



STAGS HORN

Summer 2018

The Informal and Occasional Organ of Communication for Huntingdon Rugby

Welcome to the mid Summer edition of the Stags Horn, rounding off last season and looking forward to the next one. Regretfully, this will be the last time that I get to grips with the Horn.

You see, there are a dedicated bunch of people who run this lovely, perfectly formed rugby club that you are a part of. They may coach, they may administer, they may do a role that involves them spending just a little bit of their own, precious free time on Stags business, or they may put on a blazer and glad hand when required. All of these are important and part of what makes the club like it is.

However, too much is falling on too few shoulders, and eventually fatigue sets in. Producing the Stags Horn is not difficult—you just put together various articles submitted to you by different sections of the club, and add in some news and some nonsense in one document, three or four times a season. For someone who knows how to use a computer, this should be really straightforward. If I, as a reasonably tech averse bloke with fat fingers, who is prone to make many, many typing errors (just the five while trying to type that last sentence) can do it, then there must be plenty of candidates within the club who could do it in their sleep.

Volunteers are so important in a club like ours, and if you can give up a little bit of time to collate the Horn, do a cash and carry run, help behind the bar, be a first aider, do some painting, help with marketing the club, doing match reports for the website and local press, help in the club shop, sell some advertising, do some light maintenance, or just empty some bins, your assistance would be gratefully received!!!!!!

And to everyone who does their bit at the moment, a huge and heartfelt thank you. Whether it was putting on the magnificent Picnic Ball, taking your turn cooking the bacon rolls on a Sunday morning or putting the flags out before matches, thank you. Like all the other jobs that need doing around the club, it doesn't take long, but it really does help.

If you think you could spare a little time to help, please contact the Chairman, Nick Wilcox on chairman@huntingdonrugby.co.uk to put your hand up to help next season. Thanks in advance.

Look forward to seeing you on the Club Clean Up Day on Saturday 18th August from 9.30pm—come down and we'll find a little job for you to do—and good luck to Bill Shakespeare who has taken over as President from me. He is a proper rugby man who will be a great ambassador for the club, and I hope he has as much fun as I did in the role.

Sid Millar—Stags' President 2017/18 & Former Stags' Horn Editor!!
Email—sm@rugbycluboflondon.co.uk

From the (New) Chairman

Welcome to Huntingdon Stags and the 2018/19 season. I am honoured to be taking up the role of Chairman and take this opportunity to thank Mark Foster-Collier for all his hard work over the last two years.

When I arrived at Huntingdon in 1984, as a 14-year-old, the club ran 4 senior sides, Colts and a Vets team. There was no Youth set up and kids in the main played their rugby at school and additional club rugby from 15-16 onwards.

Society has changed significantly in the last 34 years and it is with great pride that we can boast a minis and juniors playing membership of 300+. This section of the club moves from strength to strength year on year. Our challenge is to continue increasing numbers, proactively recruiting in schools where children get little opportunity to play rugby.

In parallel senior club playing numbers have fallen across the country, Huntingdon being no exception. After a best league finish the 1st Team were relegated last season and 2nd team struggled to fulfil several fixtures, in part due to player availability.

As the club grows there is a danger of a disconnect between its many different strands, evidenced in the way we often refer to junior and Senior sections as separate entities. The vibrant Youth section should provide a constant flow of players into senior rugby. Players who leave the area to go University or work and return should by default play for the club where they spent their formative years. Minis, junior's players should aspire to play senior rugby for HRUFC.

The committee have a vision for what we believe HRUFC should represent and three priority objectives to deliver in 2018-19.

'HRUFC seeks to be a central pillar of the community bringing players of all ages and abilities, supporters and families together to enjoy and benefit from all Rugby Football has to offer.'

Season 2018-19 objectives

1. Implement a whole club ethos
2. Increase playing numbers
3. Develop an integration pathway from junior to senior rugby

This is not a huge task, we have excellent foundations and people. We can be stronger and more resilient working collectively with a common aim. I am looking forward to a great season and future for the club.

Nick Wilcox
Chairman

Also newly elected at the AGM for the next season (other officers remain in post)

Vice Chairman—Matthew Griggs
President—'Bill' Shakespeare
Welfare Officer—Nick Mitchell

Welcome to our new Club Sponsors, Bellway Homes



We are delighted to welcome Bellway Homes as the main club sponsors for the next two seasons.

Bellway Homes' logo will be appearing on all playing shirts from U6s to the 1st XV, and their generous support will very much help with the variety of costs that come about from running a not-for-profit community sports club.

We look forward to working with them and our three Platinum sponsors who has re-signed for another year, Henson Crisp, Agrii & Syngenta—thank you all for your continued support of The Stags.



Autumn International Tickets

Many of you have already taken advantage of the opportunity that membership of a rugby club brings, to purchase tickets for the Autumn Internationals at Twickenham.

We have a few available still for the England v South Africa game on Saturday 3rd November, and we can still get hold of Adult and cut price Junior tickets for the England versus Japan game on Saturday 17th November. In both cases you need to be quick as we don't have many of the former, and the deadline for getting hold of the latter is rapidly approaching.

We have NO tickets left for the England v New Zealand game, and won't be getting any more. There are some tickets reserved for the England v Australia match which may become available—if they do, details will be posted on the website and social media.

Details from Sid Millar on sm@rugbycluboflondon.co.uk—you must be a qualifying club member to get hold of tickets through Stags, and they must be for your personal use.

Stags U9s vs Oundle



The latest generation of the Thorp family to leave people trailing in their wake on the rugby field.....

New Stags Kit for 2018/19 Season

Here is a taster of the new Stags kit that the whole club will be wearing next season—pre-orders will be available in August for collection on the Registration Days.



Dates for your Diaries

Sat 18th Aug — Club Tidy Up. We will be cleaning, painting, fixing and organising so please dress appropriately. Come along from 9.30am and we'll give you a job to do or help with. All sections of the Club very welcome.

Sun 26th Aug — First Minis & Juniors Registration Day – Club Shop will be Open

Sat 1st & Sun 2nd September — Club Closed — Dog Show!!!

Sun 9th September — Second Minis & Juniors Registration Day— Club Shop will be Open

Sat 15th September— Past Presidents' Lunch ahead of Stags 1st XV v St Ives 1st XV, plus Staggerers v Old Bulls

Another word from the Chairman!!

Hello again,

As I'm not often lost for words, I've been allowed a second piece for this illustrious journal, to update you on what has been going in across the club in preparation for the season to come.

Pre- season training has started well with 25-30 players at each session to date. For the 1st time the U16's & 17's have been a formal part of training and have thrown themselves into it, enjoying the coaching of Damien and the team, overcoming inhibitions mixing with adults in the process. A few senior faces have been missing but being generous I'll put that down to holidays and hard ground!! Advertising in the Hunts Post & elsewhere has been a success with several new players appearing at the Racecourse.

Matt Stenson and James Thorp organised a very well attended Youth coaches meeting, where the season to come was discussed over a burger and a beer. The intention is for these to be a regular occurrence throughout the season.

The U16's are organising a 'bring a friend day' for all Junior teams on Sunday 19.08.2018, Head Coach Damien Whales will be leading the training. A template will be put in place for the day and this will be a standing event each year; so, we will be looking for this year's U15's to do a great job next year.

The Club should be sparkling as we are having the annual 'Spruce up day' on Saturday 18.08.2018, all volunteers welcome (in fact actively encouraged) with a thank-you beer, prosecco or soft drink available. You may not recognise the place by the start of the season as new 'soft lighting' is being put in in the clubhouse and external lighting for the compound.

The Editor put the opportunity to supply Stags kit out to tender and we are very pleased to say a great deal was secured with Scimitar, who are based in the Midlands. Key to their successful bid was the lower price they attached to Minis and Junior kit, the life blood of our club.

We are actively looking to improve the atmosphere on match days and bring the club together. There will be a dinner at every home 1st team league game, starting with the 'Past Presidents' lunch when we play St Ives on Saturday 15th September. Each lunch will have a specific theme, but everyone is welcome to take a seat and we are actively encouraging members and friends from across the club to attend. Junior and minis teams will be playing a curtain raiser before five league games throughout the season, with BBQ teas being cooked for all players under our new Gazebo sponsored by the Vice-Chairman.

Much more has been done and a lot of things are in train to make the 2018-19 season a great success and Huntingdon Rugby Club the place to be.

Your club needs you to achieve this seasons goals, especially in terms of time, energy and enjoyment. We have a great bunch of volunteers, but wider participation is key across all age groups, parents, players, friends and fans, if we are to achieve a successful outcome. Should you wish to get involved in anyway, please contact our new Communications Lead, Maddy Durrant (maddysenior@icloud.com)

I look forward to seeing you all on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the season.

Nick

End of Season Silverware for Stags

The mighty Staggers carried on their rich vein of form by winning the inaugural Hunts & Peterborough Veterans Cup, comprehensively beating Oundle in the Final on Hunts & Peterborough Day, hosted by Thorney Rugby Club.

Pictured is the evergreen captain, Paul Baynes, being presented the trophy by H&P Chairman John 'Sizz' Sismey.



Congratulations are also due to last Season's Under 16s who beat a strong collection of teams to win the prestigious Kettering Under 16s 7 a side tournament, and to the Under 15s for again beating a strong field to bring home the Ron Hatch Trophy organised by Colchester Rugby Club. Both are just rewards for good seasons by both sides, and bode well for 2018/19.

WE ARE STAGS !

WWW.HUNTINGDONRUGBY.CO.UK

Stags' Summer Sale

To free up some room in the store cupboard, we have a few items of leisure wear that we are virtually **GIVING AWAY**. Both normally retail for over £20, but for the last few items, you can have them for just £5 each—first come, first served.



Stags Fleece—sizes XS, M & L only



Stags Mens Wet Top—size L only

Contact Sid Millar on sm@rugbycluboflondon.co.uk if you want one of these items—you might even get it delivered!



Stags will be having a stall at this year's Mayor's Carnival on Saturday 11th August at the Riverside Park in Huntingdon.

Come down and say hello, and bring any friends who might be looking to play rugby at Stags this coming season!

Stags Picnic Ball 2018—if you can remember it, you weren't there!

The end of season highlight as ever was the Stags Picnic Ball, which didn't disappoint. With the number of tables up from the previous few years, competition was fierce for the coveted first prize. Modesty prevents your correspondent from saying who won, but there was surprise on the winning table, as the standard of entries was very high!



Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to provide the highlight of the year, including Emily Skidmore, Karen Baynes, Karen Gould, Jon & Becky Hutton, Gail Matthews, Nicky Frost , and not forgetting Ian Gould on the Wheels of Steel.

Fancy a table next year? Watch the Stags website and social media, or keep an eye out for the posters within the Clubhouse, and keep Saturday 13th April , 2019 free.....

Advertising and Sponsorship for Huntingdon Rugby Club

With the cost of running our beloved rugby club increasing every year, we are always on the look out for local or national firms who want to increase their profile by supporting Stags in some way.

To try and harness local businesses, we took a stand at the Hunts Business Fair recently, and after a very positive day, we will hopefully get five or six new advertisers or sponsors, plus two minis players and re-connecting with an old Staggerer who has recently moved back to the area!

Do you know any firms that would like to support Stags this season? There are a range of options to suit all marketing budgets, and we can always arrange bespoke packages if they are really eager!



Options include

Full Page colour A5 advert in 1st XV Matchday Programme—£150 (£75 half page)

Senior Player Sponsorship—£175—Logo in the Matchday programme and on the club website, plus social media shout out

Pitchside Tear Drop Banner — £300—put out at every 1st XV home game, and every Sunday morning when the Minis and Juniors are playing

Stags Bar Sponsorship— 2m x 1m sign on the Bar stating 'Stags' Bar sponsored by (insert name) Season 2018/19' - £1,200—very prominent signage at the most visited place in the Clubhouse!

If you would like an advert in our professionally produced matchday programme, please contact Chris Matthews on chrisjm66@hotmail.com.

If you would like to sponsor a player or the bar, or get a pitchside banner, please contact Sid Millar on sm@rugbycluboflondon.co.uk