

"Knock-On"

The Newsletter of Aboyne Rugby Football Club

January 2006

Welcome

- to the first *Knock-On* of 2006 and a happy New Year to you all. Let's hope it's a successful year for the Club both on and off the pitch.

And for a first New Year's resolution, can you *please* remember to inform Vernon Fawcett (Membership Secretary and referee extraordinaire) of any change in address, especially for e-mails. Then we can be sure that you don't miss out on any communications.

Looking back....

So, what's been happening since the last *Knock-On*? There are updates on the playing front for seniors and juniors later on so we'll start with a quick resume on members news.

Last year's co-Captain, **Steve Duncan** made it clear that he wouldn't be playing for us again, not by his usual failure to turn up for training but by getting married and emigrating to Oz – we wish the happy couple a long and enjoyable future together and thank Steve for his work for the club. Now Stevie does a pretty mean Elvis impersonation so Andy Cowie produced an Elvis outfit for him to wear on his stag night white jump suit with sequins, cummerbund, hair style and shades – the whole thing. *Impressive!* However, it was rather a snug fit, to say the least, and by the end of the night the parted seams were more reminiscent of P.J. Proby (for those who remember him). *Even more impressive!*

Another more recent departure was former President, captain, organiser of most things and all round [*a considerable distance*] club stalwart, **Pete Burrows**. The club will sorely miss his organising skills and his formidable ~~weight~~ presence in the front row. He has gone to hotter climes and has promised a regular contribution to *Knock-On*see his first 'Dubai Diary' column below. Generous to a fault, he gave his wife **Lisa** a nice leaving present and the baby is expected in June, so she will be staying here until the baby's born.

And thinking of formidable props, those who remember **John Low** will be pleased to see that his son **Moray** (yes- that *is* how it's spelt) has followed in father's footsteps and gone one better by being a regular in the front row of the Scotland U-21 squad. Moray got his early coaching with Aboyne's minis section, which tells you about the quality of the club's coaches and what they can do given the right material.

Dubai Diary

When I left Aboyne for Dubai, playing rugby was the last thing on my mind. However, I packed my boots - just in case. My retirement was short lived when I bumped into fellow Aboyne player **Andy Whitaker** in a bar (where else!). After a few training sessions, I was in the Dubai Hurricanes Veterans 2nd team for the Gulf Veterans Tens tournament that runs alongside the Dubai Sevens. Luckily for me these are true vets - there are even players older, slower and fatter than me! Now you'll all know that I've never been a great one for training - something about the freezing cold nights, the howling gales, the horizontal rain, the dim floodlights and the mud. Out here it is the complete opposite with 4 huge flat grassy pitches, superb floodlights, stands and a bar. [*Yes but what's the membership fee? Ed.*] Its about 27 degrees at night when we train so we deserve our cold beer afterwards.

Our efforts to win the 10s tournament got off to a poor start. The now domesticated Andy pulled a muscle in his back looking at furniture in IKEA and retired hurt before even getting his kit on. But we still won two of our three matches to get to a 1/4 final against our first team squad. As they were the defending champions we let them win and go on to take the trophy for the 3rd year in a row.

The fun is all over now though and it's back to work. I'll be trying to get a game in for the seconds in the "Super 2s" league. This includes away matches in Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Doha etc. – which makes a trip to Stornoway seem a doddle by comparison. I hope it's not too cold in Aboyne - I have the weather webcam on all the time to remind me of home but even with the air-conditioning on full blast I just can't seem to make it snow!

Pete Burrows

Captain's v. President's match for the Nigel Wilkinson Memorial Trophy will be held on **Saturday 22nd April** – traditionalists please note that this is a week earlier than usual. As before, we will then hold the AGM but this year we intend to follow the AGM with a dinner (albeit not the full-blown formal rugby dinner with speakers etc.– just good food, good ale and a good time). This will probably be in the restaurant part of the Potarch Hotel and we'll be canvassing for numbers nearer the event.

Ceilidh

On Saturday 11 February we are holding a Saint Valentine's Ceilidh (profits to support the under 15 team trip to France – see below). The event will take place in the Banchory Scout Hall. A two course meal is included in the price and individual tickets at £15 or tables of 8 at £120 are still available from John and Nicola Moody (01330 825990) - but they are going fast so purchase yours now! There will be a bar and raffles and competitions including one for the best fancy dress (Gallic theme to match the reason for the fund-raising).

UNDER 15s

Our under 15 team has been representing the club in the Caledonia Premier league, giving the lads the opportunity to experience rugby at a higher level than previously and to play against teams from bigger clubs such as Stirling County, Dunfermline as well as Aberdeen Grammar FPs. Many of the lads have been playing together for a few years now and the team generally gels well, displaying great team spirit as well as many individual star performances.

Of course, it is not only the players who should take credit but also the coaches, team manager and the numerous parent/helpers who provide refreshments, taxi services and other duties to keep the squad functioning. This year the boys have had a new set of shirts, generously sponsored by Boreas, which has helped to contribute to the image and camaraderie so important in rugby.

In May this year the squad will be heading off to France for an international rugby festival which we hope will be a lot of fun for the boys and for the group of parents escorting them. Fund-raising, to help finance this trip, is ongoing and we have already helped at jumble sales, private parties and firework displays as well as having an Aboyne Rugby Football Club stall at the Aboyne games and will be holding the above-mentioned ceilidh in order to bring in some extra money.

(For information generally on youth rugby, contact the Youth Coordinator - Paul Williams 01330 822188)

Minis P4-P7

This section is growing in strength and numbers as the season goes on.....currently there are 58 players who have tried mini rugby at least once, with an excellent regular turnout for training and gatherings of 36. (We have been as high as 43 in one training session!)

The P6/7 "squad" is looking good again this year with a regular attendance of 23 players, and they are more than holding their own in the gatherings against other clubs such as Mackie, Huntly, Garioch,

Aberdeen Wanderers...there have been some really good performance and we have high hopes for the end of season tournaments.

Our P4/5 "squad" is slightly down on numbers this season, with a regular attendance of 13 players - the large majority of whom are taking up rugby for the first time this season.....which is excellent.....and they are really enjoying themselves. Huge improvements since the beginning of the season, and they launch themselves with great enthusiasm into the gatherings with other clubs and hate losing with a passion! There is great potential which we need to nurture and grow.....and find others.

We have managed to enrol some enthusiastic Dads to help out with the coaching, which is fantastic.....if no one volunteered we would very quickly fold..... but we can always do with more (Mums and Dads), especially as one or two of us will be moving on and out of the Minis at the end of this season. We will also be seeking help in organising the annual Aboyne Minis Tournament at the end of May. This is a really successful event, even though I say so myself(!), but we do need help putting this on...so any volunteers please make yourselves known to any of the Mini coaches!!

Micro Rugby

The micro rugby group for the P1 to P3 age group is another success story for the club. Up to 20 children have taken part and are looking good for another successful season. Micro rugby are run on Saturday mornings at **Tillybrake from 09:30** and are open to all children in classes P1 to P3. **Graham Nixon, Mike Fraser and Andy McMurtrie** will again be providing the coaching. Anyone interested can contact

Senior Rugby

As you will see from the table below, the senior XV has had a hard time in the league this season and, despite the efforts of captain Steve Hiller, was unable to raise a side for two games which set us back 8 points. One of these was away against Stornoway – a fixture that is just too expensive for a small club like ours to undertake regularly. Despite several heavy defeats, it has to be said that the Club has actually played some excellent rugby – especially when we have a relatively small pool of players and often have to play guys out of position.

We have suffered from the loss of some key players, most recently Pete Burrows but we were lucky to find an excellent short-term substitute for him in Tom Poland well his name was Tom and he came from Poland but he spoke little English and we couldn't pronounce his name, let alone spell it for the team sheet, so Tom Poland it was! Built like a power station he had four excellent games for us which was not surprising as it turned out that he had played for Poland as a junior. Unfortunately he left on his travels again just before Christmas.

But we have had some excellent newcomers – and they're under 30 years-old which lowers the 1st XV's average age considerably! We are also pleased to see some of the under-18s make the considerable step-up into senior rugby and a good job they have done too. Well done guys.

First XV rugby has just started up again after the Christmas/New Year break and we hope that the newcomers will help us to have a good run in the Referees' Cup, which occupies much of the rest of the season

Senior Fixtures to April 2006 (Referees Cup)

January 28th Home v Moray

February 4th Home v. Gordonians, 11th Away v. Mackie, 18th Home v. Banff

March 11th Away v Ellon,

NORTH DISTRICT LEAGUE (games played) (* = 4pt deduction)

	p	w	d	l	f	a	bp	pts
Gordonians	8	7	0	1	293	67	7	35
Aberdeen University	9	6	1	2	336	108	8	30*
Banff	7	5	0	2	156	67	3	19*
Strathspey	8	3	1	4	142	232	2	12*
Stornoway	5	2	0	3	106	105	3	11
Moray	6	3	0	3	92	117	2	10*
Aboyne	8	2	0	6	151	319	2	2**
Peterhead	8	1	0	7	43	272	2	2*

NORTH DISTRICT LEAGUE

Aboyne v Aberdeen University	5-65
Strathspey v Aboyne	84-12
Banff v Aboyne	33-0
Aboyne v Gordonians	8-45
Moray v Aboyne	P
Aboyne v Peterhead	55-0
Stornoway v Aboyne	P
Aberdeen University v Aboyne	61-7
Aboyne v Strathspey	61-5
Aboyne v Banff	3-26
Gordonians v Aboyne	69-5
Peterhead v Aboyne	18-15
Aboyne v Stornoway	P



Senior players can get the latest info on matches etc. on

<http://www.scottishrugby.org/sru/community-rugby/club-rugby/aboynerfc/1st-xv-page.cfm>

New (and old) players are always welcome so if you know anyone, please let them know that training is on Tuesday evenings on the Green in Aboyne - contact club captain Steve Hillier (tel 013398 83321)

That's all the news for the time being – more information will be coming your way before the Captain/Presidents game and the AGM on 22nd April.