

# TOUCHLINE

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<b>November 2010</b>	



**The Newsletter of Maidstone Football Club - Founded 1880**

# President's 'Peace'

## *Bob Beney outlines future planning*

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To have been invited by Trevor Langley to follow in his footsteps to be your President is a real honour. I look forward to helping the rugby club in any way and hope to meet you all. I welcome especially all new players and members to Maidstone. Enjoy yourselves.

It has, however, been a very bittersweet start for me. I lost my wife Ann at the beginning of September after her amazingly brave fight against cancer. The fact that she lived so long was due to not only her determination, but also the hundreds of cards, messages, prayers and the wonderful work at Maidstone hospital under Justin Waters. Mention must also be made of the superb support from MacMillan Care who helped not only Ann but also our whole family. Finally, however, she decided that another course of treatment was a step too far, too long and with very low chance of success. That could have only one result. She is now at peace.

We all miss her terribly, as wife and mother but also as a friend.

On behalf of my daughter Elizabeth and my sons Tom and Andrew, I want to thank everyone in the rugby club for all the support understanding and help during this difficult time. It is at times like these that you really appreciate what a great group of people we have in the club. The minute silence before the match was very touching and much appreciated, especially hard for all you young guys. Thank you.

But Ann would be saying, "get on with things", and that is exactly what we intend doing.

### ***Defining Times***

The next few years will be defining times for Maidstone Rugby, both on and especially off the pitch. We have been working very closely with the Mote Cricket Club, the Mote Squash Club and Maidstone Borough Council to establish a joint sports body on the current site.

This will ensure the long-term futures of all clubs. This, especially for the Mote, is a very important decision. It will be known as the Mote Sports Foundation. There is, of course, some 'work in hand' but I believe that an agreement can be reached in the not too distant future as we all have the will to succeed. A very key element in all of this, is the support, encouragement and expertise of Maidstone Council, under their new chief Executive Alison Broom. Future funding for sports development on this site MUST be multi-sports. Here the council can advise in so many different areas.

Rugby has been played at Mote Park since 1949 and within the environs of the cricket club since 1957, after the former allotments were cleared to facilitate the first team pitch as it is today. Billy Williams' cabbage patch at Twickenham comes to mind.

The rugby club has expended considerable sums on capital projects both jointly and shared between the two clubs. In order to ensure we secured more than a transient benefit from its investment a 50-year lease was arranged in 1966. This was a display of confidence by each of the clubs in their future, in themselves and in each other. The potential benefits that this sporting asset can bestow upon both clubs are enormous. This is as true now that it was then.



I look forward to realising this. We will keep you fully informed of developments.

Some things are well within our power now. We have three good pitches plus a further newly-seeded patch at the top corner of the first team pitch. This was arranged by the youth section and credit goes to Youth Chairman Darren Mitchell and all his team for not only tidying up an eyesore of a piece of waste land, but making the whole area playable for even more of the club especially the so important juniors, our life-blood.

You may have seen the fine new floodlights on the Somme. Here, our new chairman Andy Golding was very instrumental in organising things. Have a look at them. This will, without question, improve training.

To continue round the ground we are making the top pitch and its surrounds as smart and impressive as possible. Our groundsman Tony is doing a fine job in keeping the pitch in good order. The old stand is also getting a makeover

Here I ask you to help when around the ground especially at the top. If you see any rubbish, broken glasses etc. please place in the bins provided. Please do not discard your own just anywhere. Empty glasses to the bar please.

On the pitch we have a new coach in Andy Foley who is doing a sterling job with the team and fruit is now being borne. Welcome Andy. And what enjoyment the team have shown with some exciting rugby. What value at £2.

Let us not that forget we are more than just a 1<sup>st</sup> team, we are a total club from the most junior to senior sides (some very) sorry Vets. The first team will not function without the support of everyone else. Collectively we are one club. We need to be aware, however, that nothing comes for nothing. Everything has to be paid for. Subs MUST be paid. Why should you expect to play for nothing? The vast majority do pay but it is totally unreasonable for you non-payers to expect others to finance your enjoyment. Is my point made?

However the most important groups of people and companies are our sponsors. They are vital in keeping the rugby club going. Thank you sincerely

I ask any non players as well as players to help out from time to time when asked with other perhaps more menial but no less important tasks. Thank you.

And for my 'Presi's Project' I am going to erect some new posts on the top pitch.

We will have the best. After all, the focal point on the pitch is completed with smart posts. I want to do it right I ask you all to help us achieve this goal with any donations that you feel appropriate.

We all come here to enjoy ourselves score loads of tries watch great rugby and drink loads of beer. We will then all be happy.

Cheers,

**Bob**



# The Chairman's / DoR's Piece

## *Andy Golding, back in a comfy chair*

There must be something about the rugby season that keeps us all coming back for more and I guess we all have our own reasons and motives. For me, being back in the Club is rather like the feeling you get when you sit in your most comfortable chair in front of a roaring fire with a glass of your favourite tippie – familiar, reassuring and highly enjoyable. As such, on the first home game, it was great to experience the usual bar room atmosphere with its hustle and bustle, once again listen to the match post-mortems and sample a few pints of the 'black stuff' as if last season had never ended.

This made me think that whilst it is important that we strive to be the very best that we can (and I am as ambitious as anyone) from a playing perspective the fact that we can still muster up 6 senior sides speaks volumes and in many ways makes whatever level we play at superfluous, as long as we play enjoyable, challenging rugby to the best of our ability. So whilst, of course, I have one eye on the league tables and hopes of eventual promotion, my other is on making sure that we provide a rugby experience that echoes our mission statement:

*'to promote and develop the game of rugby football within the community  
in order to encourage maximum participation and enjoyment at all levels'*

From a facilities perspective, it is clear that the new floodlights have made a huge difference and players can now actually see the ball clearly when they train – which is a real bonus despite the fact that we are still trying to establish whether any positive correlation exists between this and our playing performance. Improved training facilities may, however, explain why training numbers are better than they have ever been at all levels of the Club. Having said that, I am yet to see much sign of the lesser spotted 3<sup>rd</sup> team player, a species apparently prone to day time activity only and with only a handful of unconfirmed nocturnal sightings reported in the last four weeks.

Some of you may also have noticed that the area behind the 1<sup>st</sup> XV pitch has been cultivated to create a 'minis' rugby training area and plans are afoot to sort out the stand by the first team pitch. In addition, we continue to work towards the Whole Club Seal of Approval and hope to attain this by the end of 2010 – so watch this space. The website has also been re-engineered and has a number of additions, including 'Coach's Corner', a facility designed for all Club Coaches both senior and junior as a resource and aid to coach development and the sharing of good practice



From a personnel perspective, I would like to formally welcome Bob Beney as our new Club President. Bob has already thrown himself into the development of the club and is making a significant impact.

By now, most of you will also have met our new Head Coach, Andy Foley. If you haven't then he is always open to someone buying him a beer although this won't necessarily increase your chances of selection. Andy has already made great strides in terms of providing solid structures and patterns to enhance our performance at senior squad level. The next challenge now is down to the players to make sure that this is translated consistently on match days. However, we have already seen the benefit of this approach having started the season in very sprightly manner.





This came in the form of a win against Dartfordians, taking the 1<sup>st</sup> XV into the third round of the Kent Cup, and a solid start to the league season that saw the Club riding high in third place. We are also in the second round of the Intermediate Cup and we have our eyes very firmly on the prospect of some silverware this season.

The Mustangs are also benefiting from Andy's approach and I was delighted to witness an excellent performance recently, when they convincingly secured their first league win for some considerable time. Hopefully, as the Club grows stronger in performance terms and with the new influx of players of late, the Mustangs will start to re-establish themselves and other winning performances will undoubtedly follow – so well done to Coach Fin Davis and the team.

It is also good to see our youth policy paying off and we now have upwards of 15 players in the senior squads, who have come through the youth system and countless others playing in other sides. A special thanks should go to Veterans captain and hitherto U18s coach, Richard Weston, who has been instrumental in developing two of the most exciting prospects seen at 1<sup>st</sup> XV level for some time and for providing the basis and co-operation, which has allowed us to integrate many of the U18s into senior rugby. I think we can now look the future with some confidence knowing that we have young players to take up the mantle. Other teams have also got off to good starts and with a fair wind and the right prevailing conditions, I see no reason why we should not look forward to anything other than a successful season for all.

Lastly, I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts and commitment of Dave Coleman, our Honorary Treasurer, very much an 'un-sung hero', who for six years has controlled the Clubs finances superbly well (often in difficult circumstances). Dave is now standing down due to work commitments, so, if there is anyone, who feels that they possess the necessary skills, abilities and unwavering optimism to carry out this very important role, please see me or any other Executive Committee Member.

I now look forward to the rest of the season with eager anticipation and hopefully reporting on how successful as a Club we have been.

Onwards and Upwards.

***Andy Golding***



# Notes from the Head Coach

## *Andy Foley looking forward to a much better season*

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If I was asked at the start of the season, where I would like us to be coming into November, I would have probably suggested our current position, but with a home win over Lewes not the loss we suffered. Things have moved forward tremendously in the last two months and the 1st XV and Mustangs are starting to play the kind of rugby that we know this club is capable of producing.

Our two league wins so far this season have been very satisfying; a professional performance on the opening day of the season away to Old Mid Whitgiftians gained 5 points, whilst our performance of the season so far, saw us totally dominate a very good Sevenoaks.

Our losses are worth a mention too, while the games against Deal & Bettshangar and Lewes were defeats snatched from the jaws of victory, it would also be fair to say that we were outclassed by Elthamians and East Grinstead. For me, by far the proudest moment of the season so far was our performance against East Grinstead where, against a professional and physical team, we fought tooth and nail for 80 minutes. With five games to go until Christmas, after the Warlingham game, we have set ourselves a target of 14 points, which should see us mid-table at the half way stage.

I would like to mention the first and second team squads for their willingness and enthusiasm, both on training nights and Saturdays, but I think it is recognised and agreed that levels of fitness and commitment must be raised for the club to start moving up the leagues.

On the pitch, Nick Coles, Lee Thomson and Luke Day have impressed in the forwards, whilst Tommy King and Neil Graves have turned in good performances in the backs. Last years under 17,s Olly Newton and Jason Smith have held down regular starting spots on merit and 18 year old Sam Harris made his 1st team and senior debut away to East Grinstead, coming away with the Man of the Match award. Also debuting in October was Ben Smith from Hartbury College and Cheltenham Tigers, a young player who comes with glowing references from previous coaches. John O'Brien has led from the front, and showed the steely attitude needed to turn this club around. Unfortunately we lost Sam Bailey and Nick Sargent very early on in the season, Sam we probably won't see on the field until next season, but Nick should be back after Christmas. We wish them both well with their rehab, we also wish Gary Whitehead well after his unfortunate injury. Matt Plowman deserves a mention for a cameo against East Grinstead and I'm hoping Matt will be the cornerstone of the scrum for a few more seasons... and Messrs. Charlton, Matthews and Arnold - **I know where you live!**

Duncan McClintock has also been a great Mustangs captain and, when we have had to take players off him at the last moment, his attitude has been first class (at least to my face).

So the half-term report reads could do better, but trying bloody hard.

**Andy Foley**





# The Other XVs

## *Richard Ewence rounds-up the season so far*

With around a third of the League season played already, the table below tells part of the story so far, with the indications being that all of the teams are playing in a Division of the Mid Kent and Invicta Leagues commensurate with their relative strengths and ability. Of the clubs various men's teams, the only one that is perhaps under-performing is the Mustangs where, despite having a decent influx of good new players and an enthusiastic and experienced new skipper in Duncan McClintock, results just don't seem to be going their way. In particular, the lack of a settled halfback pairing is probably crucial, as it's the decision making in these positions that can so easily make the difference between narrowly winning and narrowly losing. However, one can be thankful that they were allowed to drop a division this year, as at least they are going into each match with a decent chance of winning.

### Third XV

It's been an unusually low key start for the thirds this season, albeit with some notably good victories, especially against Medway and Snowdown. The team has had an unusual shape to it this year, lacking as it has the twin-towers of Fishy and Wrighty at second-row and then cruelly losing, for the season, the services of Chris Francis who is such an effective player to have in the pack. On the plus side, it's great to have re-gained the likes of Ben Court and Mike Mclvor. An extract from a Medway II match report perhaps summed up the ethos of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Team best:

*Medway's thorough warm-up, in contrast to Maidstone's 10 minute kick-around before the first whistle might have suggested that the visitors had not prepared properly for the match... however, this proved not to be the case, as they played with strength and pace throughout. Medway, in contrast seemed to have just returned from a 2-week-bender, as they looked ponderous and tired.*

In terms of Leagues, it seems clear that Invicta 3 has plenty of very strong opposition for our 3rds, despite the fact that, only last season, they were pushing hard to win Invicta 2.

### Fourth XV

The 4ths under new skipper Andy 'Chemo' Cairns, have made the transition this year from being something of a Cinderella side, sandwiched between very tightly-knit 3rd team and 5th team squads, to a team that people want to play for as a first choice option.

With a number of effective new players making a huge difference to the team's ability to provide serious competition in a League that looked too strong for them, it's been something of a roller-coaster, with thrashings being received or handed out on alternate week-ends for the first four matches. But this pattern has now given way to a creditable draw versus East Peckham and a tremendous victory over unbeaten league leaders Leigh.



## Fifth XV

The 5ths have had something of a mixed bag but are still pursuing their formula of training together, sticking together and playing together, although a lack of availability on match days has seriously undermined them on a couple of occasions. On their day they are a match for anyone but, when missing key players, they have taken big losses as against Gravesend, Tunbridge Wells and Medway. Probably their finest Saturday of the season so far, saw them collect a walk-over against New Ash Green 3rds, who conceded the league match, and then win a pulsating friendly against Hastings & Bexhill. By the way it was great to see iconic former skipper Simon McLeod dragged out recently for the trip to Tunbridge Wells. There are clearly players in the 5<sup>th</sup> team who could play at a higher level but, like elsewhere in the club, they find a team and an ambience where they enjoy their rugby and where they bring a match winning edge to a team that might otherwise struggle.



## Vets XV

Talking of struggling, that's not the word one would normally associate with our Vets but its undeniable that they do get older every year and find themselves facing younger (and bigger) opposition as each year goes by. Whilst they have taken only one heavy defeat this season, it is in the match-winning department that they are perhaps lacking the cutting edge that wins you tight matches. Certain players just seem to know where the try-line is and every team needs a few try-scorers in key positions. One of the problems for the Vets is that very few other clubs put out a vets team every week and so most clubs take fixtures against our Vets on non-league days, when they can have their best players of the last 30 years available to line up against them. Faced with teams where half of the players are still playing regular 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> team rugby, it can be something of an unequal struggle. But are they downhearted? Are they \*\*\*\*! (And there is always the match versus the B Team to look forward to, where victory is assured – or is it?)



## Summary

So that's it so far:  
all of the teams are playing competitive enjoyable rugby and honouring their fixture lists (unlike elsewhere in the county, where cry-offs are rife this season).

As we enter the dark days of the winter, let's hope for plenty more of the same.

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TEAM	PLAYED	WON	DRAWN	LOST	LEAGUE POSITION & POINTS
<b>MUSTANGS</b>	7	1	0	6	8/10 - 7 Points
3rd XV	6	3	0	3	7/11 - 13 Points
4th XV	6	3	1	2	6/11 - 17 Points
5th XV	7	3	0	4	6/10 - 15 points
Vets XV	6	0	0	6	Not Applicable





**BRITELITE**



## A Note from the Youth Chairman

### *Darren Mitchell on new Minis Playing Area*

It has been a very busy start to the new season with the development of the waste ground into a new playing area for our tag teams. This project has been spoken of for a number of years but, finally, became a reality with the drive and enthusiasm of tag rugby co-ordinator Nick Williams securing the funds needed to get the work completed. There was a big problem with the amount of rubble, metal, stones and glass being turned up while clearing the ground, but it is hoped that it will be a safe playing area ready to use very soon. This is a great achievement for the club's tag section, which has seen the numbers being introduced to rugby increase considerably over the last couple of years.

It was a wonderful feeling, when at the club a week ago, to see so much rugby with two youth home games being played, the Somme wash with the minis training hard and so many parents and coaches in the club afterwards. It shows that, despite missing a few age groups, the youth section still has a great number of participants who are well-supported by so many parents and, of course, our great team of coaches. *DM*

## Sponsorship News

### *Our supporters keep the faith*

The loss of Simon Wright Homes as a leading sponsor of the club had a major impact on the club and given the current economic climate sponsorship has held up relatively well for this season. As you may have noticed on the 1<sup>st</sup> XV shirts, **Brachers LLP** stepped into the breach as the club's primary sponsors and in addition to **Aylesford Newsprint**, **Britelite** & **Glosrose**, we welcome Wales based company **Plastics Sorting Limited** as new official sponsors. In addition local timber company **L&G Forest Products** will be joining us in the New Year and have already made a commitment for the 2011/12 season. Some of you may have noticed some rebranding also going on, this is due to the corporate rebranding of sponsors Horwath Clark Whitehill who have changed their name to **Crowe Clark Whitehill** and we are particularly grateful to them for meeting the club's expense of the required branding changes from their own budget.

A number of our other sponsors have remained loyal; **ABB Ltd**, **Sibley Pares** and also **Samurai** remain on board as the club's official kit supplier. Additionally **Vivid Associates** continue to provide benefit in-kind support by hosting of the club's website.

A major area where we still have vacancies is in respect of Shirt Number & Match Ball sponsorships, so if you or your company are interested then please contact Bob Hayton. Discounts are now available on Shirt Number sponsorship. *RH*



# Paul Ehrhart

## *25 Years of Veterans Rugby & Still Going Strong*



The end of October saw the Veterans XV take the opportunity to complete a bit of unfinished business from last season's celebration of 25 years of veterans rugby at Maidstone. On hand were players and some of the past captains of the side to present Paul Ehrhart with a tankard in recognition of his achievement in playing in all 25 seasons.

Paul started his playing career in as an 11 year old at school in Sussex and his earliest memories are of two Welsh sports masters saying, "You will play rugby, there is no football". His first venture into senior rugby was in 1960 as a founder member of St Francis RFC in East Sussex, where he played for nine years until his engineering career brought him to Maidstone. His first games with Maidstone were in the B (5th) XV but by the end of the season he was the 1st XV hooker. He was a regular 1st XV player from '70 -'77 until a broken leg interrupted his playing career. He didn't play again until 1985 when the Vets XV was formed under the late Roger Nicholls. Paul took over as captain of the side in 1987, holding the role for 10 years. During his career with the 1st XV Paul was capped at county level, was part of the club's Kent Cup winning side of 1976 and the side that faced London Irish where his opposite number was the then Irish International Ken Kennedy.

During his injury enforced break from playing, Paul was uneasy in the spectator's role and decided to pick up the referees whistle. He ascended to the heights of B Grade Referee but the formation of the Veterans XV, and the 7 o'clock departures to North Yorkshire with midnight returns, eventually forced him to hang up his whistle especially as he only got a half hour in the bar after a game.

With 57 years of active on-pitch involvement in the sport, this amounts to 1425 matches and the equivalent of 79 days of competitive rugby; Paul is probably the epitome of that old rugby saying, "*Old rugby players never die, they just look that way*".

*Paul also holds the distinction of being the first veterans player to be yellow carded when cards were introduced at all levels of the game.*

**RH**



# Website

## *Bob Hayton describes some New Features as Development Continues*

I mentioned in the last newsletter that the club's website has been judged a success over the period of the 09/10 season and during the closed season those that had closest involvement with it looked at ways of improving and adding to its content.

A couple of new features include Player Profiles of the senior squad plus also a feature we have titled 'Coaches Corner'. Whilst the player profiles are self-explanatory it is perhaps worth explaining the thinking behind the 'Coaches Corner' section. Essentially, we probably all have found or know of useful website links to assist coaches by providing advice and useful tips for training & practise sessions. The aim is to provide a central library of useful references and online information sources that coaches at all age groups can use. If you have found or use a particular online information source that is not listed then please forward the details for inclusion.



Feedback from our most recent members has indicated that the presentation and currency of the website has been a key factor in their impression of the club when moving into the area and looking for a club to join. With that in mind, sections such as the club news section continue to provide current information but it would appear only in respect of the senior section of the club. The major disappointment here continues to be the lack of contributions from the junior age groups; I'm sure they must have some achievements and notable events (SDD, Festivals, League Fixtures, Tours, Sponsorship, etc.) that they could share with the rest of the club and wider community. Each age group has got to be proactive; it is far easier for a representative from each team to forward a brief paragraph or article (plus photo) for inclusion, than it is for someone else to make up to a dozen phone calls every Sunday evening. Whilst I realise we all perceive ourselves to lead busy lives, if you don't blow your own trumpet, no one else will.

The photo gallery continues to be well received although there continues to be a lack of photos forthcoming from the various mini & youth age groups; whilst in an era of social distrust in respect of photos of children placed in the public domain, I'm sure that some photos could be more forthcoming to create a truly inclusive club gallery. On the subject of photographs, I would ask those players and supporters that do take photos to please forward copies to me periodically for inclusion (please itemise groups of photos by fixture or event). On the subject of budding photographers I would like to take this opportunity to thank young Mollie McKenzie, who has taken photos at a number of fixtures already this season, a number of which have also featured in the local press reports. *RH*



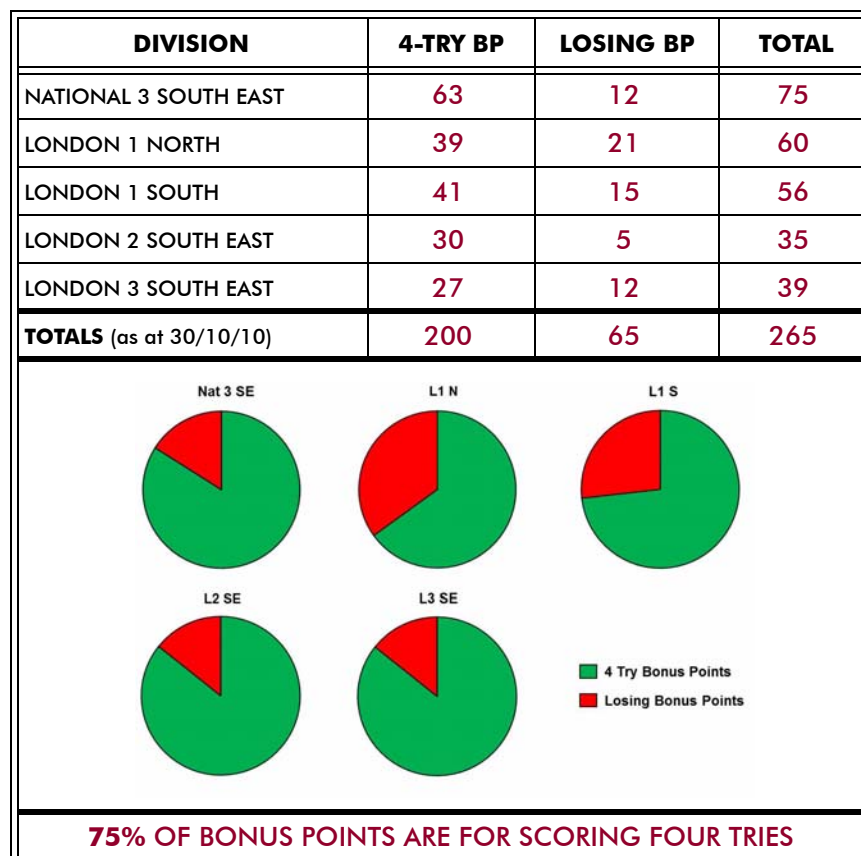
# Bonus Points

## *Bob Hayton analyses their impact on Club Rugby*

As we go to press there have now been seven or eight league fixtures since the introduction of the bonus points system at Level 5 and below. The RFU's aim with their introduction was to increase the competitiveness of matches for the full 80 minutes. So what impact have they had?

The graphic below certainly shows that across all the divisions analysed, the overwhelming trend is the attainment of bonus points for scoring four tries, with the majority being by the winning side although not exclusively. London 1 (N) appears to be the closest matched division with a 60% : 40% split between four-try and losing bonus points earned. National 3 (SE) appears to be the high scoring table; our own division also appears to be free scoring, with London 3 (SE) the lowest.

So has the introduction of bonus points promoted attacking rugby or have teams just neglected to place any emphasis on defence?



# Movember

## *It's a Man Thing and Not Before Time*

As you walk around the clubhouse during the month you will probably notice a lot of the senior players (and some of the club's coaches) sporting an unusual amount of facial hair. The club is supporting the Movember campaign to raise awareness of men's health and also to raise money for the campaign's nominated cause, The Prostate Cancer Charity. Movember challenges men to change their appearance, and the face of men's health, by growing a moustache. The rules are simple, start Movember 1st clean-shaven and then grow a moustache for the entire month. The moustache becomes the ribbon for men's health, the means by which awareness and funds are raised for cancers that affect men.



Some of you may be aware that one of the club's more venerable players was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2009, thankfully after a course of treatment he has now been given the 'all clear' and is back playing again. So this really is a cause that is close to home for the club.

We have even gained support from the Minis, well, the coaches anyway.

The club's page on the UK Movember website is as follows: <http://uk.movember.com/mospace/598372/>

## The Stand

### *Does it Have a Future?*

As alluded to by our new club President, Bob Beney, in his piece; an area of some concern is the stand on the South side of the 1<sup>st</sup> XV pitch. This has become a source of increasing concern over the last two seasons. The club spent circa £2000 about three years ago in major renovations. However vandalism has meant that all of that work has been undone and it is again no longer serviceable and options are being explored as to whether it is cost effective to invest in a further renovation, which will require it to be re-roofed or to have it demolished. A key aspect is the security of the ground, sealing the pedestrian gate that leads onto the leisure centre car park has meant that there have been far fewer problems than in the past\*.



Whilst it may appear that the options are simple, as was highlighted by the local press several years ago it remains the only spectator facility for sport within the borough. If you have any contacts that can offer advice or assistance in respect of either renovation or demolition & disposal than please speak to a member of the committee.



\* Note: Access can still be gained to Mote Park by using the pedestrian gate next to 'The Somme', the key to the padlock is held at the bar.



# Waste Ground Project

*A new deal for the for the club's younger players*



The significant increase in young players at Maidstone Rugby as part of last year's Maidstone Tag Rugby initiative has been widely welcomed by all, but has created a desperate shortage of space at the County Town Club. As a result the club's youngest players are regularly required to play at the public Mote Park, although with only two pitches available they often end up on open ground. This has, at times, created significant health and safety issues.

In order to provide a clean and safe environment for the younger players the club was committed to creating space inside the grounds for training, matches and hosting other clubs. This was seen as the only way to be sure the ground is free of hazards and to ensure toilet facilities are available for our youngest members close to the clubhouse and within the confines of The Mote.

A project long talked about within the club has now finally come to fruition with the waste ground adjacent to the first team pitch being turned into useable space, which will create up to three pitches for tag rugby.

The driving forces behind the project have been Youth Chairman Darren Mitchell and Tag Rugby Co-ordinator Nick Williams. Whilst the project has been long on the club's list of projects, 2009's successful launch of Maidstone Tag Rugby brand has been the catalyst for action.



The scope of the project was not to be underestimated, apart from the mass of bramble and nettles there was a lot of unseen debris as the area has been used as a dumping ground by both the rugby and cricket clubs for decades. Concrete slabs and ironwork needed to be removed before the foundations can be laid for useable pitches.

Fundraising for the project has been completely in house within the youth section, in particular within the very committed Tag Rugby group, especially the U6's, and also involved a trip to Canterbury to participate in the KM sponsored Dragons Den where they were awarded £450. Local company Weller Landscapes & Contractors have also pitched in by conducting the physical clearance and conversion of the site (see photos). Additionally, thanks to the offices of the Ground Chairman, a local group of 'metal detectorists' have been making regular sweeps of the area to catch any items missed in the initial clearance.

The next phase is planned to include a fenced barrier along the top of the banking above the training pitch and also a storage ISO container/pavilion to provide valuable shelter for players and parents, as well as a first aid station for those inevitable scrapes. Key to this is the continued support of local shoe shop and sponsor, The Golden Boot, who are committed to maintaining their support of the Maidstone Tag Rugby initiative they embarked on in 2009.

Now that the ground has been cleared, prepared and seeded, it is expected to be available for use around the Christmas/New Year period so, despite several years of waiting, all that is needed now is just a little patience before the benefits can be felt.



*Waiting for the grass to grow*

# Extra Curricular Activities

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It would appear that there are a significant number of people in the club whose idea of relaxation outside rugby is to do something equally or more physically taxing. Three expeditions in particular have come to the attention of the editor.

Most of the senior club will know Jim Walker, largely because he's not backwards at coming forwards. Some may say this is a symptom of 'small man' syndrome and an inferiority complex, although that would be a bit harsh. Jim has been a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> XV squad for a number of years but was last year diagnosed with a cancerous growth in his kidney, as a consequence he had an operation to have the kidney removed last December. Thankfully Jim has now been given the 'all clear' and in an effort to repay those that helped him through what was a difficult time decided to do a charity bike ride from London to Paris (just under 330 miles) with his friend Nathan Wake on behalf of MacMillan Cancer Support under the banner of 2 Men, 3 Kidneys. The expedition took place over the period 15 -18 September.

During the summer Euan Caborn took part in the World Challenge and travelled to Tanzania to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro. Unfortunately an injury meant he was unable to complete his assault on the summit and he intends to return to Tanzania in 2012 where he plans to conquer the 5895 m high Mt Kilimanjaro plus the 4566 m high active volcano, Mount Meru.

The Youth Section's very own action hero, Nick Williams also travelled to Tanzania in September to take on Mt. Kilimanjaro as part of the KM Challenge. We understand that Nick is now in training for a marathon attempt. It would appear that Nick is up for a physical challenge at the 'drop of a hat'; anyone's hat.

## Meanwhile

### *Down on the farm...*

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Is it just me? I wonder if any of you have noticed that one of our very own, seems to have quietly embarked on a new career in television advertising. I refer, of course, to the brief clip of someone showing off his sprouts for Morrisons. Or is it?



Mind you, they do say that we all have a doppelganger out there somewhere. If not Richard, and if you are taking orders for Christmas, put me down for two.



# YOUR CLUB



## How Can You Help

With the rugby season well under way, now is the time for Maidstone Rugby to get a financial boost as we attempt to increase the amount of pitch-side advertisers we have around the 1<sup>st</sup> XV pitch. And your actions can speak louder than words; you can gain exposure for your company and aid the clubs finances at the same time.

- Do you own a business that could lend its support to Maidstone Rugby?
- Do you work for a company that would be willing to sponsor a board or two at The Mote?
- Do you have a friend or relative, whom, through their own businesses would be interested in offering Maidstone Rugby some support?

If you can answer yes to any of these three questions then we want to hear from You!

Other work is already going on behind the scenes, and as some of you may be aware we now have a link-up with P.A.R. Marketing & Events Ltd. They are also working on increasing our board numbers.

We are well aware though of all the valuable rugby enthusiasts and their contacts already within the club.

And so, let P.A.R. know if you are someone that would be interested in supporting Maidstone grass roots rugby by way of board sponsorship. Also get in touch if you know of someone that might be interested in Maidstone Rugby in this way and P.A.R. will do the rest.

No one is asking you to sell boards for the club, but simply to think of those you might know that may be in a position to help and let our marketing team take it from there.

To reach P.A.R. dial 0208 529 8200 or email [sales@parmarketing.co.uk](mailto:sales@parmarketing.co.uk)