

Club points



News for Hitchin Rugby Football Club members

Issue 35 • January 2017



Barry Mellor's kick ahead led to try v Hackney



Jack Peachey runs in to score v Staines



Sam Underwood adds a try v Staines

Rugby review

Hitchin's 1XV sit in a solid league position just after the mid point of the season. Coming into 2017 we have played 12 won six and lost six and are currently sat in sixth position in London North West 3. We look to push onwards and up the league in 2017. We are also into the semi final of the Herts Presidents Tankard and having an upcoming regional quarter final in the RFU senior vase.

Unfortunately, in the past two matches we have had two serious injuries with Jack Peachey breaking and dislocating his ankle in the home win against Stevenage and Carwyn Morgan fracturing his cheek in the loss to Hemel Hempstead. We wish them both speedy recoveries.

Despite the best efforts of Richard Lucas and others, it has not been possible to get more than three sides out so far this season, with the



3XV looking for opposition!

exception of one very successful 4XV game against Ampthill Vets in October, winning by 24-12 and featuring – amongst others – Paddy McCullagh, Nigel Barrett, Rob Vivian and Chris Martin.

Always difficult to get sides out during the autumn internationals (and Six Nations) and not helped by the occasional late withdrawal of the opposition.

However, we are doing better than a number of clubs that we play, in getting out three teams and winning around 40 per cent of their games.



Adrian Godfrey – 3XV ringer!

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Beer Festival – see page 2





VP'S CORNER

Hywel Jones Hitchin RFC VP of the Year

The Hywel Jones Hitchin RFC VP of the Year award was presented to Babs Morgan at our October VP Lunch, following on from Tom Bartiromo who was our inaugural winner.

The trophy honours both Hywel and, annually, a person who contributes greatly to the fabric of our club.

It was a particular pleasure to see the award go to Babs who does so much unseen to keep the club functioning and has done so for so many years. She loves Hitchin Rugby and the game in general – that shines through.

A great award, especially so as Hywel and Babs both have a London Welsh connection and we suspect Hywel would be highly pleased.

It was a delight to see Babs face on the day and also see her speechless!



Babs Morgan

VP lunches

There are two more VP lunches this season, so get these dates in your diaries:

- **18 February:**
1XV vs Cheshunt RFC
- **1st April:**
1XV vs Grasshoppers RFC

New VPs

Welcome to the new VPs elected since last issue of *Club Points*:

- Rob Willoughby
- Steve Shaw
- Miranda Tasko
- Kirk Foster
- Lucinda King



Martin Howard

9,000 pints later...

The fourth Hitchin Beer and Cider Festival held at the club, over three days in June 2016, was once again a resounding success!

The event, organised by volunteers from CAMRA, Hitchin Round Table and the rugby club saw 2,874 visitors, drinking around 9,000 pints of ale.

Festival organiser Jon Kirby said: "It was a great festival. It's seen now as a great community event in Hitchin's social calendar."



Volunteer Craig, gives the thumbs up!

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Ladies – very popular!

Hitchin Women are going strong after finishing top of their merit league and are currently joint top of their new league.

They are the only team in the league to have fielded a full team to each fixture, which is a reflection of the big recruitment effort put in both the last season and this season. More than 10 new members have joined this season! Training is also going really well with around 25 players attending training each week. A testament to the hard work put in by coach Dale Baines to make sessions enjoyable and effective.

The Ladies' season began with their running of a free fitness boot camp for local women, funded by a grant from the national lottery. Simon from Elite Fitness did an excellent job of whipping attendees into shape with a total of 82 women benefiting from these classes.

Hitchin Women are not only a force to be reckoned with on the pitch, but have organised club events with both the quiz and Christmas fair going down very well.

Most notably this year, the ladies team set out to make a naked calendar to raise a bit of money for the team. What started out as a bit of fun spiraled into viral coverage. The calendar was featured in *The Mirror*, *The Mail*, *The Comet* (three times), *The Sun*, *The Lad Bible*, and shared by 50 Cent, as well as numerous



"Crampers" on the attack for the Ladies

other national and international publications. This led to us selling out not once, but three times! Calendars have now been shipped to over 20 countries including Japan, Australia, Turkmenistan and nearly 60 to the USA. Thanks to Claire Crompton for her hard work in despatching calendars worldwide!

Finally, the Ladies section would like to thank everyone who comes and supports their matches. You have contributed to, and shared in, a fantastic season for a fantastic part of Hitchin RFC.



Ladies pose for calendar, January 2017

Hitchin RFC U8 play at Twickenham

Members of our U8 squad did Hitchin rugby club proud at a tournament on the morning of the premiership double header opener at Twickenham stadium.

The tournament was held under the new Saracens format of 'non-scoring' and based around being judged against the core values of Teamwork, Respect, Discipline, Enjoyment and Sportsmanship. With stiff opposition from clubs such as Rosslyn Park, Saracens and Quins, our team set about working their way through the pool teams with some tight matches (but ultimately securing convincing 'non-scoring' wins).

This was the first time since last season some of the players had touched a rugby ball and the warm up looked far from promising, although fun and laughter was plentiful. Incredibly when the team took to the field they gelled instantly and

fought for each other showing some great handling and support play.

The team scored over 30 tries spread amongst the squad with some audacious footwork and took on their own ferocious tagging style stifling multiple attacking moves from the opposition and forcing turnovers.

Teamwork and enjoyment flowed readily and with a few choreographed shakes of the referee's hand our squad secured a spot in the finals.

At half time of the minor premiership



Harry T, Tommy W, Samuel W, Natty P, Luke C, George C with coach Stu Pledge

event, our squad took to the field and played Medway in front of 40,000 fans. Hitchin won 5-2 with unbelievable turnovers and tagging topped by a hat trick. An incredible experience that choked up many parents (and coaches) and one that they will look back on for years to come (and possibly dine out on into their 40's).



Congratulations to our U16s, winners of Division 2 last season.

They were invited to a Herts Middlesex League Awards Day at Allianz Park on Saturday 22 October and received medals along with a trophy awarded by Chris Ashton.

This season they play in Division One and have won some matches against seasoned Division One teams.



BACK 2 SCHOOL-IVAL

Hitchin 2016

Back2Schoolival returned to Old Hale Way on Saturday 9 July 2016 for the second instalment of the tournament, accompanied this time by the LV= Ladies 10's tournament which kicked the day off.

Five teams took part in the Ladies 10's including our own Hitchin Ladies. The tournament really highlighted the growing standard of the women's game with some fantastic attacking rugby and equally big hits. The spirit of the tournament was played in was also an embodiment of rugby, with teams helping each other out by lending players where required.

In the end, Tabard ran out worthy winners and picked up the trophy.

This was swiftly followed by the kick off of the men's action. Again schools fused together to form teams in the true spirit of rugby and everyone was rewarded with a tournament which far surpassed the quality seen 12 months ago. From the first game, which saw a Harlington team containing numerous players who hadn't played since leaving school take on a John Henry Newman/Knights Templar mix, the physicality was clear to see with some massive hits going in and some brilliant individual skill. This trend continued throughout the day alongside some fantastic team tries which a team who had been together for a few years would have been proud of, let alone a scratch side thrown together a few hours beforehand.

The quality of the tournament proved testament to the growing standard of rugby in North Hertfordshire. Letchworth and Hitchin were both represented strongly as were Biggleswade, but representatives from Datchworth, Stevenage and Royston added a real diversity to the tournament.

The tournament was won in a close final by John Henry Newman/Knights Templar, beating Hitchin Boys School in a tight finish. The plate was won by the Priory who beat Harlington by a single point.



The day was another great success and plans are in place to grow the tournament once again for 2017, on 29 July. We are hoping to work alongside more local clubs and gain further input from the schools.



Well done!

The girls U13, plus our youth rugby ambassadors, form guard of honour at Twickenham England v. Argentina

A big well done to the Hitchin Girls Squad Players who were selected to represent Hertfordshire this season

U18's

- Alice Tomlinson
- Ellie Wilson
- Hannah Skeels
- Katie Allerton
- Rosie Inman

U15's

- Cailin Prior
- Olivia Grayczyk



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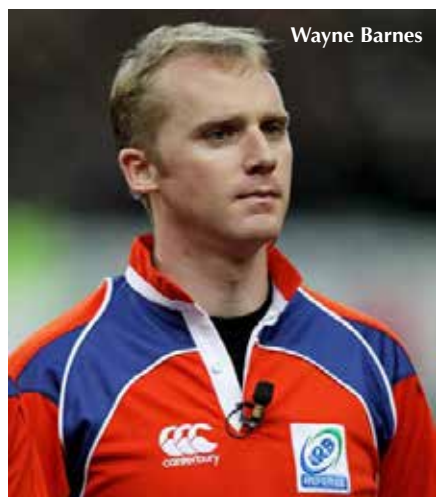
Sponsors dinner

A fund raising event for Hitchin Rugby Ltd

Wednesday 8 March 2017

This popular annual event gives us the chance to say "thank you" to our sponsors, who do so much to ensure that the club runs efficiently and has the funds to maintain the facilities enjoyed by all the members.

The rugby speaker this year is English international rugby union referee and barrister Wayne Barnes.



Wayne Barnes

When Wayne refereed Australia against France in Melbourne in June 2014, he became the most capped English referee of all time. He joined a group of five other international referees who have refereed 50 or more test matches.

When he was selected to referee at England 2015, he joined an elite group of referees who have refereed at three Rugby World Cups. During the tournament he refereed New Zealand v Argentina at Wembley, the Quarter Final between Wales and South Africa and when he refereed the semi final between Australia and Argentina, he became the most appointed RWC referee; having refereed 15 games over the three tournaments.

Ex Rugby League player and comedian Lea Roberts makes a welcome return to the club, having made us laugh back in 2013.

Lea has played professional rugby league for Halifax RLFC and is therefore passionate about sport as well as comedy.



Lea Roberts

Ticket costs:

- £40 each
 - Table of 10: £350
 - Players discounted to £35
- 4 course meal served to the tables

Available from:

- Becky Bolter
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- Chris Jones
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We are most excited to see you there!

London 3 North West 31/12/2016

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	B Pts	Pts	Adjust
Hackney	12	12	0	0	449	130	319	11	59	0
Hemel Hempstead	12	10	0	2	451	127	324	9	49	0
Grasshoppers	12	9	1	2	320	244	76	6	44	0
Stevenage Town	12	7	0	5	351	225	126	11	39	0
Datchworth	12	7	0	5	272	303	-31	6	34	0
Hitchin	12	6	0	6	300	291	9	6	30	0
Cheshunt	12	4	2	6	288	268	20	6	26	0
Kilburn Cosmos	12	4	2	6	276	313	-37	6	26	0
Old Merchant Taylors'	12	4	0	8	200	357		4	20	0
St Albans	12	3	1	8	237	340		6	20	0
Finchley	12	3	0	9	286	329	-43	5	17	0
Staines	12	0	0		181	684		3	3	0



Peter Tasko at Twickenham

Peter Tasko nominated for RFU President's Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award

Peter Tasko, our Vice-Chair and Business Committee Chair has been nominated by Hertfordshire RFU – our Constituent Body – for his outstanding contribution to rugby. He joined other nominees as Twickenham VIPs at the Old Mutual Wealth Series matches.

Peter and the other nominees received a behind-the-scenes tour of the stadium before having lunch with the RFU President in the Spirit of Rugby hospitality suite and watching England take on their opponents on the pitch.

The experience culminated with Peter and the other guests being invited to dinner with the RFU President at the post-match function as a thank you for their hard work and dedication to the game.

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

HITCHIN LADIES RUGBY
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New players welcome!

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(Alternative dates are possible, winner to bear any additional costs)

The draw will take place at the Vice Presidents' Lunch Saturday 1 April

Draw tickets are now available from the club bar and shop and from Martin Howard.

If you are unable to get to the club, please contact Martin, who will send you the tickets.
 Call Martin on: 07944 574604 or email: martin@markate.co.uk

£200 cash to the member selling the most tickets

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