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RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

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Andy Lines - Ukraine Report | Rory & Ollie | On This Day

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD v CHINNOR

16th April 2022

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Lady's Day programme*



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President's Welcome

MICK COLEMAN



A very warm welcome to everyone visiting Silver Leys this afternoon, especially the 250 ladies attending our annual Ladies Day event (but more of that later!), and also to our friends from Chinnor who provide today's opposition for our first team. Chinnor will be full of confidence following their thumping victory over title contenders Rosslyn Park last week, although I suspect that particular ship has now sailed for Park, and whilst Chinnor's recent home form has been impressive, their away results have been a little lacking. So, we'll be looking for a good win today and if luck and results go our way, then who knows, we might just chase Chinnor down in the final table placings!

Now, you must take today's programme home with you, for no other reason than to read Andy Lines excellent article based on his recent experiences in Ukraine. Andy is the Daily Mirror's Chief Reporter and has a very long association with our club which I'm pleased to say is still as strong as ever, with his son Cameron playing in the Colts. Andy was in Kyiv when the Russians invaded, and his rugby linked article captures the horrors of war and what you might think is the triviality of BSRFC results and beers with old colleagues.

As previously mentioned, our famed (some might say infamous) annual Ladies Day returns after a Covid enforced 2 year absence. This has become a very important event for us over the years, enabling us to donate thousands of pounds to 'Ladies' charities with this year's recipients being the Eve Appeal which researches cures for 5 gynaecological cancers. Many thanks to all the many volunteers who help to make this such a brilliant and rewarding day and the event sponsors Belcom, Russell Property, Barons, Nockolds and Tees.

Thanks also today to Charterhouse, who are our Match Day sponsors and Belcom for sponsoring the Man of the Match.

And, for the last time, please get behind Dick, Tubbsy, Rob and a few others as they cycle 100 miles for 100 years in aid of our changing room appeal. On the morning of our last match of the season against Tonbridge Juddians, the cyclists leave Silver Leys and should be arriving to the club at 2.30 ish, which will be a fantastic effort and deserves the support of everyone. So please visit our website to donate www.bsrfc.co.uk

Mick

The Daily Mirror's Chief Reporter
Andy Lines





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Head Coaches

TOM COLEMAN / MARCUS CATTELL



Hello and welcome to Silver Leys for the long awaited return of our annual ladies day after a 3 year absence.

This will be our 8th year of running this great event, but the first time we have played Chinnor in the pink kit. Chinnor need little introduction, since we first met back in the 2013/14 season, games are always closely fought and many a great battle has been had, and today will be no different. They are coming off a huge win over title chasing Rosslyn Park so confidence will be high.

We on the other hand fell short against Caldý, even after turning around at half time only 3 points down with the wind at our backs, we couldn't capitalise on some good field position to trouble the scorers. Still lots of positives

to take from the game and areas we will be looking to improve on today.

Last time out at home we saw off a desperate Blackheath side, who find themselves in a relegation dog fight. Far from our best performance, it is pleasing however to see how far we have come this year, and being able to close out these tight games, something we haven't always done this season.

Finally, a massive thank you to the Ladies Day organising team, for all their efforts in making it such a special occasion. I hope everyone has a great day up at BSRFC and look forward to seeing you after the game.

Oh Stort are we!

Tom & Marcus

The Coaching Staff:



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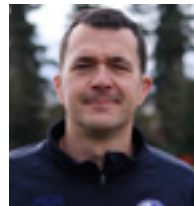
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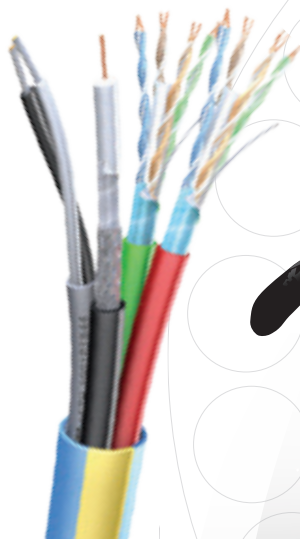
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Andy Lines reports...

FROM UKRAINE



Andy Lines, Daily Mirror chief reporter started on Stortford's Herts & Essex Observer in 1981.

He watched the 1991 Rugby World Cup final here in our clubhouse and, most importantly, is a Stortford Colts dad.



We had just passed another heavily armed checkpoint in Ukraine and my phone pinged yet again - Twitter was informing me Stortford had just lost 35-33 to Sale.

It was Saturday 26th February - just seven weeks ago today. I was part of the terrified exodus of hundreds of thousands of people out of Kyiv that day. As we passed dozens of Ukrainian tanks my mobile kept alerting me to Stortford match updates.

We hit pothole after pothole on a gruelling marathon 31-hour journey from Kyiv to Lviv and, by that stage, the only thing keeping me going were the tweets on the Stortford/Sale game. Whoever was doing the Twitter feed that day - thank you: you kept my spirits up at the lowest point of my career. (Although I do remember getting irrationally angry because they kept spelling "their pack" as "there pack"!)

In the end Stortford lost but, in the grand scheme of things that weekend, it really didn't matter.

I've reported from inside Somalia and Yemen but those 48 hours in Ukraine really were something else.

On the night of the bombings I was awoken

at 4.30am and actually put on my Stortford Rugby sweatshirt (I always take it with me on assignments) under my flak jacket and headed to the roof. I watched and listened to the thunderous explosions in and around Kyiv.

Then 24 hours later we joined the great escape towards safety in the west. As we edged painfully slowly out of Kyiv we passed the Beresteiska metro station. I remember looking at a soldier smoking a cigarette. Four hours later Russian tanks killed that Ukrainian unit.

A little further up the road I made eye contact with a family in the next door car. A mum was making some food for her kids sitting in the back seat. When she realised I was a British journalist she thanked me and kindly offered to make me a sandwich. I don't know her name - even now I don't even know if she is alive or dead. But it was a small act of touching kindness which seemed to epitomise the warmth and generosity of the Ukrainian people.

When we finally reached Lviv I was able to meet up with my dear Stortford mate Guardian reporter Luke Harding. Luke's a bit of a Fleet Street legend. Ten years ago Putin kicked him, wife Phoebe and their kids - who went to school at Hockerill - out of Russia for his brilliant and brave reporting. Barely two weeks earlier we'd been sinking a few beers in The Star with Paul Winspear and the brilliantly dysfunctional Stortford media group.

It seemed unbelievable and surreal to have been in The Star so recently and now we were meeting up in war-torn Ukraine.

Last week the terrible news came through that Oleksi Tsibko, former captain of the Ukraine rugby team, had been killed by Russian troops near Bucha. Most of you would not even know there was a Ukrainian rugby team.

Perhaps as you all here today - on Ladies Day - you could raise a glass to that lovely mum who kindly offered to make me a sandwich. And to all the brave people of Ukraine.

And, of course, to the ultimate rugby hero: Oleksi Tsibko.

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BSRFC First XV Squad 2021/22



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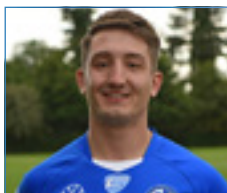


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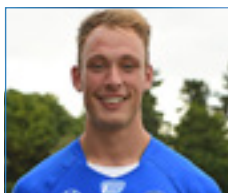


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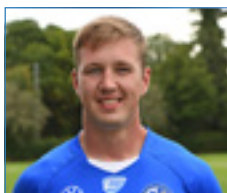


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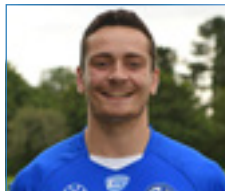


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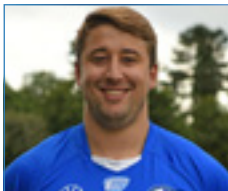
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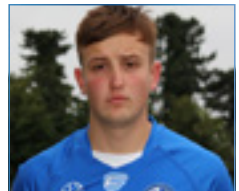
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Today's Opposition

CHINNOR RFC



Our opponents today Chinnor RFC were founded as recently as 1962 making them the 'youngest' club in the National leagues, by a group of regulars at 'The Bird in Hand' pub in Chinnor. The pub was their unofficial HQ and 'clubhouse' for many years whilst they played matches on a field next door.

In 1971 the club moved to Towersey Playing Fields in Thame, building their very first clubhouse on the site, entirely through volunteer labour. The club quickly grew, adding Mini & Youth Rugby in 1973 and winning the Oxfordshire County Cup in 1976. Not bad for a club, that was at that point, only 14 years old!

Within a few years though the village decided they wanted their playing fields back forcing the club to look elsewhere for a permanent home. In 1987 they moved to the ten acre site at Kingsley Road which many of our supporters will be familiar with.

They won a play-off to secure their promotion to National league 2S (Level 4) in 2012 and many of you will remember our first encounter with them which was at this level on 26th October 2013. That match at Kingsley Road was a close fought encounter with the hosts running out winners on that occasion 29-27.

That was the first of several memorable matches which we contested in the three seasons we were together in National 2 South. Chinnor were of course along with Old Elthamians & ourselves involved in a 3-way dog fight for promotion during the 2016-17 season, a fight that thankfully resulted in us gaining the automatic promotion with OE's just pipping Chinnor to the play-off spot. They themselves were promoted to level 3 the season afterwards via

the playoff. Happily we emerged victorious from both our meetings with them last season. 6-13 in Thame in October & again more comprehensively 47-10 here in January. Results that contributed to us finishing one place above them in the final league table although level on points.

Earlier this season though we took away points at Chinnor by winning another close fought encounter 19-23. They currently sit in a very healthy 7th place on 56 points having secured 10 wins already this season and are definitely looking upwards, not behind them.

CHINNOR



Ben Manning (Captain)

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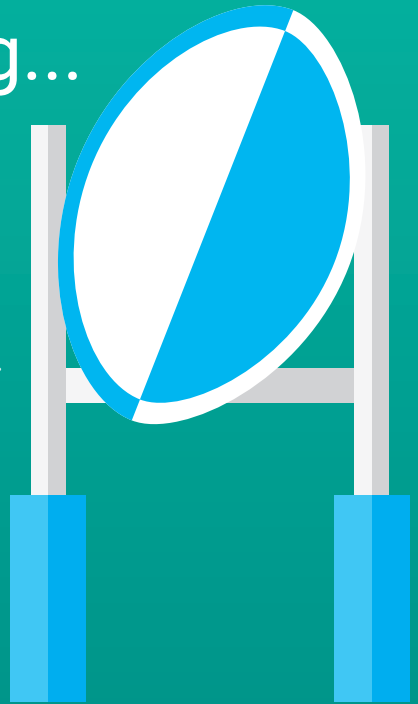
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Results grid, table and fixtures

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1

Season 2021/2022 NATIONAL 1

Results from 9th April

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Birmingham Moseley	24 - 43	Sale FC
Blackheath	17 - 29	Rams
Caldy	31 - 18	Bishop's Stortford
Cambridge	38 - 24	Taunton Titans
Chinnor	55 - 17	Rosslyn Park
Darlington Mowden Park	25 - 22	Plymouth Albion
Tonbridge Juddians	29 - 27	Leeds Tykes
Spare week		Darlington Mowden Park

Season 2021/2022 NATIONAL 1

Fixtures for 16th April

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Bishop's Stortford	vs	Chinnor
Cinderford	vs	Darlington Mowden Park
Leeds Tykes	vs	Plymouth Albion
Rams	vs	Caldy
Rosslyn Park	vs	Cambridge
Taunton Titans	vs	Tonbridge Juddians
Taunton Titals	vs	Chinnor

National League 1 - 2021/2022

Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points
Caldy	26	21	2	3	707	508	199	13	1	102
Sale FC	25	20	0	5	724	505	219	12	3	95
Cambridge	25	17	3	5	694	458	236	17	2	93
Rosslyn Park	25	17	0	8	769	496	273	15	6	89
Rams	25	16	0	9	612	518	94	13	6	83
Cinderford	24	15	0	9	653	502	151	12	7	79
Chinnor	25	11	1	13	671	641	30	16	7	64
Birmingham Moseley	26	12	0	14	515	666	-151	8	3	59
Taunton	25	9	2	14	657	817	-160	15	4	59
Bishop's Stortford	25	9	2	14	573	596	-23	11	5	56
Darlington Mowden Park	25	10	1	14	575	659	-84	7	5	54
Plymouth Albion	25	8	0	17	566	692	-126	12	6	50
Blackheath	26	7	0	19	529	630	-101	6	14	48
Leeds Tykes	24	6	0	18	490	682	-192	8	9	41
Tonbridge Juddians	25	4	1	20	442	807	-365	4	7	29

The Teams



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Bishop's Stortford 1st XV

BLUE AND WHITE

- | | |
|----|--------------------|
| 1 | Matt Meek |
| 2 | Alex Rayment |
| 3 | Ben Harrison-Price |
| 4 | Harry Charter |
| 5 | James Thacker* |
| 6 | Oli Jones* |
| 7 | Jacob Wrafter |
| 8 | Toby Knight |
| 9 | Sam Bryan |
| 10 | Alfie Orchard |
| 11 | Josh Stannard |
| 12 | James Ayrtton* |
| 13 | Sam Winter(c)* |
| 14 | Jake Morris |
| 15 | Tom Walker* |

REPLACEMENTS

- | | |
|----|---------------|
| 16 | Harrison King |
| 17 | Tim Matthews |
| 18 | Tom Lewis |
| 19 | Dan Smart |
| 20 | Dan Cole |

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*Homegrown player

The Teams

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Assistant Referee 1 Andrew Ashwell
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Keston Lines	1
Mark Darlington	2
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Conor Brockschmidt	5
Willie Ryan	6
Ben Manning(c)	7
Fred Tuilagi	8
Luke Carter	9
Max Titchener	10
Kieran Goss	11
Sam Yawayawa	12
George Grose	13
Jason Worrall	14
Nick Smith	15

Man of the Match Sponsors



REPLACEMENTS

Soane Tonga'uiha	16
Max Heathman	17
Dan Thomas	18
Alfie North	19
Josh Hodson	20

DoR Richard Thorpe | **Head Coach** Craig Hampson | **Assistant Coaches** Caolan Ryan | Dan Harris
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BSRFC Minis' Tour Returns



During the first weekend of the Easter holiday, the youngest members of Bishop's Stortford RFC headed to Grantham, as the Minis' Tour took place for the first time since 2019.

The event, which is largely funded by the generosity of local businesses (Space Executive Recruitment, Nuclear Races, Wonderworks, Bodyfit Boot Camp, Greenline Environmental, Little Scrumpers, Mullocks and Fosters) starts with kangaroo court, where coaches of the different age groups found guilty of such heinous

crimes as using 'Just for Men' and having Piña Colada as their favourite drink, were placed in stocks and pelted with wet sponges.

The Saturday saw children in the club's mini section (under 12s and below) together with their parents enjoy activities such as a sensory trail, giant swing, raft building and zip wires. As well as an It's a Knockout competition on bouncy castles. Indifferent weather, including snow, couldn't dampen their enthusiasm and enjoyment.

During any downtime and late into the night, children could be found playing football, rugby, basketball or chilling, without a portable screen in sight.

On the Sunday, the children played against a rugby club local to Grantham. Sleaford, who had organised a festival especially, inviting Wisbech to take part. Parents were amazed the children still had the energy to play (many parents were running on empty) and as is usually the case, the teams did the club proud.



PAUL WALTON (UNDER 10s COACH)



One of the under 10s coaches, said "I have done 3 of these tours now and I forgot, over lockdown, how much fun the kids have and how much confidence they gain from the freedom these tours give them in an entirely safe environment. It is a fantastic opportunity for teammates to cement friendships for years to come.

It is such a great community club that I am very proud to be a part of. We've had nothing but positive feedback and are extremely grateful to all of our sponsors and the organisers who made it possible."

Paul Walton (under 10s coach)

Charities that benefited from this year's BSRFC Minis' Tour are JOCA, GOSH and LGBTQ+.



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Match Report

CALDY 31-18 BISHOP'S STORTFORD



Early Stortford pressure was rewarded with a penalty under Caldý's posts after 5 minutes, with Alfie Orchard stepping up to kick the three points. The lead, though lasted barely 5 minutes, after James Thacker was yellow-carded for a second team offence in short order inside the red zone. Caldý wasted no time in launching their all-court attack, with multiple offloads out of tackles stretching the visitors' defence to breaking point for a try on the left, as Stortford's defensive organisation let them down momentarily out wide. Ben Jones converted well, as he did barely 4 minutes later right from the touchline, after another Stortford penalty gave his side more good possession, which was moved very slickly through their midfield to set the winger clear. It was now Stortford's turn to register a quick score, with Josh Stannard popping up in left midfield from his position on the right wing to dummy and glide through a gaping hole in the home defence, after his side had gone through several phases of quickly recycled ball. Orchard converted well but, only 6 minutes later saw his side slip 11 points behind again, after more very effective offloading by Caldý out of successive tackles led to the home side touching down out wide, again brilliantly converted by Jones. Stortford were able to strike back even more quickly this time, though, when quick hands saw the ball swung along the backline, allowing Stannard to go in for his second try with only 25 minutes on the clock - this time on his own wing. Orchard's conversion attempt into the increasing wind drifted just wide. Caldý swept back onto the attack, but determined defence by the visitors kept them out and a counter-attack, led by an interception by James Thacker in his own 22 almost brought another Stortford try, when a Sam Winter grubber kick just eluded the grasp of chasing winger, Jake Morris. With time running out in the half, Stortford exerted more pressure on the home

defence, forcing two penalties, the second, right under Caldý's posts allowing Tom Walker to take the three points.

A three-point halftime deficit for the visitors, turning to play with the strong breeze behind them seemed to provide a good platform against the league leaders but, despite considerable early pressure, increasing difficulties at both scrum and lineout meant that Stortford were unable to drive the advantage home. Caldý eventually worked their way upfield on the back of successive Stortford penalties, but stout defence from the visitors repelled the attack, which included a 5 metre scrum taken instead of a penalty. A tremendous clearance kick from Orchard quickly switched play to the other end of the pitch, where a good team chase and some fierce Stortford pressure forced a penalty under Caldý's posts with some 60 minutes on the clock. The case for going for goal to level the scores looked compelling, but Stortford showed their ambition by taking a quick tap. Unfortunately, on this occasion, ambition was not matched by execution and a knock-on quickly saw the threat snuffed out. With the visitors now struggling to win any good first phase ball, Caldý proceeded steadily to take control, forcing a number of further penalties, which they were able, despite the headwind to use as platforms for two tries in the final 10 minutes. Both came from textbook lineout drills in the opposition's 22 and, although Stortford's maul defence was good enough to hold out both initial drives, Caldý showed the kind of game management to be expected from would-be champions by quickly shifting the points of attack to pierce the stretched defence. Stortford fought back bravely, but the home side's experience and organisation enabled them to see the final few minutes of the game out without undue alarm.

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Rory Banks & Ollie Jones

A BACKROW PAIRING

In the “good old rugby days” the back row consisted of an openside wing-forward, a blindside wing-forward and a No 8. The back row has now progressed and are often referred to as flankers, ball carriers, and jackals, but the wing forward backrow role is still to tackle opponents close to set pieces, be first to the midfield breakdown and be able to support breaks. Another thing that has not changed is the backrow players are still “loose forwards” and are not usually required to carry out the more onerous duties of the “tight forwards”. Backrow forwards are expected to be skilful, faster and more athletic than hookers, props and second rows, and as such, you will often see back rowers appearing on the wing as a deliberate tactic.



There can be no argument that both Rory Banks and Oliver Jones are proper back row forwards. Rory, despite the handicaps of having a brother (Tom) who played scrum half and having started his rugby playing at school as a hooker, has managed to transfer those skills to become a clever backrow forward. He has the right combination of strength, skill and nous to become a good fit for a backrow forward. He progressed through the Stortford minis, colts and Blues to play backrow forward in the First XV. This season he has played most of his rugby in Nat One as a ball-carrying, jackling No. 8 although he would still regard himself as a 7 which was where he came to

prominence in Stortford's first season in National One.

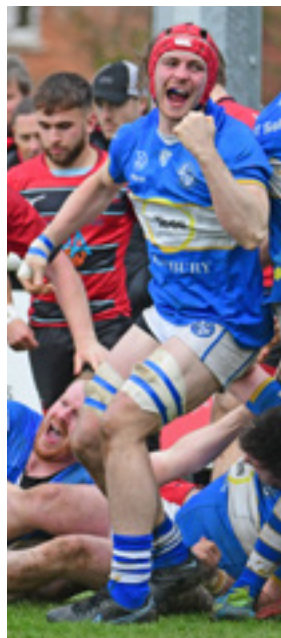
Oliver (Ollie) Jones started playing at Stortford at age seven in the minis and was in the Colts National Cup winning side of 2012-2013 when the colts beat Worcester 24-7 in the final. He made his debut for the First XV at Clifton in National 2 South in October 2016 and his Nat 1 debut against Amphilhill at home in September 2017.

Ollie now wears a red scrumcap when playing, at the suggestion of his Welsh father who was a big fan of Dan Lydiate and Justin Tipuric, the two Welsh scrumcap wearing backrowers. It also appears wearing a scrumcap not only means that you get noticed on the field but also that you can confuse spectators and coaches. Ollie has been confused with Matt Tomlinson- a scrum cap wearer- and also Sam Winter, when Sam borrowed Ollie's scrumcap against Leeds this season.

Rory and Ollie started together alongside Dan Leo for the first time in Nat One at home against

Old Albanians in October 2017. In the next two seasons, with the club's antipodean imports of Baxter Wilson and Dan Elsom featuring in the backrow, and with Covid curtailments, meant that Rory and Ollie's starting appearances together have been limited but maybe in the coming seasons they will start a lot more games together.

Ollie got his first “Man of the Match”



BY RICHARD EVANS



award and the “National One Player of the Week” award, against Rosslyn Park at home this season. It was by far the best Stortford performance of the season to date set up by some impressive defence in the first half in which Ollie and Rory together made a big contribution.

Surprisingly that was the first game this season that Rory and Ollie had started together in the backrow and subsequently they both started in another excellent home win over Darlington. In National Division One rugby there is a high rate of attrition from injuries and a definite need for rotation amongst the back rowers, so it is not really



surprising that Rory and Ollie have not started that many games together.

There is no doubt that their backrow skillsets compliment each other’s play, with Ollie’s “Kamikaze” tackling and Rory’s

vigorous ball carrying and turnovers. This covers all the backrow wing forward requirements, and along with Apples, (another product of the Stortford youth system!) in the backrow, who provides excellent lineout and close support work. On occasions however, just like Tipuric for Wales, and on the basis that he is light enough to lift easily, Ollie also has provided some variety with important clean lineout ball.

Rory has been sponsored long term by “The Star at Standon” village pub and restaurant and this continues despite the recent addition to the proprietor’s family of a First Team hooker, namely Dec Caulfield, who married Katie the Landlords daughter last year! Rory also used to feature in the Banks family firm adverts in the match programs but has now been phased out for a pair of half backs. It would not have been appropriate anyway for a proper backrow forward to have been portrayed sitting down!



Ollie is sponsored by Smart Merchants Ltd, and as a quantity surveyor enjoys chatting with Mark Watts about all the new electrical systems and equipment now becoming required in house building.

It is good to know that in the modern rugby game the backrow still need to make the same important contributions and that with Rory and Ollie Stortford have two good practitioners of those backrow arts.



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Featured match: Bishop's Stortford 2nd XV vs Richmond Saxons 3rd XV
Final score 40-30 to BSRFC

Club Stortford



Now in its sixth season, **Club Stortford** was set up by a small working party to support the 1st XV squad after promotion to National League Rugby in 2013/14. Our aim is “to ensure Bishop’s Stortford RFC has a sustainable future in National League Rugby and continues to nurture home grown talent.”

Working in conjunction with the 1stXV coaching team, CS provides funding for various expenditure beyond the financial resources of the main club.

Our Joint head coaches Tom and Marcus have stressed on a number of occasions how important the financial support given to them by Club Stortford is. Quite simply, without it’s support, the team would not be able to perform at such currently high levels.

We continue to look for new members, to allow us to broaden and deepen the extent of our support.

We would urge you to consider joining Club Stortford. If you are interested and would like further information, please contact our secretary,

Russell Cattell 07778 101 988



The Oval Club was formed in 1998 by some Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club members who wanted to find a way of raising funds to improve the playing facilities of the Club with the mission statement:

'To contribute towards promoting the highest possible standard of rugby throughout Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club'

The Oval Club is an autonomous body and entirely independent of the Rugby Club's operations. None of the Committee members hold a position or appointment in the Rugby Club's infrastructure. The Oval Club does not seek to influence decisions of the Rugby Club. It responds to requests for financial assistance for projects which have been approved by the Rugby Club's Executive Committee and which fall within its mission statement.

Funds are raised by monthly contributions from the Members two thirds of which are set aside for Rugby Club projects with the other third reserved for social events for Members.

To date The Oval Club has raised over a quarter of a million pounds with the Rugby Club receiving more than £150,000.

The Oval Club makes contributions to the Rugby Club for one off projects which are of long term value and not part of on-going budget requirements. Often these contributions have been made to the Club to enable it to secure grants from the Rugby Football Union and other sources.

So far, major contributions have been made towards the cost of:

- Flood lighting the main pitch,
- Floodlighting the back field pitches,
- Pitch repair and maintenance,
- Improvement of the playing surfaces, including the purchase of a verti-drainer,
- Drainage of the back field pitches,
- Rabbit fencing,

- Replacement of goal posts,
- Refurbishing the changing room showers,
- Purchase of physiotherapy equipment,
- Playing equipment and travel costs for all teams,
- Supporting youth and mini through tours, kit and additional playing facilities,
- Junior coaching courses.

On the social side there are annual Members' events. Currently these are:

- A self-supporting golf day at one of the local golf clubs,
- An Annual Dinner and Forum,
- First team home and away lunches.

Through its contributions The Oval Club plays a considerable part in helping the Rugby Club enhance its playing related facilities for the use and benefit of all members of the Club.

Anyone who is interested in joining The Oval Club should contact a member of the Committee below.

THE OVAL CLUB COMMITTEE:

Robbie Kerr - Chairman
John Robinson - Secretary
John Power - Treasurer
Mark Caulfield
Mike Howatson
Mark Smith
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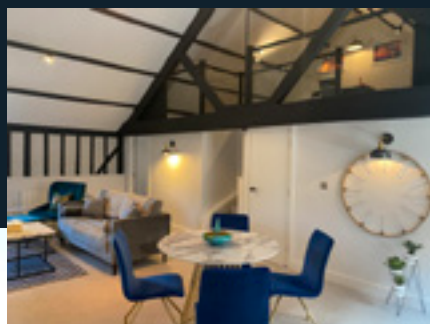
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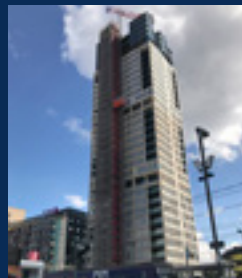
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Page 5

Pedestrian crossing to finally get green light?

New hope for families over safety improvements on Hadham Road

Sinead Carr
sinead.carr@stortfordindependent.co.uk

Parents campaigning for a pedestrian crossing in Bishop's Stortford's Hadham Road have finally made progress after three years of pressure. Exasperated families launched an attempt to force Hertfordshire County Council to find funding for the vital safety measure on the A1309 near Maze Green Road.

The road is used by pupils at Bishop's Stortford College, Hockerill Anglo-European College, Herts and Essex High School, St Mary's Catholic School and Northgate and Windhill Primary, as a route to and from school. One of the campaigners, Helen makes it extremely dangerous for school drop-off times and this situation is getting worse as more and more new housing developments are occupied to the west of the town, including the large Stortford Fields estate.

The county council should have

made provision for improved road safety on Hadham Road in the planning conditions for Stortford Fields, yet a crossing in this location does not qualify for any of the 5m transport provision associated with the development.

This now needs to be put right and funds should be provided urgently to avoid a serious accident. Two years ago former county councillor for Stortford West division Colin Woodward used part of his highways budget to commission a vehicle speed and volume survey plus a pedestrian survey which proved the crossing was required.

Since then, his successor, Cllr Alastair Ward-Routh, has backed the campaign and finally been able to report some good news. Design work has begun and Cllr Ward-Routh, who is also an East Herts Council member, is hopeful he will soon have a firm indication of costs and a possible timetable. He is hopeful the location might be suitable for a zebra crossing, without

» Continues on page 3

Village pub's first floor and thatched roof destroyed in Mother's Day fire



Ten fire crews fought to save the Ave and Comptons in Arkhadden after flames ripped through its thatched roof shortly before it was due to open on Sunday - full story, see page 3

Picture: Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

"The county council should have

» Continues on page 3

thority before it was due to open on Sunday - full story, see page 3

Picture: Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

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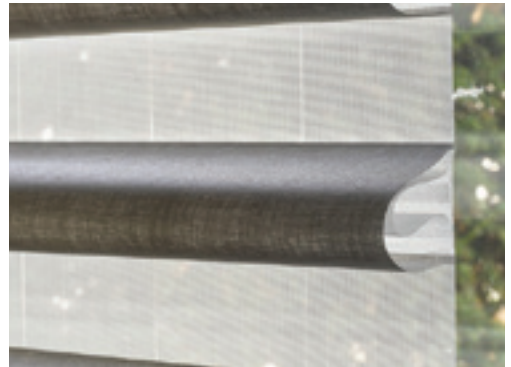
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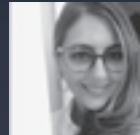
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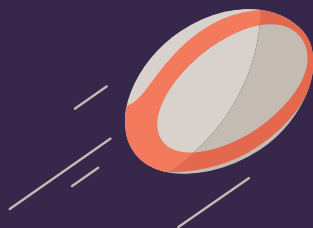
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On this day...

APRIL 16TH



The first reference to ladies rugby at Bishop's Stortford was during season 1986-87 when 18 young ladies started training under coach Keith Coakham and captain Amanda Campbell, whose husband, Gordon captained the 1st XV in 1988 and '89. This puts BSRFC a little behind the trend because in 1884 Emily Valentine played in a boy's team at Portora Royal School in Enniskillen and it is thought that women's rugby started in the 1890s but it was 1962 at Edinburgh University before the first record of a women's rugby team.

The next reference in our club is from 1995-96 when Sharon Mumford brought a group of girls and ladies together and began Sunday training but that initiative petered out. Almost ten years later, in October 2008, Executive Committee minutes record a determination to restart the women's section. A large number of girls from local schools were training at Birchwood school under the direction of Tom Coleman and all would be invited to join BSRFC at an introductory subscription of £25. The first training session took place at the club on 5th November and the first game was on 16th November and on 1st December 2008 Executive minutes stated that a team would be ready for January 2009 with shirt sponsorship being finalised and initiatives underway to increase the number of coaches. It was agreed that part of



the Subway sponsorship money would be used for work on a ladies changing room including showers, benches, and shirts. By February 2009 training had been established with 13 girls attending regularly 'Girls Rugby' and in July Chris Gallagher 'had been appointed womens' coach with assistance from Tom Coleman. And it was hoped to arrange some games against Hertford'.

Now, of course, Women's rugby is well established with Premiership, Championship, and thousands of clubs throughout the country playing competitive league and social women's rugby. At BSRFC, a re-vitalised ladies' section has grown to include the senior squad, playing twelve league games this season in the Women's National Challenge 2 League, Midlands South, as well as 4 age groups of girls' rugby each with dedicated coaches and

support groups. In 2018, the ladies took part in the BT Sports Rugby Tonight program, and in November 2018 the girls were part of the guard of honour at Twickenham before the England vs Australia autumn international and as mascots to the England team, they got to play on the hallowed turf.



BSRFC Girls and Ladies

END OF SEASON ROUNDUP



By Womens' & Girls' Chair, Carly Poyser and Ladies Captain, Social Media Guru & Girls' Coach, Jasmin Bice.

I am extremely proud of both the ladies and the girls this season. We have had new players and coaches, and they all have a real drive to perform their best. There is nothing more that I could wish for in the teams.

The girls' teams continue to grow, but as ever, we need more players – so please do get involved! A real season highlight for our U18s was a great evening playing against the Swedish international U18s squad (organised and coached by our own Joss Linney – thank you!).

A huge thank you to all of our coaches this season in the girls' teams, total “newbies” and experienced alike, teamwork really does make the dream work!

The ladies' coaches, led by Tom Brady along with Jack Fellowes-Pryne, Nick Kane and our medic, Dave Walker, have been an unwavering support to the team. Come rain or shine, they have worked very hard to turn the ladies from individual players to work as a team. Although the scoreboard for the last ladies game was harsh, the communication and work rate within the team has been amazing and next season we will come back even stronger!

There is always more to do, but we are all up for the challenge.

(Now over to Jas...)

For the ladies, this season has been a mixture of highs and lows (as you can tell by the scoreboards), but, without sounding cliché, there are so many positives to take away. Firstly, the number of new ladies coming along to give rugby a try has been incredible.

Whether they've played rugby before or not, we've had a huge number of new players coming along to Silver Leys on a Tuesday – which has meant that for the

first time in BSRFC Ladies history, we have been able to put out a full team for every single match!

Being able to watch the confidence grow in new players, and the team as a whole, has been amazing to see. After going through so much uncertainty over the last couple of years, the support that our coaches have given us this season has really pushed us to want to do better for each other – which really shows just how much we're coming along as a unit.

The girls' section is going from strength-to-strength, and this is really all down to Carly and the band of volunteers who give their time to make sure that the girls have training and can play matches. Again, despite the uncertainty everyone has faced, the teams haven't been affected and this is really paving the way for girls in the area to be able to start rugby at a younger age and work their way right through to the ladies.

Across both sections, we've had injuries, penalties (a couple of yellow cards for the ladies) and unfortunately some leavers; but, the development in player numbers, skills and teamwork has been great to watch and we're looking forward to continuing it into the 2022-23 season.

As ever, we always welcome new players, so once you've finished reading this (potentially a few bottles of prosecco down) at Ladies Day, let our ladies convince you why you should join our team!

See you next season!

Carly & Jas



Match Day Experience

BISHOP'S STORTFORD RFC

Behind the scenes with the 1st XV...



As part of the Club's ethos 'to be a strong and successful rugby club united from Senior to Minis', trusted and valued by our community BSRFC Joint Head Coaches Tom Coleman and Marcus Cattell along with Club captain Sam Winter and the rest of the 1st XV Squad, provide an insight for our "Mini and Junior" Members into what goes on behind the scenes as the Players prepare for

a National League 1 Match. The day kicks off with a QandA in the 1st XV Changing Room, followed by Training, Games and Warm up Sessions with the Coaches and Players. They then form the "Players Tunnel" alongside the "Blazers" to welcome both the opposition and the 1st XV onto the pitch before the game. Their experience culminates with Post Match Photos alongside the Players.



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- Will be entitled to a reduced entrance fee on 1st XV Match Days
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