



# IN TOUCH



## Kent Work with Clubs to Provide a Blueprint for the Future

**Over the past 18 months the Kent County RFU Executive Committee, the Kent RFU Rugby Development officers and the RFU Area Manager have worked hard to address the way in which the County consults and communicates with its member clubs of which there are 59 full RFU voting clubs and 10 affiliate clubs.**

This initiative has involved the creation of questionnaires for both clubs and individuals involved in the game from the County and the RFU, a consultation evening for Club Presidents and Chairmen in September 2018 and three cluster 'Insight' evenings held with clubs in the Spring of 2019 at: Maidstone FC, Canterbury RFC and Westcombe Park RFC.

Each of these evenings was supported by major sponsor Shepherd Neame both in terms of refreshments and the use of their meeting facility at Faversham for the September event.

This range of consultations saw 35 clubs attend the Faversham evening and 43 clubs attend the cluster evenings. As the events were developed, a wider audience was invited where we saw Club Board/Executive officers Directors of Rugby, team captains and players participating to gain their views on how to improve the game and make it more attractive to those currently playing and those who might be attracted in the future.

As a result of the input given by the club attendees at these meetings the Kent Executive now has a very clear view of the key priorities as we move towards the 2019/20 season. These are:

**1. Recruitment and retention of Senior XV a side players.**  
**2-5 These were all ranked as of equal importance.**

- Volunteer Recruitment
- Improved Facilities.
- Referee and Coach Development.
- Potential changes to Merit table rules and structure of Cup Competitions.

**In summary the key ideas put forward were the following**

### PLAYER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Club forums and evenings should be held during next season to share best practice. There should be a review of the current Competition offering, both in terms of the structure of competition and the relaxing of regulations within the Merit tables and potentially Kent 1 and 2 leagues administered by the Kent Competitions Committee. Best practice should be shared relating to Club Welcome for Members and visitors-systems for successful transition from Youth Rugby to Senior Rugby should be shared and front row clinics should be organised across the County to cope with the current shortage of front row players.

### VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Club forums to be organised by the County Club Development Committee to share ideas and best practice on volunteer development and recruitment. RFU key Job Descriptions and Succession planning advice to be presented. The Leadership Academy in Kent is valued and should be continued with on an annual basis. There should be an on-going review of the County's Awards system for volunteers to ensure that all clubs are nominating deserving individuals to both the County and Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer Awards.

### FACILITIES

Continue to improve guidance on available grant sources in addition to the RFU and Kent Small Grant systems to improve both club houses and ground facilities. Promote the Groundsman Connect scheme and encourage non participating clubs to join.

**(groundsmenconnected@rfu.com)**

### REFEREE AND COACH DEVELOPMENT

Courses to be more local to clubs if possible. Introduction of the front row clinics by the Coach and Referee sub-committee. Further GMS training and support and the introduction, before the start of next season, of a new touchline behaviour strategy.

### COMPETITIONS

The introduction of a Player exchange system to run alongside the existing Facebook Fixture exchange.

Investigate other on line systems which could help with this initiative-relaxing of some of the existing rules around competitions administered within the County system particularly where they relate to front row rules. Longer term potential for restructuring Kent leagues should be kept under review and the County Cup offering should also be tested for effectiveness.

### COUNTY CORE ACTIVITIES

Rugby Safe - Discipline- Safeguarding and CB County Management activities continue to be provided as core activities required by all as part of the structure of the game. Particular emphasis to be placed on the recruitment of volunteers to these areas to maintain their output at a high standard.

### WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The next steps for the County Executive having worked on these Insights at a recent Strategy Day is to ensure that these Insights provide the cornerstones of our key objectives in the Kent County RFU 'Local Plan' for the 2019/20 season. To this end both RFU funding and available County funds will be channelled into the priority objectives with an emphasis being placed on priority 1 Recruitment and Retention of Players. In addition over the coming season and next, the Competitions Sub-committee will consider and review how best to provide greater flexibility in the rules governing the County Merit Tables and will monitor the health and suitability for players needs of Kent 1 and 2 leagues.

The Committee have already, as a result of holding these Insight events relaxed the front row rules for the Invicta, Kent Metropolitan & Rural Leagues in 2019/20.

**Roger Clarke**  
Chairman KCRFU  
Exec and RFU Councillor  
for Kent.



# Recognising Our Volunteers in Kent.

Kent County RFU have in recent years celebrated its many brilliant volunteers by holding an Annual Awards Dinner at the home of major sponsor Shepherd Neame at Faversham. The award nominations are in a number of categories with the top award being the President's award.

The winner last year was Alan Skinner of Tunbridge Wells RFC who recently completed 50 years as a club member. In that time Alan was a player, first XV captain, 100 club founder and manager, VP's Secretary, Bar rota organiser and cellar man.

Here is a picture of Alan at Twickenham receiving recognition by the RFU with Eddie Jones doing the honours after the England France game which both Alan and his wife Kathy attended and were hosted by the County's RFU Councillor and Chairman Roger Clarke.

Who will win the award this year and travel to Twickenham in early 2020 to be hosted at one of the Six Nations games or later in the year at one of the 2020 Autumn Internationals?



## Categories are:

- 1. Kent RFU President's Award** – This goes to a club person, an unsung hero who makes an all-round significant contribution to the success of a club
- 2. Mini Rugby Volunteer of the Year** – This award goes to a volunteer who has been nominated by their club as making a significant contribution to the mini section of their club
- 3. Junior Rugby Volunteer of the Year** – This award goes to a volunteer who has been nominated by their club as making a significant contribution to the junior section of their club
- 4. Girl's Rugby Volunteer of the Year** – This award goes to a volunteer who has been nominated by their club as making a significant contribution to the girl's section of the club (males can be nominated in this award if contributing to the section as a volunteer)
- 5. Women's Rugby Volunteer of the Year** – This award goes to a volunteer who has been nominated by their club as making a significant contribution to the Women's section of the club (males can be nominated in this award if contributing to the section as a volunteer)
- 6. Senior Rugby Volunteer of the Year** – This award goes to a volunteer who has been nominated by their club as making a significant contribution to the Senior section of the club
- 7. Young Rugby Ambassador of the Year** – This award goes a Young Rugby Ambassador aged 14-24, whom are part of the RFU YRA programme, driving the core values of Rugby within their community
- 8. Student Volunteer of the Year** – This award goes to a student volunteer who has been nominated by their university/college/school as making a significant contribution to Rugby
- 9. RFU Spirit of Rugby Award** – This award is specific to the educational sector and is relevant to the whole institution, giving playing opportunities to all the students and offering development pathways for students in all forms of rugby.

The 2018/19 awards ceremony took place at Shepherd Neame's Faversham Brewery on Thursday 6th June. Did your club nominate anyone for an award? If not remember to nominate for the 2019/20 awards if you have valuable and essential volunteers who should be recognised for their work.



## The 2018/19 Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer Awards

This year's awards ceremony took place on the 9th May at the Humphries and Parks dealership in West Malling with over 30 category award winners recognised.

This is the third year that England Rugby and Mitsubishi Motors have run the Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer Recognition Programme. The awards have been developed to provide the local rugby community and grassroots rugby clubs, with opportunities to recognise and reward the volunteers who are an integral part of the game.

From the West Malling event, two individuals have been invited to attend the Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer of the Year Awards at Twickenham in September, at which three overall national winners will be announced, each receiving the prize of a Mitsubishi vehicle of their choosing for a year. The two individuals from Kent are Cary Wright and Ryan Thomas - Cary is from Thanet Wanderers RFC and has been recognised for his tireless efforts in setting up a Schools Rugby hub across the Thanet District. Whilst Ryan has been nominated for the positive impact and awareness he has made around the benefits of sport upon mental health, across all sports within London Southbank University.

**Ashford RFC**  
Chris Hunt & Scott Booth

**Ashford Rugby Club**  
John Heaver

**Askean RFC**  
Ian Lunn

**Aylesford Bulls RFC**  
Amanda Clark, Mark Cornford,  
Vanessa Martin, Tony Merlini &  
Neil Wiltshire

**Beccehamians RFC**  
Gary Bullard & George Lawlor

**Beckenham Rugby Club**  
Jack Tombs

**Bexley RFC**  
Kevin Cope

**Charlton Park RFC**  
Doug Hursey

**Cranbrook RFC**  
Lyndsey Posey & Nigel Posey

**Dartford Valley RFC**  
Luke Stickings

**Dartfordians RFC**  
Andre Seguin, Dave Phillips,  
Michael Edward Fiander  
& Tim Geoghegan

**Greenwich RFC**  
Jason Shepherd

**HSBC**  
Haydon Bartlett-Tasker

**King's College Hospital RFC**  
Marc Avery

**London South Bank Students' Union - Men's Rugby**  
Ryan Thomas

**London South Bank Students' Union - Women's Rugby**  
Niamh Mitchell

**Medway Rugby Club**  
Gillian James & Matthew Riches

**Old Alleynians RFC**  
Helen McIntosh & Ian Kenny

**Old Colfeians RFC**  
Ben Hutchings

**Orpington RFC**  
Dominic Clare

**Sittingbourne Rugby Club**  
Adrian Wilson, Paul Pretti, David Hall  
& Alan Sharman

**Southwark Rugby**  
Jonathan Adams, Mark Simonds,  
Nick Rostron-Pike, Phil Morrison,  
Thomas Cole, Tunde Adeniji  
& Zak Perrin

**Thanet Wanderers RFC**  
Cary Wright

**Tonbridge Juddians RFC**  
Andy Bishop

**Whitstable RFC**  
Ciaran Redmond

# Kent Seniors



Credit to  
Rory Milner

The Kent County RFU Senior Squad have enjoyed a successful campaign in the National County Championship Bill Beaumont Cup with two away victories at Gloucestershire and Hampshire and a very narrow loss at home to Cornwall.

The opening game saw Kent fall at the hands of Cornwall at Medway RFC by 21 points to 25 in a game that was very much winnable. They bounced back at Clifton RFC with a fine performance in beating Gloucestershire by 43 points to 33 and finally a victory against Hampshire at Havant RFC by 35 points to 26. The squad was well led by Tom Stradwick of Blackheath FC.



The performances of the following players saw them gain selection for the England Counties tour of Georgia, Kent can be rightly proud of their achievements this season.

**Dan Smart** Canterbury RFC  
**Nathan Morris** Old Elthamians RFC  
**Danny Herriott** Blackheath FC  
**Tom Williams** Blackheath FC

**Steve Leonard** Blackheath FC  
**Jack Daly** Blackheath FC  
**Kieran Moffatt** Old Elthamians RFC

## Kent Vets



Kent Vets have enjoyed an unbeaten 2018/19 season winning 3 games out of 3 in October, February and May. 35 players from 13 clubs across Kent have represented the County during this season.

Kent started with an outstanding display in October against Essex Vets winning 70-5 at Westcombe Park RFC. The second game was a far tougher test with Kent only winning by a small margin 17-22 away to Hampshire at Portsmouth RFC. The final game of the season against Berkshire away at Reading RFC was a closer encounter than the scoreline suggests. At half time Kent were only leading 17-22. An outstanding second half display saw Kent run away with the game ending 17-56. The experience, commitment and most importantly the camaraderie has been the success of this side. We look forward to going again during the 2019/20 season.

Our thanks go to Chris Bright for his commitment and organisation making the Kent Vets such a success on and off the field.



## Kent Women

Kent headed into this year's County Championship with high hopes after finishing last year unbeaten only failing to progress from the pool stages on points difference. A difficult opener kicked off the campaign as Kent welcomed Surrey who has appeared in the last three finals consecutively.

Kent managed to record an extremely impressive victory outscoring Surrey four tries to two in a 20-14 win with two tries in each half courtesy of Frankie Newby (Blackheath) & Beth Pickernell (Beckenham) in the first half followed by Layla Little (Canterbury) & Emma Gibson in the second half.

Next Kent hosted East Midlands and eased to a comfortable 43-7 victory running in seven tries in the process with Helen Harris (Old Elthamians) bagging a hat trick Brier McNamara (Beckenham) with a brace with Becky Smith (Old Elthamians) & Layla Little (Canterbury) completing the scoring.

Kent headed to Sussex for the final pool game which was now essentially a quarter-final with both teams unbeaten. Despite there being only one score in it for the majority of the game Kent was unable to put away their chances and will now look back to this game to improve next year. Georgia Gray (Old Elthamians) scored Kent's try on the day.

## U20 and U18 England Counties Representatives

### Kent U20 Success

Our congratulations go to Charlie Knight of Thanet Wanderers RFC, Bobby Bratton of Old Elthamians RFC and especially Matas Jurevicius of Tonbridge Juddians RFC for their selection for London & South East Under 20s.

At the Divisional weekend Matas went on to gain selection for England Counties Under 20.

### Kent U18 Success

Following on from their impressive season, 7 Kent U18's County players featured in the final squad of 23 for the London & South East Divisional Team, Max Bullock, Joel Chance, Joshua Ondoma, Jack Smith, Cullen Daly, Beau Farrance & Kai Pearce Paul, with a further 3 selected as non-travelling reserves, Zac Corrigan, Ben Fryatt & Matthew Smith. London & South East beat the North Division 26-9 and the Midlands 29-12.



Three Kent U18's were selected for the England Counties U18's squad to play Ireland U18's Clubs, pictured L-R Joel Chance, Max Bullock & Beau Farrance and Cullen Daly was named as a non-travelling reserve. The series against Ireland was tied with a win apiece. Congratulations to all the Kent U18's squad this season.

**A great achievement!**

## Dartfordians RFC Celebrate their 95th Anniversary Season



The 2018/19 season saw Dartfordians 1st XV successfully defend their position in London 1 South, following on from their promotion from London 2 SE the previous season. Maintaining a spot in the league was a great way to celebrate the club's 95th anniversary, but there is so much more going on at this community club. Whilst continuing the links with Dartford Grammar School, the Old Boys of which set up the club in 1924, Dartfordians has continued to work hard within the local area to ensure the continued success of the Junior club, seen the launch of Girls and Ladies rugby and the fielding of five men's sides on a Saturday.

Dartfordians Junior club continues to see growth in players across the U6s to U18s Academy and the numbers are also increasing across the U13s, U15s and U18s Girls and Ladies squads, with the latter being a fantastic addition to the wider club. Dartfordians has had players selected for Kent representative sides across the U16s, U18s, U20s male sides, the U15s and U18s Girls sides, the Kent Men's senior side, with other representative honours in the Junior club for London & SE U18s, Middlesex U18s Girls and finally with several being selected for the Saracens Academy and Saracens EPDG squad. All of the great work being undertaken in the Junior club, across male and female sections, ensures that the club can maintain the size of the senior squads and this is testament to the hard work being carried out by coaches and all the volunteers at the club.

Whilst seeing wide success on the pitch, Dartfordians has also worked hard to upgrade the off-field facilities at the War Memorial Ground. The new changing room and gym block has now been open for a couple of years and the club is now finishing the development of new toilet and kitchen facilities to ensure that the members and visitors have a great experience. The final project is to relay the main pitch at the club and this is just about to get underway.

So, another great season at Dartfordians RFC and the 95th Anniversary Dinner & Dance is being organised for the start of next season for all to celebrate the all round successes.



## Canterbury Promoted to National One

Kent will, for the first time, have three clubs playing in National Division One in the 2019/20 season. Canterbury's 19-10 victory over Chester in the National 2 play-off game saw them join Blackheath and Old Elthamians among the top 40 clubs in England. The promotion is the highest point in Canterbury's 90-year history and brings National Division one rugby to East Kent for the first time.

The win over National 2 North side Chester, at Canterbury's Marine Travel Ground, was witnessed by a record crowd of 2000. They saw the city club concede the first score to the visitors but tries from Dan Smart, Jonathan Murray and Sam Rogers, plus two conversions by Harvey Young, carried them home. Club chairman Giles Hilton said: "It was a fantastic day for Canterbury and the support we got from clubs all over Kent was amazing. The size of the crowd showed that there is a real appetite for rugby in the county. It has been a long journey for us but it proves that any club can rise to the top."



## "A Magnificent Season for Sevenoaks RFC"

Sevenoaks Rugby's 1st XV won the London 1 South league title to gain promotion to level 5, the highest ranking the club has ever enjoyed but it would be wrong to think that this was the pinnacle of the club's excellent season. As well as running 4 senior sides each Saturday, the 2nds and 3rds also won their respective leagues whilst the 4ths (the Gents) finished runners-up in theirs and the veterans side (the Acorns) added the Kent Plate to the club's haul of silverware.

Not to be outdone by their senior counterparts the junior section added a few prizes too. The Academy 1st VII won the Kent 7s, the U15s were Kent plate winners whilst the U14s, 13s and 12s were Kent Champions whilst the minis, in their waterfall tournaments, mixed different abilities into all sides all season and scored tries by the hat-full.

Off the field the club has over 2,000 members and has increased sponsorship revenue year on year by nearly 60%. Season 18/19 will remain in the hearts of the Mighty Oaks for decades to come.



Credit David Purday



## Paul Keohane Sports Fund Day 2019

The fourth annual Paul Keohane Sports Fund day was held at Thanet Wanderers on 6th April. The day began with a match between teams from Charles Dickens and Royal Harbour Schools. Both schools have received coaching from Thanet Wanderers youth development coaches Cary Wright and Tom Carlier and their school coaches Dan Shepperson and Mickey Capeling, both former first team stalwarts at Wanderers.

The coaching and the provision of £6000 equipment and kit is only possible as a result of financial help from the PKS Fund, England and Kent RFUs and sponsors Miles and Barr and London Array. Special shirts in the schools' colours were presented to the two teams by Simon Thompson of Miles and Barr and John Keohane of the PKS fund. The game was won by the Dickens School and was notable for the quality of play considering many of the players were only introduced to rugby a few months ago. Thanks to Patrick Little for refereeing.

Prior to lunch John Keohane reminded a packed clubhouse of the origin of the fund that bears the name of his brother Paul whose untimely death motivated him and fellow founders, Gary Frame, Jimmy Green and Chris Marson to set it up in Paul's memory. Today had seen a big step forward in its main aim of getting local young people more involved in physical activity and rugby in particular.

Cary Wright spoke of his delight in the early success of the schools initiative which aimed to deliver funded curriculum rugby to years 7/8 and 9/10 in six non-Grammar schools whilst also supporting the Grammar and Independent schools wherever possible. The success of the programme, after only six months of the planned three years, had far exceeded projections with inter school matches and a very successful schools festival hosted at Thanet Wanderers.

Paul Luxmore, Executive Head of Coastal Academies, thanked Cary Wright and Tom Carlier for their efforts and also the club's sponsors for enabling the schools and community programme. Dylan Hennesey who had played in the schools match for Royal Harbour, then spoke about how being introduced to rugby and then playing the game as a result of the schools programme had had a positive impact on his life.

Paddy Mcevely with the assistance of Ross Bell served an excellent lunch and Kelly Smith and Gerry Doyle with their ever smiling help ensured glasses weren't empty for long. On the field Thanet Wanderers secured a notable win against Old Colfeians to end their season on a high.

Back in the clubhouse, ex-Wanderer Prav Mathema, who is now National Medical Manager with the Wales RFU and Mattie Stewart, who played 34 times for Scotland and 169



times for Northampton Saints and who is a good friend of Cary Wright took part in a question and answer session. Thanks to them for the interesting session.

Chris Marson ably conducted an auction and raised prodigious sums for some superb donated rugby memorabilia and auction lots. Thanks to those who donated and bought these wonderful items.

John Keohane has announced that around an amazing eleven thousand pounds was raised during the afternoon.

News of the Paul Keohane Sports Fund can now be read on their new website designed and set up in record time by club sponsor Broadbiz [www.pksf.co.uk](http://www.pksf.co.uk)



## The Prague Connection

An amazing Second World War link between Canterbury Rugby Club and the Czech capital, Prague was discovered when a touring team from the city visited East Kent

Club Praga Praha ran out against the Under13s and 14s wearing the black and amber hoops of Canterbury but it was only after the game that the historical connection came to light.

The visitors revealed that Canterbury were at the heart of their club's foundation, thanks to a wartime parachute drop. The RAF dropped Red Cross supplies into Prague after the city's liberation and one box contained a rugby ball and four black and amber shirts with greetings from the Canterbury club. A few months later, in 1944, the Praga Praha club was formed and adopted the Canterbury colours they still play in today.

Canterbury chairman Giles Hilton said: "It was a long time ago but we would love to know who was responsible for sending the ball and shirts to Prague. It shows that rugby can reach every community no matter how difficult the circumstance and I am so glad we helped to create a bit of rugby history."

## 2018-19 Spitfire Gold Veterans' Trophy Finals

There are those that say that in Veterans Rugby, you see the same skills & guile, but without the searing pace: well this year's finale to the Shepherd Neame sponsored Spitfire Gold Veterans Trophy tournament saw pace aplenty in what were four excellent finals played on a chilly but bright Sunday afternoon.

In what is now the fifth year of this competition, it was pleasing to see relatively few walkovers in the pool stages, with the overwhelming majority of matches being played in a tournament that was slightly restructured this season, with new clubs signing up to the competition that now has a waiting list for entrants. What was additionally pleasing was that many of those new admissions to the competition had progressed to the finals and that it wasn't just a repeat of the same old faces.

First up was the Shield Final between newcomers, Gillingham Anchorians and Charlton Pk. The early stages were of the match were quite competitive but it was evident as the match progressed that the SE London club had just a little too much power and pace for the Medway-based club, eventually running out 40-7 winners to take the trophy.

The Bowl Final was robustly contested between two other debutantes, with very evenly matched sides in Whitstable and Vigo, and was a thrilling encounter with no quarter given by either team. When these two met in the Pool stages, Whitstable edged the win but in the Bowl Final, Vigo always appeared to have a slight upper-hand, stretching to a 10-0 lead before being pegged back at the interval to 10-10. An early score for the 'Villagers' after the break, gave them a 15-10 advantage but the 'Oystermen' had their moments and were always in with a shout, with Vigo despite creating opportunities, never quite able to put the game out of reach; so there was something of a sigh of relief from Vigo when the final whistle sounded.

The Plate Final saw perennial finalists O Gravesendians and Sevenoaks battle it out, OGs took an early advantage and



held sway 15-7 at the interval. The second half saw them very much on the defensive and their efforts weren't helped by a couple of yellow cards followed by a delay in the action for an injury requiring an ambulance, to OG's paciest player, arising from a try-saving tackle. It was after the resumption that Sevenoaks turned the screw to lead 15-24 and despite a late OG try it was Oaks that took the trophy 22-24.

The Cup Final was a cracking match between Thanet Wanderers, who have featured in all 5 of the finals days to date, and Westcombe Park, last year's Plate winners. In what was a great advert for veterans rugby this was a remarkably open game with Combe, reeling in the early stages from sustained Thanet pressure and an early score, gradually exerting themselves to gain more and more possession and being just that bit more clinical when the opportunities presented themselves. Going into half-time with a 17-5 lead they were able to hold at bay a Thanet side that just lacked the guile and incision to unlock an organised Combe defence, with Westcombe Pk eventually running out 27-10 winners.

Our thanks go to Shepherd Neame for their continued support for this popular competition which is organised and hosted by Maidstone Rugby on behalf of Kent RFU.



## Lizzie Runs the London Marathon for Wooden Spoon Charity

**Lizzie Shand recently completed her first Marathon wearing the red, green and blue hoops of the Wooden Spoon charity. Many of you will know that the Wooden Spoon is a Charity, that changes children's lives through the power of Rugby. Since 1983 the charity has distributed over £26 million to more than 700 projects.**

Lizzie, 24, who works in commercial property management, ran the London Marathon on Sunday 28th April, completing the course in a very respectable 4 hours 56 minutes. Lizzie, has spent much of her formative years in and around Rugby Clubs, she has close connections to the Gillingham Anchorians RFC, her Father, Tony, is a retired player and a current committee member. Her younger brother, Ted currently studying at Roehampton University, has played at Medway RFC, most recently playing for their Development Team, he has also recently played for Middlesex U20s.

Lizzie set a target of £2000 sponsorship, and has at this point raised £2115 (£2566 with Gift Aid). She was able to negotiate with the Wooden Spoon Charity prior to the Marathon that all of the sponsorship monies collected would be spent in the county on the needs of children and young people from Kent. A huge proportion of the sponsorship was generated by the kindness of the membership of Gillingham Anchorians Rugby Club with further contributions from her brothers friends and their families at Medway Rugby Club.

She had a super time on the marathon with a small army of Family and Friends cheering her at various locations from the start at Blackheath, and many other locations on the 26 miles to the finish in the Mall. Following the exertion she met her team of supporters for an Italian Meal washed down with a few pints on the South Bank. Lizzie has been bitten by the bug has committed to the Royal Parks Half Marathon in the Autumn, and hopefully running again for the Wooden Spoon at the 2020 London Marathon.

Should anyone wish to offer further sponsorship to Lizzie for her endeavours, it is not too late. Her Virgin money giving page can be found with a simple online search, once you have found the page search for Lizzie Shand. Any contribution, would be welcome for such a good Rugby cause and to recognise her hard work.

**Tony Shand**  
SENCo/Assistant Headteacher  
The Robert Napier School  
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# The Anthony Fitzgerald Challenge Shield in Support of CRY

## Old Colfeians Students v Blackheath Students



**What do you do when you have invested time, effort and finances in building a minis, juniors and colts section only to find that many of your players, on reaching the end of their school days, decide to move away in order to further their education?**

This was a challenge set for Colfeians newly appointed University Liaison Officer.

Well one approach is to exploit young peoples' penchant for burying their noses in phones on various social media platforms.

Setting up a social network would certainly prove useful for keeping in touch and monitoring the continual progress and participation of the players at whatever level, be it social, competitive university rugby or in some cases, local club rugby but ideally it would be even better to offer some substantive parent club rugby activity for when the players inevitably and periodically return home to restock their finances and recover from the stresses of university life!

Obvious times to be exploited being pre-season, Christmas and Easter. Finding viable opposition, in the target age bracket, however is not as easy as it might otherwise be but this is as likely because it is a recent problem arising as clubs junior sections have expanded and matured in recent years with increasing numbers of players move on to higher education.

This year for the first time, however, at Christmas, our local RFU development officers facilitated a RFU initiative in organising a flood light under 23's tournament against other local clubs, excellently hosted by Sidcup RFC and in support of the Jimmy Mizzen Trust. This was a resounding success for all participants and in our own particular case twenty six predominantly university based players represented OCRFC.

Moving into the new year OCRFC were going well in the RFU Intermediate Cup winning the South East regional final and being rewarded with a home semi-final against South West champions, Matson, on Easter Saturday. As the excitement built we wondered what we could do to enhance the day when over a beer with local rugby stalwart and Blackheath VP Mark Twomey the idea of a curtain raiser was hatched. The intention was to pitch it at student level with Blackheath providing an opposition in the form of a fantastic group of lads who regularly and voluntarily play in support of the Anthony Fitzgerald Charity, **Cardiac Risk in the Young**.

**Anthony** was a young man who spent his formative years at Blackheath enjoying his rugby from minis through to colts when tragically at the age of eighteen he passed away

suddenly from an undiagnosed heart condition.

A follow up meeting with Anthony's father, Noel, and close family supporters resulted in their full backing for this initiative which would not only bring young people together but two local clubs with a common cause of boosting the profile of the charity CRY. Ultimately we would be looking to raise funds in order that both clubs could provision screening for their respective young people such that a similar tragedy might be avoided in the future.

Competing for the inaugural Anthony Fitzgerald Challenge Shield, the day proved to be a resounding success from the students' perspective. Sadly it was not to be so good for OCRFC seniors who narrowly missed out on a Twickenham final when losing by a single point. That said although defeat was difficult to take there were many winners on the day.

CRY benefited to the tune of in excess of £1,000, over forty student players put on a great show, the profile of CRY was raised and with significant numbers of spectators in attendance from local clubs throughout South East London, friendships and re-acquaintances were made not least between OCRFC and Blackheath who attended in significant numbers. The bar takings weren't too bad either! For the record the students' game was won by Blackheath 33 points to 29.

We now turn our attention to the next stage for our students and will be looking to organise one or two pre/early season friendly fixtures. We hope that the floodlight tournament can be repeated in the coming season and thereafter OCRFC students are already looking forward to the Challenge Shield return fixture next Easter!

So many boxes can be ticked by such initiatives. Lads retain a connection with their clubs, clubs can come together in a common cause and ultimately if tied up with a local charitable cause then even more meaning can be bought to bear.

Finally, I know that Noel, his family and supporters are very keen to boost the profile of CRY and have a dream of seeing CRY recognised and supported with fund raising and more importantly screening provided to young people at all rugby clubs in Kent and further afield. If you are interested in finding out more or wish to know how to go about setting up such an initiative I am sure Noel and his supporters will be delighted and only too willing to give you some pointers and advice. In this regard contact can be established through OCRFC.



**Each week at least twelve young people in the UK die suddenly as a result of undiagnosed heart conditions. At Cardiac Risk in the Young we aim to save young lives.**

The emotional impact of the sudden, seemingly inexplicable death of a young person on their family cannot be underestimated. CRY offers emotional and clinical support following a young sudden cardiac death.

Screening to identify young people at risk is cost-effective when conducted correctly – the conditions can be treated, securing a future for those identified.

All young people should have the choice to be tested CRY offers subsidised ECG and Echo-cardiogram screening to all young people between the ages of 14 & 35.

**Registered Charity Number: 1050845**  
**Tel: 01737 363222 cry@c-r-y.org.uk**

# The Kent RFU Partner Programme

The Kent RFU Partner Programme has been designed to encourage businesses and organisations to become involved with rugby at grass roots level, with the aim of ensuring greater contact between the clubs and partners that can add valuable business and community experience to both parties.

In line with the current RFU and Rugby World Cup 2015 legacy aims, the Partner Programme will deliver a high degree of business and community acumen to rugby in Kent and at the same time allow the Partners the opportunity to extend their sales and marketing opportunities to a large and varied rugby audience.

Partners are also guaranteed that there will be no other competing businesses or organisations in the county programme, although clubs are free to choose who they wish to work with.

Complementing the current Kent RFU sponsorship arrangements, the Partner Programme will ensure that companies and organisations will have available to them dedicated channels of communication to all clubs in Kent. For more information contact: [office@kent-rugby.org](mailto:office@kent-rugby.org)



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# Around the Grounds

## An End of Season Summary

### Shepherd Neame Kent Cup Competitions

**KENT CUP:** Just six of the nine eligible clubs entering a tournament that saw only one fixture played prior to a repeat of last year's final between Sidcup & O Elthamians. Elthamians started quickly held the early advantage, pushing out to a 17-3 lead in the first quarter before Sidcup began to get into their stride and pegged them back to a 17-15 scoreline at the half-time interval. Elthamians started quickly again in the second half, extending their lead to 24-15 before a succession of three Elthamians tries and a penalty in the middle period of the half took the score out to 48-15, ensuring there would be no repeat of last year's result where Sidcup took the trophy in the dying minutes. It wasn't until the final 10 minutes and with a man advantage that Sidcup were able to respond with two converted tries of their own before a final flourish by Elthamians to lift the Kent Cup for the first time in their history with a 55-29 scoreline.



a contest where there was little to separate the two sides, it was Gravesend who held off some late Charlton Park pressure to take the trophy 23-26

**KENT PLATE:** Entry into the Plate is for losers of their first fixture in either the Cup or Shield competitions; and ended with a Canterbury v Westcombe Park final without a ball ever being kicked. Nonetheless, the final proved an enthralling and high scoring encounter in which the advantage swung back and forth with the lead changing hands on five occasions. In what was always a close contest it was Canterbury's Pilgrims that lifted the trophy with a 31-39 scoreline.

**KENT VASE:** It would appear that there is much more enthusiasm for the county cup competitions amongst the junior clubs with 23 entering the Vase competition and out of the 19 fixtures up to the final only five were conceded to walkovers, which is a credit to all the clubs concerned. To mention all the matches would be impossible, but some of the fixtures of note were the efforts of league debutantes Cliffe Crusaders who made it to the quarter-finals before falling to eventual finalists Kings College; and non-league Ash, Ashford Barbarians and Swanley who all went out in the opening round. Their participation in the competition is most welcome, and without wishing to be political, their willingness to compete perhaps an example to some of the senior clubs. The semi-finals saw Kent 2 club Bexley concede to Kings College whilst the other semi also resulted in a walkover with Ashford being given the concession by O Gravesendians. The final saw Ashford always in control to complete a successful season with an 18-3 victory to lift the trophy.



**KENT SALVER:** Only four clubs failed to transfer to the Salver through conceding their fixtures and pleasingly the competition progressed through three rounds with only one further walkover. The semi-finals saw Cranbrook fall 19-27 to Southwark Lancers, whilst in the other Faversham were 29-7 victors against Sittingbourne. In the final Faversham took a slender 7-5 advantage into the interval but it was Southwark who looked like picking up the trophy having moved into a 7-15 lead, but the 'castaways' came back with two further scores to eventually lift the Salver with a narrow 17-15 win.

**KENT SHIELD:** Now in its third season, this competition for teams at Levels 7 & 8 saw less than half the available clubs enter. Of the round one fixtures only one was played as part of the preseason preparations. Of the semi-finals, only Charlton Park's match against Aylesford took place, with Gravesend benefiting from a walkover in the other. The final was always a close encounter with Charlton Park holding a narrow 8-6 advantage at the interval and with the lead changing hands during the second half. In the end in

# English Clubs Championship



**NATIONAL 1:** The last two seasons have seen the promotion battle very much a 'one horse race' as Hartpury and then Coventry romped to secure promotion by a wide margin; not so this time around. Chinnor were the early season leaders but fell off the pace mid-season as a group of 4 or 5 clubs fought for promotion. Both Blackheath and Elthamians were very much in the mix going into the last quarter of the campaign, along with Amptill, Rosslyn Park and Rotherham. In the end it became a battle between Elthamians and Amptill and the early March clash between the two is probably what decided the issue with the Hertfordshire club taking the points and going on to clinch the title leaving the SE London club to think what might have been. Blackheath's challenge also fell away in the second half of the campaign where losses to the eventual winners, plus Rosslyn Park who finished third, and a couple of mid-table sides saw them drift off the pace to eventually finish fourth.

**NATIONAL 2(SOUTH):** O Redingensians or Rams as they became shortly after the season started, pretty much took the division by the scruff of the neck very early on and had built a big enough advantage by the mid-season point to ride out any slip ups in the second half of the campaign as they coasted to take the title in early April. The chasing pack consisted of four clubs, who themselves had a significant cushion over the mid-table melee. Both Canterbury and Tonbridge Juddians were in that chasing group, with Canterbury very much leading the chase from the mid-season point, whilst TJ's were largely at the tail end of the group at the halfway stage. Both clubs kept their form as first Taunton and then Henley stuttered with TJs very much coming up on the rails. Whilst they never really got close enough to really challenge, they were always in with a shout and in the end finished third, having kept their county rivals always looking over their shoulder and just a point shy of their total. Canterbury, having taken the playoff place, went on to meet National 2 N club Chester who had finished behind Hull Ionians, with Canterbury taking the tie 19-10 to join Blackheath and Elthamians in National 1 next season.

**LONDON & SE PREMIER:** The promotion battle had no county involvement and was a three way battle for pretty much the season mid-point, with Sutton & Epsom (S&E), Westcliff and Wimbledon competing for the promotion places in a battle that wasn't decided until the final weekend, leaving S&E as the league champions and Westcliff to go on to face Barnstaple in the promotion playoff, a match which they went on to win convincingly

For the county's clubs, promising starts somewhat faded and both clubs ended in mid-table, with Sidcup 8th as they did last season, slipping down the table and flirting with the relegation battle. After a promising first season in the division last year, Tunbridge Wells 7th might have expected a better campaign this time around but it was their propensity to lose to sides below them and beat sides above them that saw them hovering on the edge of the danger zone for a large part of the season, and whilst other results never really saw them in danger it probably made for an uncomfortable campaign.

**LONDON 1 (SOUTH):** What a nail-biter this division was, with just a single point separating four clubs going into the last month of the campaign; and the promotion battle literally going down to the wire with both Medway and Sevenoaks involved. Brighton and Medway had set the early pace but both clubs had wobbles and Sevenoaks and Camberley

were able to maintain station. In the end both of the early season leaders potentially saw their hopes dashed in the home straight, as first Brighton stumbled and Medway's challenge dissolved with three defeats in the closing stages of the campaign. The final day saw Sevenoaks take the title, but it was a gritty comeback on the last weekend by Brighton at fellow challengers Camberley, that saw them snatch the runners up spot and the promotion playoff place against Colchester, an encounter which in windy conditions saw them again come from behind to take the promotion place.

At the bottom of the table Hove anchored the division and were relegated by mid-February, and they were joined by Chobham at the end of March with Tottonians the other side to join them after the likes of Havant and Chichester, moved clear of danger. Of the County's other representatives; Dartfordians enjoyed a solid first half to the campaign before flirting with the drop zone in the third quarter of the season, eventually finishing eleventh, whilst Westcombe Pk, who might have been expected to challenge for promotion were never quite on the pace as they finished mid-table.

**LONDON 2(SOUTH EAST):** In a division dominated by Kent clubs, it was Beckenham that took the title at the end of March, to finish clear of Horsham in the playoff spot. Very much like last term, the battle for the playoff place was fought between several clubs, although the closing weekends saw that crystallise to a battle between Horsham and Charlton Park as both O Colfeians and Haywards Heath dropped away, with Horsham securing the runner-up spot on the final weekend. At the bottom end of the table both of the relegation places were finalised on the same weekend with Aylesford dropping straight back down to London 3 along with bottom club Heathfield & Waldron. For the rest of the County's clubs it was mid-table mediocrity with Gravesend in the top half of the table whilst Maidstone, Dover, D&B and Thanet all struggled at some point through the campaign.

**LONDON 3(SOUTH EAST):** Crowborough were the only Sussex club in the top half of a division dominated by Kent clubs last season; always one of the front runners this time around they had built a healthy lead by the season mid-point, going on to secure promotion and the league title at the end of March. It was Kent clubs that provided the competition with Beccehamians and Vigo always in the hunt with Folkestone recovering from a very poor start to the campaign to be in with an outside chance in the closing stages of the season. In the end it was Beccehamians that secured the promotion spot on the last day of the campaign, from Folkestone who will no doubt look back at their awful start to the season, and Vigo who finished fourth.

At the bottom end of the table Hellingly's withdrawal meant there would be just two relegation places this term, with any of the bottom half of the table likely to be dragged into the struggle. In the end Lewes were relegated in mid-March, and in the penultimate weekend, Hastings were consigned to relegation.

**SHEPHERD NEAME KENT 1:** Ashford took the league title at something of a canter, strengthened by returning players they proved to have too much fire-power for the competition. Anchorians put in a good season to take the playoff spot against Crawley, which they subsequently won, although a slight wobble in the closing stages could have seen them caught by Cranbrook who very much came up on the rails in the final weeks of the campaign to finish fourth. O Gravesendians for long periods looked like potential challengers but fell away in the second half of the season and finished in fifth place. At the bottom, the withdrawal of RBS meant just the one relegation place and in many ways it was a formality as Sheppey suffered a horrendous season to finish well adrift at the bottom and drop to Kent 1.

**SHEPHERD NEAME KENT 2:** It was newcomers Cliffe Crusaders that were the pace setters, taking top spot early in the campaign and going on to take the title in their debut season in the leagues. The battle for the other promotion place was really between three clubs with Sittingbourne falling away leaving Faversham and Lordwood to battle it out in a contest that went to the final two weekends of the campaign as the top three clubs were pitted against each other, with Faversham eventually taking the promotion place. At the bottom of the table Askean anchored the table from Greenwich, with Dartford Valley the other club in what was a clearly delineated bottom three in the table.

## London & SE Promotion & Relegation Summary

### NATIONAL 1

**Promoted:** Amptill.  
**Relegated:** Esher, Loughborough Students and

### NATIONAL 2 (S)

**Promoted:** Rams and Canterbury  
(Playoff v Chester (Nat 2N))  
**Relegated:** Ldn Irish WG, Guernsey and Birmingham & Solihull

### LONDON & SE PREMIER

**Promoted:** Sutton & Epsom and Westcliff  
(Playoff v Barnstaple (SW Prem))  
**Relegated:** Shelford, Brentwood and Chingford

### LONDON 1 (N)

**Promoted:** Rochford Hundred  
**Runners Up:** Colchester  
**Relegated:** Diss, Luton and Fullerians

### LONDON 1 (S)

**Promoted:** Sevenoaks and Brighton  
(Playoff v Colchester (Ldn 1(N))  
**Relegated:** Hove, Chobham and Tottonians

### LONDON 2 (SE)

**Promoted:** Beckenham and Horsham  
(playoff v Farnham (L2SW))  
**Relegated:** Aylesford Bulls and Heathfield & Waldron

### LONDON 2 (SW)

**Promoted:** KCS OB  
**Runners Up:** Farnham  
**Relegated:** Effingham & Leatherhead and Gosport & Fareham

### LONDON 3 (SE)

**Promoted:** Crowborough and Beccehamians  
**Relegated:** Lewes and Hastings & Bexhill  
(Hellingly – withdrew)

### LONDON 3 (SW)

**Promoted:** Winchester and Battersea Ironsides  
**Relegated:** Teddington, Petersfield and O Whitgiftian

### SHEPHERD NEAME KENT DIVISION 1

**Promoted:** Ashford and Gillingham Anchorians  
(playoff v Crawley (Sussex1))  
**Relegated:** Sheppey (RBS - withdrew)

### SHEPHERD NEAME KENT DIVISION 2

**Promoted:** Cliffe Crusaders and Faversham

**Note:** Promotion/relegation between Kent Div 1 & 2 does not take account of potential restructuring during the closed season.

### SUSSEX 1

**Promoted:** Uckfield  
**Runners Up:** Crawley

### SHEPHERD NEAME KENT CUP

**Winners:** O Elthamians  
**Runners Up:** Sidcup

### SHEPHERD NEAME KENT SHIELD

**Winners:** Gravesend  
**Runners Up:** Charlton Park

### SHEPHERD NEAME KENT PLATE

**Winners:** Canterbury  
**Runners Up:** Westcombe Park

### SHEPHERD NEAME KENT VASE

**Winners:** Ashford  
**Runners Up:** Kings College Hospital

### SHEPHERD NEAME KENT SALVER

**Winners:** Faversham  
**Runners Up:** Southwark Lancers

Bob Hayton, Maidstone FC