



TEDDINGTON RFC

Celebration Ball

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS 1966 - 2016
SATURDAY 22ND APRIL 2017, TWICKENHAM STOOP

Club Officers

1966/67

President Lionel PITT

Honorary Secretary
Len ENGLISH

Honorary Treasurer
Geoff CRUST

Fixture Secretary
Martin JOHNSON

1st XV Captain
Geraint WILLIAMS



2016/17

Club Chairman Gareth CROSS

Vice Chairman
Simon CARTMELL OBE

Director & Company Secretary
Rob ALLEN

Honorary Secretary
Pat PATRICK

Honorary Treasurer
Toby EVERETT

Ladies Chairwoman
Sarah EDWARDS

Youth Chairman
Kevin DAY

Youth Treasurer
Mark HUMPHREYS

Juniors Chairman
Mike LIGHTFOOT

Minis Chairman
Julian KNOTT

Touch Manager
Darren WEYMOUTH

Director of Rugby
Joe TOPA

Head Coach
Paul MANLEY

1st XV Captain
Dom STONE

2nd XV Captain
Joe TOPA

3rd XV Captain
Nick SMART

Hon Fixture Secretary
Vince HARTE

Club Captain
Fergus FARRELL

Club Volunteer Co-ordinator
Kevin DAY

Club Referee Co-ordinator
Nick GITTINS

Fat Stags XV Captain
Paul GILHEANY

Ladies Head Coach
Alison DONNELLY

Ladies 1st XV Captain
Heather SMITH

Ladies 2nd XV Captain
Lucy HARRISON

Club Safeguarding Officers
Clare MEADOWS & Sam OLSEN

Bar Manager
Vince HARTE

International Ticket Secretary
Derek GRANT

Webmaster & Social media manager
Leon SPIGHT

Membership Secretary
Tom COLLETT

Welcome

I would like to welcome you all to the Anniversary Ball, an event which celebrates not only our 50th Anniversary, but also the 125th anniversary of our sports club partners Teddington Town Cricket Club.

The mere fact that our club came into being at all and has since survived for 50 years is testament to the people who nurtured and developed it in those early years. The fact that we are now a thriving community rugby club with over 2000 members, providing the whole spectrum of rugby to the residents of Teddington and beyond is down to the wonderful people who are and who have been actively connected with the club for over half a century. Our volunteers, role holders, players, coaches and committee members, not forgetting our supporters, sponsors and ex players in Crinkly Corner all continue to do things the Antlers way, which for us is the right way. As we strive to be the best and friendliest community rugby club around, let's never forget how hard those before us worked to get us where we are today.

I'm sure you'll also join me in wishing Warren May the chairman of Teddington Town Cricket Club and all of its members congratulations on their milestone 125th Anniversary. Here's to a great night for both clubs, please dig deep and continue to support your club whether it be rugby or cricket or both.

Gareth Cross, Club Chairman Teddington RFC



MENU

STARTER

Pressed lamb shoulder, pea puree, pickled carrots, horseradish, toasted brioche
Vegetarian Option: Heritage tomatoes, mozzarella, basil gel



MAIN

Slow braised British beef, fondant potato, ribbon courgettes, chantanay carrots, buttered kale, rosemary jus
Vegetarian Option: Butternut Puree and Ricotta Risotto with crispy leeks



DESSERT

Vanilla panacotta, blood orange



Our History

1966-2016

THE FIRST 50 YEARS

Before I start this resume of the first 50 years of our great little rugby club I must first confess to you that I didn't pitch up to the club until 1992, so the majority of the facts surrounding the early years have been mostly gleaned from conversations at the bar with a selection of Antlers people, many quite old and some through no fault of their own have possibly lost the power of accurate recollection.

This having nothing to do with their age or infirmity, but because our conversations took place mostly over the course of several pints and also because some of these helpful historians have the ability to tell a tall story well beyond the skills of JK Rowling. So, if I've got something slightly or completely wrong, or not included someone who did something earth shatteringly important, then I'm sorry and I can only blame the beer, our club historian Ken Howe or club storyteller Ian Murray. But all will be corrected when the official history of the club is written and published by Ken sometime soon.



The birthplace of Teddington RFC (no longer The 3 Tuns pub)

OUR SIMPLE BEGINNINGS

1966 was for England fans of a different sporting persuasion a rather momentous year, but for aficionados of the oval ball game it will of course be forever remembered as the year that England failed to win a single game in that seasons 5 Nations tournament, but more importantly the year that Antlers rugby club was born.

It was I'm sure at a port, brandy and cigar fuddled meeting held at the Three Tuns pub in Chancery Lane, Holborn on 22nd June 1966 when members of the struggling Old Masonians RFC met for a drink with a break-away group from the Decca RFC. Whether it was their initial intention or not, but one thing led to another and before the evening was done they'd formed a new rugby club. Now that's what you call an evening out. The reason for this collaboration is unknown, but the new club they decided would be called the Antlers RFC and the club would initially base itself in a pub in Hampton Wick.



The Antlers 1st XV in 1966

Now it's not entirely sure if the chosen name and stags head emblem were a reference to the Royal Masonic School old boys association whose home was in Bushey Hertfordshire and who's emblem was a Hinds or deer head, or because the clubs first pitches were in Home Park, Hampton Wick, where herds of wild deer roam, but Antlers RFC it was and the emblem a stags head. The club was duly registered with the RFU and our first game was played on 17th September 1966 at home against Ditchling RFC from Sussex, we lost that one, but soon started to win games too. The one and only President that we ever had was Mr Lionel Pitt, who took the presidential reins of leadership of the new club and remained in post until 1971.

As briefly mentioned above, the club initially based itself at the White Hart pub in Hampton Wick (still there to this day) and played its matches across the road in Home Park. The two pitches although picturesque had scaffolding poles as goalposts and lines marked with creosote, plus it was a ten-minute walk from Pub to pitches in full kit, so it wasn't exactly The Stoop. After a couple of years providing the pub with a ready income and Saturday evening entertainment in 1969 the landlord changed and the new boss effectively booted Antlers out. Thankfully an opportunity arose to become tenants of the Teddington Town Cricket Club in Bushy Park and we gladly moved to Teddington.

The new arrangement was barely a year old when in December 1970 the clubhouse was burnt to the ground. Whilst a new clubhouse was being financed and then built the club based itself at the Ditton Skiff & Punting club. By September 1971 the new building was finished on the same spot and was duly opened, but this time under the auspices of the newly formed Teddington Town Sports Club, of which the cricket and rugby clubs were equal partners. The club slowly grew and eventually managed to acquire two pitches adjacent to the clubhouse, rather having to trudge over to Home Park. The wooden structure in Bushy Park, which became affectionately known as 'the third world potting shed' was to be our permanent home and without too much changing, bar an occasional lick of paint for the next 43 years. Throughout this time the club provided two things with great consistency; a warm welcome and a cold shower.

As far as the name Antlers RFC goes, we changed it to Antlers-Teddington RFC in 1981 and in 1998 with grass roots rugby blossoming across London and the South East and the internet just beginning to make its mark we decided that the club needed to have a local and recognisable identity, an identity that the name Antlers couldn't provide. And so we formally changed our name to Teddington RFC. We will of course forever be known as The Antlers, but at least people now know where we actually are and if they don't then we're only a Google search away.



THE 1970'S

The club flourished in the 1970's at its permanent home in Bushy Park and managed to attract some top quality players from near and far. These included current Crinkly Corner stalwarts Chris Wright, Rob Bromfield, John Cunnell, Dave Cox, Derek Grant, Mike Robson, Norman Adnett and Terry O'Connor, to name but a few. Antlers also started to become a notable sanctuary for Policemen, teachers and local businessmen from both sides of the straight and narrow. We were by now regularly putting out 5 teams on a Saturday and toured every year to the West Country. The players and their wives and girlfriends also put on a Pantomime every Christmas. On the pitch we had some very successful years and our fixture list was a strong one. The highpoint of the decade was a run to the Middlesex Cup quarter-finals, where our 1st XV captained by Mike Robson met the mighty Wasps RFC, whose team sheet included at least one international player. This fixture was repeated two years later, with the same result, a loss, but on the second attempt we at least scored a try and Dave Tarrant the Antlers captain was awarded the 'Man of The Match' by the Wasps players. A framed programme from the first meeting can be found in Crinkly corner at the clubhouse.



Our Third World potting shed



Antlers in action in the 1970's



THE LEAGUES

A new era in rugby was reached in 1987 with the start of the RFU and County leagues, this saw us initially being placed in Middlesex League 2 and in 1992 we were promoted to the Herts-Middlesex League 1. In 1997 we took the opportunity of reducing the number of Saturdays spent stuck on the north circular road heading off to the far flung reaches of north and east London, by transferring to the Surrey Leagues. This meant for easier; leafier, stress-free away trips, but trebled the number of teams with 'Old' in their title.

We remained in the Surrey leagues until 2010. In that year we were promoted to The London leagues for the first time in our history and passed straight through into London 2. We remained in the oxygen starved heights of London 2 between 2011 and 2014 and then dropped back London 3(SW), where we remain today. Our 2's and 3's also play league rugby and they are included in the Surrey RFU merit league system.

THE 1980'S

The 1980's was a period when club records and admin became a little sketchy and less well kept. The players and committee were obviously having too much of a good a time to take team photos or keep playing records and it's no coincidence that this lack of admin and record keeping neatly coincided with the arrival of famed Antlers 'characters' and comedy treble act Ian Murray, Pete Mather and Charlie Stockwell.

Even so the social life and the annual club skiing holidays to the Alps were legendary, as were the Friday and Saturday nights at the Murray abode, nicknamed 'Walton Towers'. Things began to unravel on the rugby front and although the boys were having fun we were not training and only just managing to raise one team. It got so bad that at one stage after losing every game in the season serious consideration was given to folding the club completely, but the boys who remained needed somewhere to go on a Saturday afternoon, so they hung on. The Ladies section was soon to arrive and this would halt the decline and change the fortunes of the club forever. Towards the end of the 80's the slump was reversed and we started to attract the next generation of young players from such exotic climes as Macclesfield, Bangor University, Douai School and even a few City boys.



Antlers XV from the 1980's

By the time the decade was drawing to a close we were back on the up, winning games, getting promoted and touring, this time across Europe and with the men and ladies touring in unison.

THE LADIES ARRIVE

As mentioned above in 1987 we were one of the first clubs in the UK to form a Ladies section. Our ladies were right from the very start not a separate part of the club but uniquely at its very centre and that is how it has remained ever since. In 1987 the club needed a good shake up and thankfully the Ladies were all too willing to oblige.



The first Antlers Ladies Team in 1987

All of our first ever ladies team back in 1987 were not only the pioneers of women's rugby at Antlers, but also women's rugby in general and we cannot mention these very early days of women's rugby without referencing the huge influence that three sisters had on the club during that time. Karen, Helen and Zoe Kirk we salute your efforts and your love of the game and everything Antlers and without people like you the club might not exist today and the fastest growing women's team sport in the world might not be rugby.





The ladies in the 90s

Helen who was our first Ladies captain also gets a name check on any famous rugby quotes you care to look up. She said to a Times reporter in 1987 (when referencing female rugby teams) "Everybody thinks we should have moustaches and hairy arses, but in fact you could put us all on the cover of Vogue." I will say no more, but below is a photograph of that first Ladies team.

The Ladies had a sustained period of success throughout the 1990's where we played league rugby in the RFUW National Division 3, making us one of the top 24 teams in the country. In 1997 we reached the last 16 of the National Cup. In that season we also had 3 International players pulling on an Antlers shirt every week; Elaine CROSS (nee BLACK) – Scotland, Giselle MATHER (nee PRAGNELL) – England and Susan JOHNSTON (nee GIBBARD-JONES) – Wales. Giselle having just returned from her missionary work at Wasps WRFC, where she was capped 39 times for England. In this golden era of women's rugby at Teddington we also nurtured and developed several other quality players who had to leave us to play premiership rugby in order to catch the eye of the international selectors.



The current ladies squad

They were: Linda UTTLEY – Wasps WRFC and England; Charlie BRONKS – Richmond WRFC and England; Sarah ESCOTT Richmond WRFC and England. Linda, Giselle and Sarah all returned to us to play their final seasons before retirement. Unfortunately Linda passed away in November 2009, but her personality, her love of life and love of the club is her legacy that will forever live on. Linda was the very essence of what being an Antler was and still all about.



Linda Uttley (1966-2009) in action for England

Like the men the ladies had a changing of the guard in the early 2000's and after a period of recruitment and rebuilding our ladies are once again strong, vibrant and at the heart of the club. We reached the National Junior Cup final in 2014 and in the current 2016/17 season sit comfortably in The RFU Championship 2 (SW). We now also run a Ladies 2nd XV, who compete in the RFU development leagues. This recent success and growth of our Ladies section can be firmly put down to the hard work of our ladies golden couple; Sarah EDWARDS and Ali DONNELLY, our Ladies Chair and Head coach respectively. They have been instrumental in

not only growing the women's and girls' game at the club, but also at a local and regional level. They also promote the game worldwide through their website Scrum Queens.com, which is the online home of women's rugby.

THE 1990'S & THE MINIS

The next major change in the club's history came in 1996 when we welcomed rugby playing children and their parents to the Antlers family. Our minis section was acquired from the defunct Lensbury RFC and was initially just a handful of children and enthusiastic parents. In the intervening years the Minis have grown from a one team to be one of the biggest most successful youth sections in the country. We now have 14 separate age groups, many of which have 3 teams or more, not forgetting our Junior girls section. We currently have approximately 500 children regularly playing in our minis (U5's to U12's) and juniors (U13's to U18's), all backed up by a network of fully qualified coaches, first aiders, physios, Safeguarding officers, admin managers and festival organisers. Our mini and junior teams have together won a multitude of national, regional and county competitions and festivals and players nurtured on the pitches at Bushy Park have gone on to play County, Regional and International age group and senior rugby. One of our minis James LIGHTFOOT-BROWN notably becoming a fully professional rugby player with The Exeter Chiefs and played on the HSBC World 7's circuit with England.



The all conquering Teddington U7's A squad 1997/98

Towards the end of the 2005/6 season a notable milestone was reached by the club. This was when one of our original Minis from 1996 played for the men's first team and so established the precedent and a defined route through the club; this was the realisation of a vision established by the original minis chairman Tony SWAN together with Club Chairman at the time Mark 'Taff' JONES. The player was Ross SWANSON and in the following season he went on to be capped by England at U18 level and thus provided the club with our first ever home produced male International. Ross also went on to win two Blues for Oxford University and he and his dad Ian (an ex Antlers player himself) are still regulars at the club. Our senior section continues to feature home produced players, this includes Tom COLLETT, Josh PENBERTHY, Rory MERCER, Jonny KING and Henry ELLENDER who are all regulars in the 1st XV.



Some of the current minis section



Ross SWANSON winning his England cap in 2007

THE 2000'S & THE GOLDEN AGE

The club remained pretty stable on all fronts through the early 2000's, but by 2007 our ageing 1st XV were floundering in Surrey 4, which was at the very bottom level of RFU league rugby. The only way was up and so with the help of our Youth committee led by Simon CARTMELL and club Chairman Vince RYLE the club hatched a plan to recruit new young players.

The recruitment drive began by using the services of students at St Marys University in Strawberry Hill to coach our junior teams. The students got their required coaching experience and in return we bought them lots of beer and persuaded a few of them to play for our senior teams. At first it was a trickle, led by Martin DONNELLY, Paul MANLEY, Tim HOLDSWORTH and a bit later Fergus FARRELL, but their influence was enough to get us back to back promotions from Surrey 4 to Surrey 2. By 2009 the trickle had turned to a steady flow of young talented players who were bridging the divide between student and club rugby and a new golden age of Antlers rugby was beckoning. In 2008 we needed a new coach to develop this pool of young talent and again the Antlers family came to the fore.

Giselle MATHER (ex Antlers player and recently retired Wasps Ladies coach) agreed to give it a go and became the first female to coach a men's senior side in the UK. In 2008/09 we won promotion to Surrey 1 and then we had two seasons; 2009/10 and 2010/11 which were without doubt the most successful in the clubs history.



Rugby World Magazine British and European Team of the Year 2010



Giselle MATHER, Teddington head coach 2008- 2012

Coached by Giselle and captained by Pete WHYTE and then Jonathan DICKSON we not only completed two unblemished seasons by winning a total of 62 games on the trot, but in doing so we were crowned the unbeaten champions of Surrey 1 in 2010 and London 3 in 2011. We also won two National cup competitions, the prestigious RFU Junior Vase at Twickenham Stadium in May 2010 (beating Bramley Phoenix RUFC from Yorkshire in the final) and the RFU Senior Vase at Twickenham in May 2011 (beating Littleborough RUFC from Lancashire in the final). Add to these the Rugby World Magazine British and European Team of the Year award in 2010, The Middlesex Bowl in 2010 and an appearance on Sky Sports News in 2011. These were heady days for the club and this 1st XV success was reflected throughout the club.



Senior vase winners 2011

We also racked up Surrey merit league titles from our much-improved 2nd XV and barnstorming 3rd XV. These two seasons broke the record books and they will be remembered for many years to come. It should also be noted that a strong core of these students who arrived and continued to arrive from St Marys Uni become committed to the club too. The 4 players mentioned at the top of this section; Martin DONNELLY, Paul MANLEY, Tim HOLDSWORTH and Ferg FARRELL all went on to make over 100 appearances for the 1st XV and for MANLEY (197 caps) and Ferg (227 caps) the journey continues.

At around the same time our Vets Team aptly called The Fat Stags under the management of Doug ADAM started to play regular Friday matches under floodlights and they too went on a 3 year winning streak. The Fat Stags was and still is made up of old Antlers players and also dads of children playing in our youth section. A Touch rugby section managed by Darren WEYMOUTH and Paul STRACHAN followed in 2013 and with it we then had just about had every base covered on the rugby spectrum.



The Fat Stags XV



The O2 touch rugby section





Antlers 2nd XV



Antlers 3rd XV

THE NEW CLUBHOUSE

The next step in the Antlers story was the total re development of our rather tired but much loved old clubhouse known as 'The Shed'. After over 10 years of planning, preparation and fundraising the all new 21st Century Clubhouse was completed and opened for the start of the 2014/15 season.

This was a huge effort by everyone at the club, but especially Simon CARTMELL (Youth Chairman and Build project Chairman) who drove everything forward. In total the club raised over £800,000 to build the new clubhouse. This was from personal donations from the membership, the selling of investment bonds and corporate sponsorship, all backed up with grants from The Rugby Football Foundation and Sport England and an RFU loan.

On a roll we next turned our attention to our winter paddy field and summer dustbowl otherwise known as the Bartons Cottage pitch. This pitch constantly flooded during the winter and became waterlogged, muddy and unusable for months at a time. We needed to find a drainage solution that worked, that we could afford and that was environmentally friendly. A state of the art system was found and once again the membership came up trumps with the funds to help pay for it. We were also financially helped by Newland House Preparatory School who had by now become one of our weekday facility users. The system was installed in the summer of 2016 and has already made a huge difference to the condition of the pitch. It will improve still further over the 2 year maintenance programme. Our next project is to secure a permanent floodlit midweek training venue for the club and work is already progressing on this issue.



Antlers 1st XV 2016/17



The new clubhouse



Junior girls guard of honour at Twickenham

Antlers People

They say that Antlers is the last club you'll ever play for, well that can also be said about our club officers, role holders and volunteers too. Here are 8 Antlers people who have given a lifetime of service to the club, there are of course many others who have given and continue to give vast chunks of their life to the club and without them we would cease to exist, so a huge thank you to all our doers, whether you be past, present or future:

JONNY CROFT

Groundsman – 1984
to present

33

YEARS AND COUNTING

PETER WOOLGAR

(Deceased)
Honorary Secretary
– 1971 to 2003

32

YEARS

GARETH CROSS

Ladies XV coach,
1st XV captain,
Director of Rugby,
Club chairman –
1993 to present

24

YEARS AND COUNTING

ROD BROMFIELD

Hon Fixture
secretary – 1984
to 2005

21

YEARS

TOBY EVERETT

Youth Treasurer,
Club Treasurer –
1997 to present

20

YEARS AND COUNTING

SIMON CARTMELL

Minis vice-chairman,
Youth chairman,
Club Vice-chairman
– 2000 to present

17

YEARS AND COUNTING

MARK 'TAFF' JONES

3rd XV captain,
Vets XV captain,
Club Chairman,
Hon Secretary –
1987 to 2013

16

YEARS

VINCE HARTE

Bar Manager & Hon
Fixtures secretary –
2003 to present

14

YEARS AND COUNTING

Whilst we celebrate tonight, we must also remember and honour those that came before us and also look ahead to the future to ensure that we do our very best to help the club grow, to improve and to be at the forefront of grassroots community rugby for many years to come.

Here's to the next 50 years of Antlers rugby.



The Tours

Tours have always been an important if irregular part of club life and especially so since we became a mixed club in 1987, when our men and ladies always joined forces and toured together. This is a unique feature of our club and even though we have been told on many occasions that it shouldn't work, it always does and here's where we've been:

1970's and early 1980's – Exclusively to the West Country

1989 – Amsterdam, Holland

1991 – Amsterdam, Holland

1992 – Paris, France

1994 – Dublin, Ireland

1996 – Galway, Ireland

1998 – Denia, Spain

2002 – Barbados

2007 – California, USA

2009 – St Austell, Cornwall

2016 – Texas, USA

2019 – ?



Antlers 2016 tour to Texas, USA

On the touring front our Mini rugby section also embarks en-masse every year on an end of season tour. Whilst not venturing as far afield as the senior club they average around 200 to 300 tourists on every tour and have taken over just about every seaside holiday camp in the south and south west of England.

Our Junior teams also tour as individual age groups and over the years have covered all of the 6 Nations countries and a few more besides. We are slowly spreading The Antlers name and friendly reputation across the globe and our shields, shirts and flags adorn clubhouses from Edinburgh to Buenos Aires and beyond.

With thanks to

An event like this wouldn't be possible without a huge amount of hard work put in by the whole organising team, but special thanks must go to:

Leon SPIGHT for pulling the whole thing together. Sarah EDWARDS for the promo graphics and programme design. Sam OLSEN for the auction, silent auction and raffle. Sonia ROSS and her helpers for all the lighting and decorations. Toby EVERTT for managing the finances. Kristina SUTKUTE from Quins who has been fabulous in her support. All the table captains who have been amazing in promoting the night. Everyone who has generously donated auction lots and raffle prizes. Guests who donated £5 per head to support all the students in the room, Thank you. Lastly Gareth CROSS for the words in this programme and support. If you catch them at the bar buy them a drink.



50TH ANNIVERSARY BALL 22ND APRIL 2017

Guests are invited to fill this in on the night and keep the programme as a reminder of the night.

Table Name:

Table Captain:

1: 6:

2: 7:

3: 8:

4: 9:

5: 10:



“Teddington RFC taking social
rugby seriously since 1966”



RECOMMENDED DONATION
£5