

OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME OF BISHOP'S STORTFORD RFC

STORTFORD

IN THE SPOTLIGHT
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PAGE 43



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FROM THE PRESIDENT: AL JONES



Five weeks after our last home game I hope that you, like me, are looking forward to getting back to rugby at Silver Leys.

Before I get to today's opponents, I would like to share a few words and thoughts regarding a great character of the Club who we lost over the Christmas break.

I was incredibly sad to learn that **Frank Hadfield** passed away suddenly on 23rd December, whilst visiting family in Devon.

Frank was a Club Vice President, former player, and long-time supporter of BSRFC, and a member of the Oval Club from its inception in 1998.

He was a larger-than-life character and will be sorely missed by his family, and all of his many, many friends here at the Club and beyond.

When I remember my own conversations with Frank over the years, it is impossible to do so without a smile on my face, since every single one of those conversations involved laughter. I am sure I am not the only one who has such memories.

My thoughts, and those of everyone at the Club, are with his family and friends at this very sad time and we send them our best wishes.

Although we narrowly lost our final two matches of 2024, both on the road, we are defending a two match home winning streak after victory against DMP and Sale. Today we look to extend that record against Birmingham Moseley who sit just above us in the table.

When we met Moseley in September, they took 5 points with a strong disciplined

performance, winning 28-14. Conceding tries in the first and last minutes of the game certainly didn't help us and meant that the final score perhaps flattered the home side a little. And Josh Stannard's hamstring going when he was about to score under the posts didn't help us either!

Over the last eight years, results have been fairly even between the two Clubs, and we can expect another well fought contest this afternoon.

Today's Man of the Match sponsors are the ever-present Ace of Lanes & Three Willows who have not missed a pre-match lunch in our years in National League One. Thank you for your ongoing support gentlemen.

Finally, I wanted to highlight our Women's team had their first match of 2025 postponed last Sunday and currently sit second in their league with a game in hand over league leaders Braintree. The two sides meet at Braintree next Sunday, so if anyone wishes to make the trip down the A120, I'm sure the team would appreciate the extra support on the road.

I hope everyone enjoys their afternoon at Silver Leys, and that we have a great start to 2025.

Al



Frank Hadfield (centre) is flanked by Kiran Shaw (left) and Roger Wilmot (right)



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TOM COLEMAN: HEAD COACH



I would like to start by wishing everyone a very happy new year and I hope you enjoyed the festive period with your friends and families.

It is precisely five weeks since we last ran out at here at Silver Leys against Sale FC, so we are hoping to begin the new year with a bang and produce a really positive performance.

Whilst we came up short on too many occasions throughout the first half of the season, I've seen many aspects of our game improve and I'm positive we are only going to get stronger. I cannot fault the effort and desire from the squad over the festive period and it's been really pleasing to see the extra work they have put in away from the club to ensure we're in good condition for today's game.

Today's opponent in Birmingham Moseley will be another tough challenge for the players, but

one they are ready and excited for. In our first meeting we had so much possession in their 22, but ultimately weren't good enough to score enough points to win the game. We let ourselves get frustrated as they constantly slowed the game down at the right moments to take it away from us. They are an experienced side who have a very good set piece and some dangerous backs we need to be aware of. We have prepared for another very difficult game for, but one we are very excited about competing in.

Thank you to everyone who supports, sponsors and volunteers at the club. Your time, generosity and effort does not go unnoticed, and we hope the players and coaches can share a drink with you after the game.

All the best.

Tom

THE COACHING STAFF



Left to right: Ryan Clarke, Cameron Boon, Tom Coleman, Rob Faiers, Jon Skelton, Ben Sheath.



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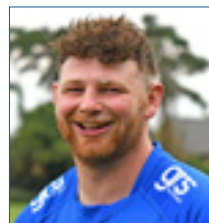
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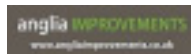
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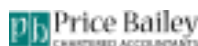
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TODAY'S OPPONENTS



Moseley were founded in 1873 by members of Havelock Cricket Club who wanted something to do in the winter months. A year later they

adopted their famous red and black colours. They originally played at the Reddings in Moseley but the pressure of trying to compete in the new era of professional rugby caused them financial difficulties and created a need to sell their 125-year home to property developers. After five years as tenants at the University of Birmingham they relocated in 2005 to their current home at Billesley Common, Yardley Wood Road, Birmingham.

The Clubs so called 'Golden years' were in the 60's and 70's when their fixture list routinely included the top sides in England and Wales, and Moseley players were regularly included in international teams.

When league rugby commenced in 1987, Moseley were placed in the Courage National Division 1, the top division at the time, in 1988 they ended Bath's astonishing run of 22 unbeaten cup matches winning 4-3!

They were though relegated at the end of the 1990-1991 season. The club entered administration in 1998. Four years of financial turmoil followed before a new Moseley Rugby Club emerged in 2002. The rescue came too late though to save them on the field, that season they once again endured relegation this time from National One (Level 2) to National Two (Level 3).

They regained their spot in the second tier by finishing as champions in 2006 and there they remained until they were relegated from the Championship (Level 2) to Division One (the new name for Level 3) at the end of the 2015/16 season.

Prior to the 2016/17 season, the club changed its name to Birmingham Moseley Rugby Club.

Stortford played Birmingham Moseley for the first time when we went up to

Division One in 2017/18 and for that season and the next two seasons both sides won a game each.

In season 2021/22 Moseley finished just below us in the league, we completed the double on them for the first time by winning 33-3 home and winning 17-29 away.

In 2022/23 we beat them at home 29-23 and came back after a very poor first half to finally get a 34-34 draw at their place.

Last season Stortford won the home game 29-22 after coming back to overturn a Moseley lead in the first half and then holding onto the win in the second half. The match at Moseley was convincingly won 38-13 by Moseley. Moseley finished fifth in the League with 14 wins and 76 points with Stortford ending at eleventh with 10 wins and 56 points. Both sides were also well beaten by promoted Chinnor at Chinnor in the second half of the season, with Stortford losing by a lot more than Moseley!

Ollie Stedman
(Captain)





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WOMEN & GIRLS: KATE HAWKINS



We sadly had our last league game against Letchworth postponed due to the weather meaning the Womens XV have still only played 3 league matches and had one walkover so far this season on top of a few friendlies.

The squad are keeping their heads high despite a lack of game time with a winning streak leaving them currently sitting 2nd in the league with a game in hand and still the only undefeated team within the NC3 Midlands (East) league.

Our next game is away to Braintree on Sunday 19th January, so if any of you fancy coming along to maintain the amazing support we have had so far this season keep an eye out for KO time on our socials.



You may have also seen that the amazing **Christina** and **Eva Radukic** represent Croatia in a winning game against Bulgaria at the end of last year, what an achievement. Well done ladies, looking forward to watching the next match!!

We continue with our sponsors Nockolds and Charterhouse to whom we are extremely grateful.

We also as in line with the 23/24 season have our individual player sponsors and as we have so many new players we still have sponsorship options available.

If you're interested in sponsoring a player for the 24/25 season, please email ladieschari@bsrfc.co.uk for further information.

So, if you're searching for more than just a sport, consider BSRFC's Women's rugby.



If you wish to become involved or for any further information. Please contact myself Kate Hawkins at: ladieschair@bsrfc.co.uk

Kate Hawkins

Chair of Women and Girls.



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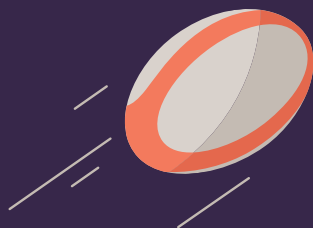
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NATIONAL 1: RESULTS, FIXTURES, TABLE

Results from 21st December 2024

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Rams	31 - 3	Esher
Birmingham Moseley	27 - 10	Leicester Lions
Blackheath	39 - 32	Bishop's Stortford
Plymouth Albion	31 - 3	Ding Crusaders
Richmond	17 - 25	Rosslyn Park
Rotherham	29 - 14	Darlington Mowden Park
Sedgley park	14 - 12	Sale FC

Fixtures for 11th January 2025

HOME TEAM		AWAY TEAM
Bishop's Stortford	vs	Birmingham Moseley
Darlington Mowden Park	vs	Richmond
Ding Crusaders	vs	Sedgley Park
Esher	vs	Rotherham
Leicester Lions	vs	Plymouth Albion
Rosslyn Park	vs	Blackheath
Sale FC	vs	Rams

NATIONAL LEAGUE 1 TABLE											
Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	PD	TBP	LBP	Points	Adj.
Richmond	14	12	1	1	438	258	180	8	0	58	0
Rams	14	11	0	3	419	224	195	10	3	57	0
Rotherham	14	11	0	3	431	307	124	8	2	54	0
Rosslyn Park	14	9	0	5	426	328	98	8	2	46	0
Blackheath	14	9	0	5	387	318	69	7	2	45	0
Plymouth Albion	14	7	0	7	375	335	40	10	5	43	0
Birmingham Moseley	12	8	0	4	285	254	31	5	0	37	0
Bishop's Stortford	14	6	0	8	345	353	-8	8	3	35	0
Dings	14	5	1	8	369	447	-78	8	1	31	0
Sale FC	13	5	0	8	259	318	-59	4	5	29	0
Sedgley Park	14	4	1	9	357	359	-2	6	4	28	0
Leicester Lions	14	3	0	11	278	434	-156	5	4	21	0
Esher	13	3	0	10	325	515	-190	7	1	20	0
Darlington Mowden Park	14	1	1	12	267	511	-244	4	1	11	0



BISHOP'S STORTFORD

BLUE AND WHITE

1 Calum Coyne

2 Isaac Bell

3 Henry Peck

4 Hamish Ferguson

5 Fraizier Kiff

6 Ollie Jones

7 Sam Johnson

8 Will Rogers (c)

9 Chris Bolton

10 Dan Powell

11 Alex Gilham

12 Austin Pope

13 Jack Biard

14 Chris Smith

15 Tom Mills

REPLACEMENTS

16 Alex Rayment

17 Tristan Smith

18 Toby Hill

19 Harrison Langworthy

20 Charlie Briers

Head Coach:

Tom Coleman

Forwards Coaches:

Cameron Boon

Defence Coach & Blues Head Coach

Ian Simpson

Scrum & Throwing Coach:

Rob Faiers

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Ben Sheath

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Head Physio:

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13 Morgan A Jones

14 Freddie Painter

15 Sam Pointon (c)

REPLACEMENTS

16 James Randall

17 Tabuna Maka

18 Finn smith

19 Tom Miles

20 Tighe M Whitely

Director of Rugby:

Adam Balding

Head Coach:

Peter Glackin

Forwards Coach:

Ashley Johnson

Team Manager:

Harley Williams

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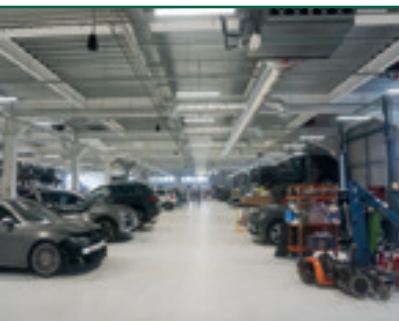
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MATCH REPORT: JOHN ALLANSON



Blackheath 39 Bishop's Stortford First XV 32

A frantic game, in which fortunes swung to and fro, but in which, generally, the home side played with a little more purpose and control, deservedly coming out on top.

Despite playing into a strong wind, Blackheath went 3 points ahead in the first minute, after Stortford were penalised almost straight from the opening dropout. Within 2 minutes, though, Stortford took the lead with an unconverted try to Alex Gilham, after a quickly taken penalty had stretched the home defence. The gap was extended to 9 points 7 minutes later, when Alex Rayment touched down after a good spell of Stortford pressure and Dan Powell had drawn in the last defender. Chris Bolton made an excellent conversion from the touchline. The home side bounced back with their own unconverted try with 15 minutes gone, when, with scrumhalf, Jordan Burns pulling the strings, they clinically exposed Stortford's lack of cover down the short side to give the right wing a clear run in. A long Tom Mills goal on 21 minutes took the visitors 7 points up, but the deficit was narrowed to only 2 seven minutes later from a driven lineout maul, after a big Stortford error, carrying the ball out of their 22 before kicking directly into touch. A sustained spell of Stortford pressure, built around a dominant scrum was frustrated by stout Blackheath defence and the visitors settled for a Chris Bolton penalty goal. Unable to clear their lines from the restart kick, however, Stortford invited the opposition onto them again and three strong thrusts stretched the defence, capitalised on to the full by a clever grubber kick, which allowed the left wing to gather the ball and go over untouched for a try. The conversion, as first half time ran out took Blackheath into the break ahead for the first time – albeit by only 2 points.

Burns demonstrated perfectly within 2 minutes of the restart how to exploit the strong following wind, putting a long rolling 50-22 kick to within 5

metres of Stortford's line. The visitors were soon penalised and Blackheath added 3 points to their tally. The visitors seemed to have a let-off after 51 minutes, when an easy penalty shot crashed against an upright, but a further successful shot 3 minutes later stretched the home lead to 8. This became 15 after a further 3 minutes, when another kick straight into touch put Blackheath on the front foot and more, forceful, driving rugby took them to a ruck on Stortford's 22. Quick thinking by their hooker took him through a gap in the cover defence directly behind the breakdown to scamper over under the posts with 20 minutes to go. A great solo try from replacement scrumhalf, Declan Murphy only 3 minutes later brought Stortford back into the game, stepping his way over from 30 metres out. David Hayes added the 2 points, but his side looked to be out of the game, when 2 further penalties were added after 65 and 70 minutes by Blackheath's Tom Fitch, as his side piled on the pressure. Undaunted, though, Stortford fought back and managed again to string some fluid handling together to test the opposition defence. This was rounded off with Murphy again sprinting over from 20 metres out for the 4th, bonus point try. Hayes again added the crucial conversion to narrow the deficit to 7 points, but the resultant second bonus point looked vulnerable, with any penalty within Stortford's half threatening to cost three points. Although Stortford finished the stronger, threatening briefly to level the scores, Blackheath countered and the visitors were content in the end to settle for the 2 points.



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IN THE SPOTLIGHT: FRAIZER KIFF



Frazier joined Stortford at the start of the 2022-23 season and played his first game against Hull in the opening game of that season. Frazier was selected in the back row at 6 for that game but has subsequently played all his games for Stortford in the second row.

Frazier made just 5 appearances in 2022-23 season as he picked up several injuries and was in the concussion protocol during the season. In the 2023-24 season he made 19 appearances all in the second row and got his first try for Stortford against Taunton at home. It was a typical second row try with Frazier diving over the base of a ruck. He also picked up his first yellow card early in the home win over Darlington in December for a high tackle when the refs were still vigorously applying the new high tackle law.

So far, this current season Frazier has made 11 appearances again all in the second row and managed another “back of the ruck” try against Plymouth.

Frazier has the dimensions you would expect for a second row at 6ft 5ins tall and 118 kilos. He plays in a faded red scrum cap that helps a little with minimising concussion risks but is also key to preventing the dreaded second row mis-figured ear syndrome.

Frazier came to Stortford from Moseley and will be playing against some of his former team mates this afternoon. He made 17 appearances for Moseley in Division One in the 2021-22 season before moving to Stortford. At school Frazier started playing his rugby at Number 8 but soon moved to the second row however having started his rugby career in the

back row has obviously helped with his around the field mobility.

Frazier previously featured in the player profile article in the Richmond home programme in January 2024 but on that occasion shared the limelight with Dan Powell in a double player. Frazier was also included in the newcomers’ article in September 2022 along with other newcomers that included Chris Bolton, Harrison Langworthy, and Will Rogers. So, this will be the first time he has featured in a programme profile article all by himself.

Frazier has been sponsored by Hilton Coach Works since he joined Stortford in 2022 and very much appreciates their on-going support.





Did you know **Club Stortford** has raised over **£467,000** to help the 1st XV team over the last twelve seasons? Now in our 13th season, it's hard to believe we started as a small working party to support the squad after our promotion to National League Rugby in 2013/14. It was the brainchild of Charlie Dunsford, Russell Cattell and others from the club. Many members have worked tirelessly both at the forefront and behind the scenes throughout the last 13 years and we want that to continue. At our recent AGM **Charlie Dunsford** and **Jamie Baker** were duly elected to take up the ongoing challenge as the New President and New Secretary.



Club Stortford works closely with the 1st XV coaching team to provide funding for expenditure beyond the resources of the main club and our Mission Statement remains a simple one;

- **To ensure BSRFC continues our journey in National 1s League Rugby – this includes the 1st & Blues as one squad**
- **To cultivate new homegrown talent throughout the club drawing from the - minis - youth - colts - development squad.**

We continue to be on the hunt for new members who can help us to broaden the extent of our support for the squad. Both individual and corporate membership options are available, and come with exclusive Club Stortford ties, 2 x Club Stortford pre-match lunches, match reports after each league game and other perks like access to Six Nations and Autumn Internationals tickets. There will also be regular updates for Club Stortford Members from Tom Coleman, our new head coach. Alongside this, you'll get discounts to local restaurants like Zara. Get in touch with our secretary **Jamie Baker** on **07922 422 489** for more information or to join.

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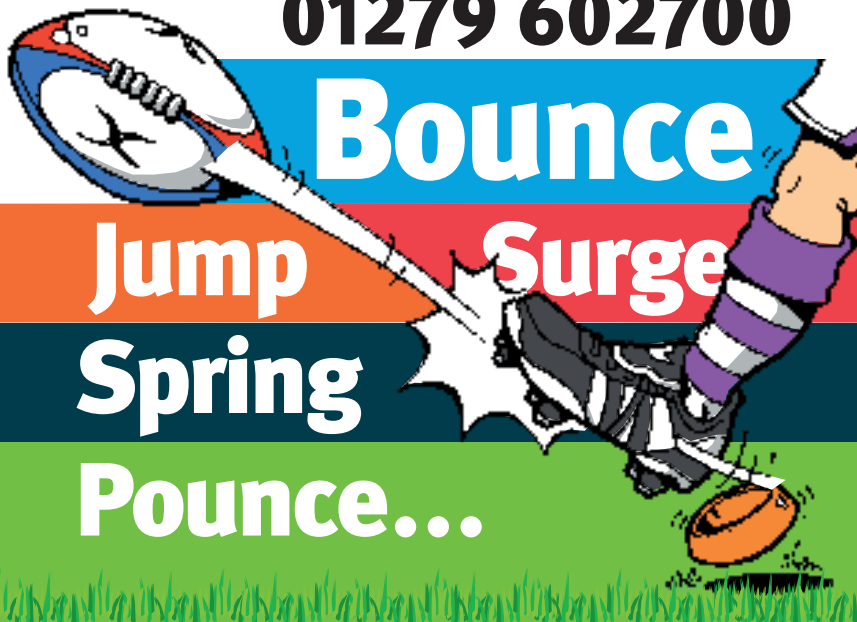


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The Oval Club was formed in 1998 by some Bishop's Stortford Rugby Football Club members who wanted to find a way of raising funds to improve the playing facilities of the Club with the mission statement:

'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 £200,000.

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 of all sections and members of the Club, including Senior Sides, Ladies & Girls, Colts, Youth, Mini and Touch Rugby

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

THE OVAL CLUB COMMITTEE:

Robbie Kerr - Chairman
Steven Wasley - Secretary
John Power - Treasurer
John Robinson
Mark Caulfield
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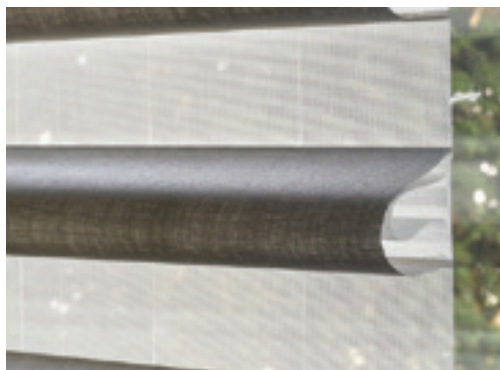


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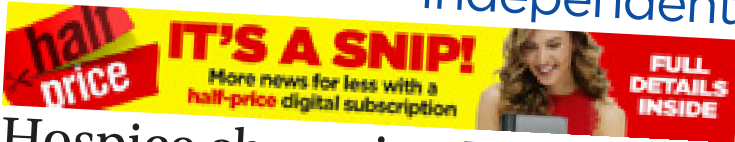
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Hospice champion Renée is on King's New Year Honours list

Bishop's Stortford engineer awarded OBE and village stalwart gets British Empire Medal

Chris Carter
chris-carter@gatorjournal.co.uk

Renée Friend cannot walk through Bishop's Stortford town centre without being stopped by someone who has been touched by her work with Isabel Hospice.

Now, as a recipient of a British Empire Medal in the King's New Year Honours published last night, recognition of her 35 years of inspirational voluntary work with the charity can only grow.

For 70-year-old Renée, that can only be good things as it reinforces her mission to keep the hospice's profile as high as possible will continue.

She described news of the honours as "amazing", adding: "It's a huge honour - and a big surprise."

Renée's involvement with Isabel - the Welwyn Garden City-based hospice service for East Herts, Broxbourne and Welwyn Hatfield - was born out of frustration with the way her mother spent her final days in a hospital corridor, dying of cancer.

That was in 1981, when hospices were in their infancy, so helpfully she volunteered for Cancer Research UK and began raising funds for that charity.

In the mid-80s I was contacted by Isabel Hospice saying they were trying to raise funds," she said. "I decided yes, that's what I should be doing. In [my mother's] loving memory."

Renée set up her first fundraising group in Branching, then the Hatfield and finally in Stortford. Besides her fundraising exploits, she has provided bereavement support to families and been a volunteer in the hospice's in-patient



Renée Friend, left, has been awarded a British Empire Medal in the King's New Year Honours for her inspirational voluntary work, which has spanned 35 years and counting. In aid of Isabel Hospice. And read the stories of fellow award-winners Sally Fenton, centre, and Margaret Lines, right, on page 3



unit (IPU). She was heavily involved in the fundraising to build the hospice's first IPU and her engagement with the community has seen her raise £60,000 a year.

Renée also runs bereavement meetings and coffee mornings in the Markwell Studio - formerly the Markwell Pavilion - in Castle Park Church, and is involved in the hospice's Compassionate Neighbours scheme.

In the commendation for the award, Renée was described as "creative, inspirational" with "huge amounts of energy which encourages others to support her and the hospice".

She could not hide her frustration over the system of funding for hospices. But says the efforts of the community ensure the £7.2 million a year needed to maintain Isabel Hospice's work is realised.

"We count on the support of our local communities - we rely on that to

do it," said Renée, who said she could not do what she does without her "great team of volunteers".

Inevitably her passion for the hospice has rubbed off on her family, as describing her husband David's two daughters were involved from a young age.

And she was proud to say even her seven grandchildren have been touched by her enthusiasm. "My granddaughter runs a cupcake stall for

"my name", said Renée, who was the first recipient of the Charity Champion title in the inaugural Isabel Community Awards in 2018.

That first burst of passion for the work of Isabel Hospice is unquenchable and a busy period in December saw Renée organise 12 events.

"I just love the whole ethos of the hospice," she said. "It's the heart of our town and that's amazing."

See page 3 for more New Year Honours coverage

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OFF THE PITCH: THE PHYSIOS



The Bishops' Stortford RFC physio team has a crucial role in making sure that the impact of the inevitable injuries within the 1st XV

and Blues squads is minimised with the players recovering from injury both as safely and quickly as possible.

Ryan Clarke leads a team of physios who attend on match days as well as the twice weekly training sessions. Tuesday and Thursday evening. Ryan's team consists of Gina Roby, Matt Shephard, Annabelle Wright and Ethan Cooper. On match day Saturday's there is additional support from Emma Spong, together with a newcomer this year, Ailish Straver.

During the game when the physios assess any on-field injury they communicate by radio with the coaches so that they can make the well-informed decisions on the player playing on or possible substitution for the benefit of the individual player and the team.

There is an injury review as soon as the Saturday game is over, with a plan made for the coming week to deal with any new injuries and ongoing injuries so that the coaches know the fitness status of all the players.

The players are "strapped" up by the physio team prior to taking to the field on match days, the evening training sessions also requires physio preparation work prior to the commencement of training. The specialised rehab work for long term injuries takes place alongside Ben Sheath's training gym sessions.

Every injury rehabilitation is different, there are of course typical "forwards" and "backs" injuries. Forwards get more contact-based ligament injuries around their knees from rucks and other contact areas. The backs get more muscular injuries like hamstring strains from running at speed. There are also numerous shoulder injuries

sustained by all players from tackling meaning there are a variety of injuries which must be dealt with by the physios.

Ryan says since the introduction of the new tackle laws he has not noticed a decrease in concussions; however, concussion incidents had been monitored carefully at Stortford a long time before the introduction of the new tackle laws. Ryan believes anything that will help with player safety is a positive and the new law will help in the long term.

The science of injury treatment itself continues to improve, and the physio team use a range of aids such as complex equipment (electrical stimulation), occlusion cuff (blood flow restriction) and exercise bands.

It is obvious to even the older Stortford rugby supporter that the physio "magic sponge" days are ancient history, and that Stortford now field a strong dedicated physio team. They make a very important contribution to looking after the players fitness and health, making a key component for Stortford to be able to play winning rugby in National One.



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MATCH DAY EXPERIENCE

Behind the scenes with the 1st XV...

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The day kicks off with a Q&A in the 1st XV changing room, followed by training, games and warm-up sessions with the minis coaches and injured 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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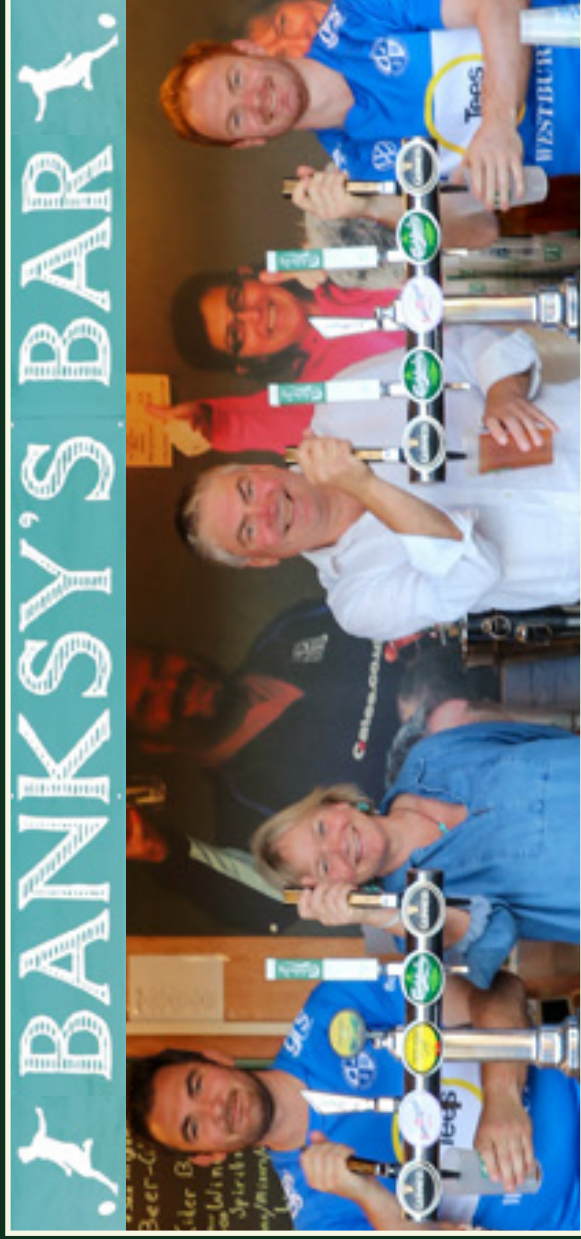
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