think that very positive working relationship is going to be very good for the Club going forward. You can have talent, you can have all of the science, but in the end with sport I think that passion and the love of being part of a game and part of a group is a major factor in ultimately winning things and being successful. I like winning trophies and being successful, so the most challenging thing is trying to ensure that we have that mindset. You never lose the enjoyment – but the best enjoyment is winning, anyway!"

Future involvement with the Lions? "I thought the last tour was my last one – seven tours is being a bit greedy – but of course eighteen months later you think, well, 'the Lions will always be a pull for me'. I've got so much from the Lions – it's just incredible to have the opportunity to be part of it and I feel privileged to have had those opportunities more than once, and as a coach it's a huge challenge. It's an experience like no other. At the moment they've asked me to stay involved [as a consultant, engaged in planning the 2013 tour to Australia] and I'm hoping that they're going to ask a few more things of me in the near future. We'll see. Nick and Bruce are both happy, because it gives us a wide rugby perspective for the Club."

WEARS THAT SHIRT

Whilst most people's focus on the 11th of September was Lewis Moody's first appearance in the BBW at The Rec for the first home Aviva Premiership match of the season, mine was my departure at halftime to Heathrow Airport for my trek of The Great Wall of China in memory of Penny Brunton for Dorothy House Hospice Care. I was a total bundle of nerves and had a case of the shakes as I walked to my car.

My great friend and fellow (BRSC Member) Stacey and I signed up in a moment of utter madness back in January this year and had spent every waking moment training, fundraising and writing about the experience in our blog. We are by no stretch of the imagination athletic and so this was a HUGE challenge for us and not only physically but mentally as well. We spent way too much time (in our book!) in the gym and partaking in sessions with our personal trainer. We had chosen to pay for the whole experience ourselves so that every last penny that we raised went straight to our chosen charities. (Stacey was raising funds for Cancer Research UK)

Our first day on the wall was described in the itinerary as a light 4 hour trek on the Badaling section of the wall! I, of course, had Googled prior to departure and it looked do-able. The steps, though steep, were well restored and I assume that this must be the well known section that everyone walks on that we would be doing. Clearly it was not. Photos that I had seen on the net had a mass of people on the wall. We saw 4 all day.

An hour and a half in and we stopped for our main snack stop. Every item of clothing was soaked with sweat. We had mainly walked up hill to this point. We felt shattered. Stacey was aching and struggling with the persistent up hill and was adamant that she would be blistered from sunburn by the end of the day. I was ok, shattered but darned proud of myself. The views were sublime and I soaked up the view wall snaking across the undulating hills. Looking back on what we had walked was quite something. But we had nowhere near finished. We still had a lot of downhill to come.

It was about 300m to the bottom and the 'finish line' we were the last two on the wall the 'youth team' as they have since called themselves must have chuffed run it or something. We had to come off the wall and walk the last little section to the side as the wall had turned into a rock slide – way too dangerous to walk down. My knees were having none of this. They said to me 'Errr –no! You,

my lovely, are having a SERIOUS giraffe! We are going NO further' I felt totally ruined, broken and a failure, when I somehow made it to a seated position. I just wanted to be teleported away from this hell that I was putting myself through. Peter, one of our guides took my rucksack off of me and went ahead a little further down to where Stacey had found a tiny bit of shade and felt like she was literally melting away like a 99 cone with the flake being her walking pole!

I waited for him to disappear out of sight and relished the moment to catch up with myself. Let my knees try and catch up with the rest of my body. And then came the tears. And they didn't stop. What on God's earth was I doing? I pleaded insanity at the very idea of taking this on. Why did I think that I could possibly do this? I was more than happy at that point to quit. Stuff all those that had sponsored me – I'd pay them all back. I could not, and would not, carry on any further. The tears, still in full force, were seriously stinging my face SO much as every pore on my face must have been open from the heat. I buried my head in my hands and thought, 'I'm NOT a celebrity GET ME OUT OF HERE!! Or at least get me my Mum!'

I can honestly say that I have absolutely NO idea where on earth my motivation came from to make it down to the bottom that day, nor do I know where the motivation came from for the rest of the week. In my times of intense pain I took out the photo from my sleeve on Mondays trek to remind myself of why I was doing this. The intense pain and difficulty in moving happened every single day that I walked. It didn't bother me after I got through Day 1, I knew that somehow I would be able to make it to the end.

So 85 towers passed through, 65km walked, 11 litres of water drunk and well over 1000 photos taken – we did it. The remainder of the week was no easier under foot or much cooler – we just had rain to contend with on days 4 & 5. To date I have raised around a phenomenal £6,000 with (fingers crossed) a further donation to come through a matched funding scheme if my application is successful. I set my original target at £3,500 (1/2 a day's cost to run Dorothy House) so I have smashed that and nearly doubled it already.

Our blog with full details of every painful day, photos and videos can be found at www.greatwall2010.com

Emma Sparks



BATH RUGBY EFFECT ON LOCAL ECONOMY

On a coldish grey morning whilst awaiting our coach in Parma for our trip to Viadana, some sort of hot beverage was required.

Next to our hotel was a very small café, inside having one table and chair and outside table and four chairs.

A small party ordered some hot chocolates and coffees which brought a great beaming smile to "Giorgio" (our name for him). Before completing our order several more of our party arrived! PANIC! Grandma was sent to local supermarket to buy more chocolate, wifey was summoned from below stairs, children to the sink.

As time elapsed more of our party arrived – work more hectic – smile expanded – service fabulous – Giorgio said "Bath Rugby – great bloke".

As we departed in our coaches– very happy Giorgio closing door for the day

Another successful business and PR operation concluded.

FROM THE EDITOR

This is my first News letter as editor and my very first match was Bath V Gloucester on Friday 1st October 2010. I sat in the IPL stand with pen and paper ready wanting to write on the highlights of the game.....

This has always been a fiercely fought local derby and today's match was no different.

But in 30 plus years of watching rugby I did see what for me sums up The "Spirit of Rugby". In the second half Lewis Moody collided with a Gloucester player. The match was stopped whilst medics attended to Lewis. As we waited Mike Tindall walked up to Lewis put his arm on his shoulder and had a brief conversation. This kind act did not go un noticed and the Bath supporters in this area of the IPL stand loudly applauded Mike's kindness.

To me this is the Spirit of Rugby Mike's kind act and the applause of Bath supporters at such a fiercely fought local derby. I did not think this should go un noticed and the BRSC committee agreed. We will write to Mike Tindall to show our appreciation for his kind act.

Charles Reeves

From Jan & Mike Warrington
BRSC Coach Travel

01380 871416

NEWCASTLE FRIDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2010

As television coverage has taken its hold on this game, Supporters' Club Coach travel is unable to arrange the usual Newcastle weekend – sorry!

However, we are hoping to take a coach up on Friday morning and return on the Saturday morning. The cost of this trip will depend on the number of supporters' interested in joining us.

We have reserved rooms in the Novotel Newcastle Airport hotel, which is close to Kingston Park.

At present the cost of this trip which includes bed/breakfast would be: -

22no. persons travelling on a 22-str luxury coach -
£75.00pp sharing twin/double

30no. persons travelling on a 39str executive coach -
£63.50 pp sharing twin/double

37no. persons travelling on a 39str executive coach -
£57.50 pp sharing twin/double

Although it is early days we need to know the interest out there and would very much appreciate those people contacting us to enable us to ascertain our numbers.

ULSTER AND BIARRITZ IN THE HEINEKEN EUROPEAN CUP

We are also in the process of organising a "package" to Ulster in December and Biarritz in January 2011. Both trips will include the coach to the airport, flights to and from the destination, hotel and return coach travel from the airport to Bath.

The Ulster trip is as follows:

Coach Travel has provisionally organised to Ulster in December. Departing Friday 10 December and returning Sunday 12 December.

Coach transfer from Bath to Bristol Airport

Flights from Bristol to Belfast International Airport including one piece of luggage each to check-in.

2 days' Bed/breakfast at Days Hotel, Belfast

Cost of package is:-

Supporters' Club Member:
£150.00 per person sharing a double/twin room

Non Member: £155.00

Unfortunately Single Supplement is an extra £30 per night (Sorry!)

We are at present awaiting costs of coach from Belfast International Airport to hotel but understand there is the option of the Airport Link bus approx £10.00 per person for the return journey.

These costs are based on 40no. persons

Please register your name as soon as possible as numbers and time are limited. A Deposit of £50 per person will secure your reservation.



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