



The Griffin

A newsletter from Old Laurentian RFC Issue 2, January 2017

Welcome to the second in our series of newsletters, in which our Chairman spells out his wishes for 2017 (some a little deluded) in his leading article below and tells how there is plenty to look forward to.

Sprigga's View - on the club, politics, the world, everything!

2016 has been a year of both terrible shocks and the unexpected happening, leading to new words entering everyday language – **Brexit, Nexit, Frexit and Italeave**, following the EU



Referendum; and **Trumpquake & Alt-Right**, following the US Presidential elections. We have been used to politicians making promises they do not keep, but electing people who clearly tell untruths with impunity and deny anything that does not correspond to

their view of the world is a new low and a challenge for all of us, whatever our politics! And a day did not seem to pass without an untimely celebrity death being announced – David Bowie, Prince, Caroline Aherne, Victoria Wood and George Michael to name but a few. In the OL's family we have lost Dom Marsella, Stuart Patrick, Paul Amor, Mike Lewis and O T Wootton ("Wootty") all of whom will be sorely missed but never forgotten.

Faced with such happenings it is difficult to remember the positive things that have occurred in 2016 and there have been some memorable things:

1. Tim Peake becoming the 1st Brit to make a Space-walk and only the 2nd British Astronaut
2. Colombia Peace Deal after 40+ years of terrible conflict
3. Malaria eradicated in Sri-Lanka and HIV reducing dramatically in Malawi
4. England's rugby team being unbeaten throughout the year

The latter remarkable achievement followed the humiliation of England failing to qualify for the Quarter Finals of RWC 2015, the 1st time a host nation has suffered such an indignity. What it demonstrates is that however bad things appear to be we must remain positive. This time 12 months ago, the 1st XV had lost 11 of their thirteen matches and were rooted to the bottom of the league with a points difference to make you squirm!! Today we are 2nd in Mids. 2 East (South) with the best win percentage of all the teams having won 9 of the thirteen matches and we have to be confident of making the play-offs. This has all been achieved despite or because of the changes within the coaching team, the new team captain or even the new club chairman!! Changes within England Rugby are credited with the transformation there but Stuart Birch, Olly Cowley and Dan Volkman can and should be rightly proud of what they achieved within the OL's family as it is the concept of us being a family which makes us unique!! We will all have a view on the reasons for the current improvement in results but I have to recall the wise words of Mike Lewis who said "what goes around comes around" as he comforted me about Scotland winning the Wooden Spoon again (and again) by

Sprigga's View (cont'd)

recalling 1984 & 1990 as it will happen again believe me Spriggys!! What is important is that we stick together, keep true to our values and things will turn around; and remember that it is not only results on the field which should define OLRFC.

We must strive to be an inclusive and welcoming club to everyone associated with the OLs be they players, potential players, VPs, social members, parents of players or spectators and recognise the part we all play to make this happen.

This leads me to another word that has apparently come into everyday use this year - **hygge** (roughly pronounced "hue-gah"), a Danish term often translated as "cosiness" that refers to the sense of happy ease found in entertaining company!! It sums up how I felt in the clubhouse after Mike Lewis's funeral and it is what I feel most times at the Club where we can mix with friends and team-mates, reliving fond memories and looking forward to the future in a positive fashion, despite some setbacks along the way. That feeling leads to the words which are not new but have resonated for some 225 years, "**Auld Lang Syne**" where we vow never to forget our current or departed friends but also to embrace new ones by offering a welcoming hand, celebrating success and looking forward with optimism despite the adverse happenings that can sometimes be disconcerting.

My resolutions for the New Year will remain private but my 3 hopes in Rugby terms are:

1. Scotland 6 Nations champions ending England's unbeaten run!!!
2. 1st XV reaching the play-offs and securing promotion
3. The British & Irish Lions winning the series in New Zealand

You will all have your own personal hopes for 2017 and mine hopefully demonstrate both my optimism (some could say delusion) and my positivity which I have in being your proud Chairman. In that respect, I am anxious that the club continues to move in the right direction and I hope the players and committee members amongst you have been able to spare the time to complete the RFU survey we have commissioned. This will enable you to have your voice and I confirm that we will listen to every constructive comment so that we can move forward together and ensure a more than positive future for Old Laurentian RFC. Help us make **HYGGE** happen for everyone!!

All the Best to you and yours for 2017 and thank you for your continuing support of the OLs.

VP's Away Day

This season's VP's Away Day will be on Saturday March 11th when we play at Market Harborough. Full details yet to be finalised but please make a note in your diary now. Watch the website for more information nearer to the date.

Farewell, dear friends

Mike Lewis, 1946-2016



Mike was widely acknowledged as one of the architects of the present-day club when a player and captain. Our picture shows him as captain of the 1st XV in 1978, together with some familiar faces who are still very much part of the club.

Terry Wootton, 1924-2016

Our picture shows the quintessential Wootty – immaculate appearance, glass in hand and a smile playing around his face.

How he will be missed.



World Rugby Hall of Fame

November 17th saw the opening of the World Rugby 'Hall of Fame' in the town's Art Gallery & Museum. First launched in 2006, it now has a permanent home for the first time. There are now 142 members in total, including 12 who were inducted at the opening ceremony.

The club was invited to send three delegates to the ceremony and attending on our behalf were Chairman Andy Spriggs, Hon. Sec. Alan Willis, Peter Jenkins and Chairman of the Minis & Juniors, Kevin Vince.

They were rubbing shoulders with the likes of Jonny Wilkinson, Brian O'Driscoll, Lawrence Dallaglio, Shane Williams, Jeremy Guscott, Maggie Alphonsi and John Dawes. Other luminaries from the world of rugby were also there, like World Rugby Chairman Bill Beaumont, his deputy Augustin Pichot, and England great Martin Johnson.

Our pictures show some old pals meeting up again!



Kev Vince and his old mate Lawrence Dallaglio

Alan Willis meets up with Jonny Wilkinson



1200 Club

The prize fund for the monthly draw was increased from October and now amounts to £400, split as follows:

- 1st prize - £200
- 2nd prize - £150
- 3rd and 4th prizes - £50

The lucky winners in the draws for the last three months were:

October:

- 1st: Adam Dougherty
- 2nd: Vic Smith
- 3rd/4th: Tom Gleghorn & Dean Cobley

November:

- 1st: Graham New
- 2nd: Jitka Llewellyn
- 3rd/4th: Peter Jenkins & Garrie Reeve

December:

- 1st: Simon Leech
- 2nd: Graham New
- 3rd/4th: Alan Foster & Matt Brinklow

If you are not a member, or would like to buy more numbers, you can do so at any time and go into the very next draw. Just contact Sprigga on aws-sms-sjls@ntlworld.com and he will gladly arrange it.

The next 5 draw dates are Saturdays 21st January, 25th February, 25th March and 22nd April; and Friday 19th May, the date of the Club Dinner.

A new face on the coaching team

The club was delighted to welcome **Andy Milner** to the coaching team for this season. Andy has provided absolutely invaluable support for Head Coach Iain Wallis in his first season in that role.

He comes with impeccable credentials, as his day job is as a Community Rugby Coach, employed by the RFU in the East Midlands; and he has a Sports Science Degree from Loughborough University.

There were envious glances cast in his direction when he first pitched up at the club driving a very smart, RFU liveried Mini. But that was nothing to the reaction when he turned up mid-season in a brand-new Mitsubishi 4WD battlewagon, also RFU liveried. It is believed that he keeps the Mini in the back; and it's rumoured that Mick Warwick wants to use it as the team bus and save on coach hire costs!



Andy with the battlewagon at Oundle

The Calendar Boys

Available at the club at Christmas (but possibly sold out now, such was the demand!) was a unique publication that may never be repeated, so get in quick to snap up any copies that may remain.



The publication in question is a 2017 calendar featuring club members in a variety of (almost!) revealing

poses! The models are drawn, you will be relieved to hear, from playing members and not VPs, as you will see above

Donation to Oakham RFC Fund

Oakham RFC lost a leading player back in September when Savenaca Koroibulileka collapsed and died on the field of play and they set up a trust fund for Savenaca's widow and four young sons. When they visited Fenley

Field on Saturday 6th December the club held a raffle in aid of the fund and, after additional donations from club members and an impromptu

auction, a cheque for £500 was handed over to Oakham President Steve Beanland by Chairman Andrew Spriggs.



The Season So Far

The half-term report is 'good work so far, but a lot more to do yet'.

The 1st XV started the second half of their league season in 2nd place in Midlands 2 East (S) and the 2nds arrived at the same point holding 3rd place in Warwickshire League 1, so plenty to play for in each case over the next ten games.

The 1st XV enjoyed a run of six successive wins up to Christmas, beating the teams immediately below them in consecutive weeks to lift themselves into 2nd place. But that run came to an end on January 7th in a tight and tense encounter away at 3rd placed Oundle, the home side edging it by 30-25. But OLs retained 2nd place ahead of their victors by virtue of the losing bonus point they earned.

At time of writing the next game on the schedule is the home clash on January 21st against league leaders Peterborough and the opportunity to gain revenge for the 31-6 drubbing handed out by them when we took a team depleted by injury, and suffering further casualties in the game, to their Fengate ground in October.

The 2nds are in a very strong league and the sides around them, Banbury, Newbold and Stratford, each have 1st teams playing at a higher level, Stratford beating us comprehensively on a day when their senior team had no game. But all those clubs playing at the same level as OLs have been despatched!

Aside from the 64-0 beating handed out to Rugby Lions Crusaders, probably the best result so far was the narrow loss to a strong Newbold 2nd string, who won by just 22-20.

For the 1st team, fly half Jon Bean (left) is the leading scorer with 88 points so far, all but 5 coming from the boot. Top try scorer is flanker James Orbinson (below) with 10, but wing Jordan Bunn has made up ground on him recently and has now registered 7 touchdowns.



For the 2nds, leading the way in the try scoring stakes are those wily veterans Ben Shepherd

and Gary 'Gusher' Hammond, Ben with 11 tries, Gusher with 10. Splitting the two with a haul of 53 points (28 from his boot) is Chris Halcrow; and, remarkably, given the number of games he has played in the 1sts, Ben Roach has a 2nd XV tally of 48 points.



No less than 34 players have appeared in 1st XV colours this season, a fact that inevitably has an impact on the lower sides. Of that number, just 4 – Dom Hammond, James Orbinson, James Collins and Charlie Seager – have appeared in every game.

The 3rd XV has appeared on nine occasions so far, no mean feat at a time when many clubs struggle with two sides. Thanks are due to Barry Hipwell and Adie Marsh for their hard work in keeping the team together. It has been good to see that our Return to Rugby campaign, championed by Chairman Spriggs, has helped their cause with several players re-discovering their love for the game – and some taking it up for the first time.



Dates for your Diary

March 11th - VPs Away Day, Market Harborough

April 22nd - Captains' Day, league match v Olney - lunch will be served, all VPs welcome for the last game of the season

May 6th - Inter Club Vets Tournament and Family Fun Day at Fenley Field

May 19th (Frid) - Club Dinner & Awards



to all our readers

Please get in touch with Bill Wallis (billwallis45@gmail.com, 01788 333043) with any comments, ideas, or stories for inclusion in the newsletter.