

Blandford is the Rugby World Spotlight Club of the Month. The questions posed and answers are below:

(RW) Who the captain is and what position he plays and how many seasons he has been led the side?

(JF) James Burry is captain and plays No.7 Flanker, James played for us a few years ago and then went to Bournemouth where he played for there 1st xv, after 3 seasons he returned to captain the Blandford 1st xv and this is his first season as captain, able assisted by Doug Baker Fly half who is Vice Captain doing all of the hard work.

(RW) Who are the coaches with their exact roles and have they played previously for the club and what positions they played, with any other detail that you think important. How many sides do you run - senior, juniors, ladies etc. If applicable, what would be the approximate total mini-junior membership of the club?

(JF) We have had a new Head Coach/1st team manager, Chris Curtis, he joins us this season from Wimborne RFC a local club, he has a wealth of experience with all age groups and has played a high standard of rugby in his youth, he brings with him experience and huge enthusiasam for the game, which has helped him gel with all the players, we have two other coachs Mike Pyrgos Head of Rugby and Andy Marriott who are from Bryanston school, we are extremely lucky to have there help and advice and are very grateful, they are both Natioanlly recognised coachs, and we have a trainee coach Rodney Hudson who after retiring from rugby after playing for Redidengians and Wimborne has decided to try his hand at coaching and is currently 2nd team Manager. We also have a growing junior section, after a couple of quiet years it is growing in numbers and has around 100 members a 100 % improvement on last year. Senior membership is around 200 including social members, we run a 1st and 2nd xv and an ocasional vets team that is looking for more fixtures next year, juniors we run a side in most age groups.

(RW) How many pitches you have plus any plans to maybe increase facilities or future plans? How long have you played at your present ground? Can you tell me about your clubhouse re: skittle alley.

(JF) Initially a pub side started in 1976 and based at the Half Moon Inn under the watchful eyes of Pat and Trevor Crawford. The Club quickly expanded and gained a reputation in the County for its hard and exciting rugby played in a friendly and fun loving atmosphere. The connection with the Half Moon has been retained by the half moon being super imposed in the Club badge. Since the closure of the pub the Club managed to retain the old barrel table and the Inn sign. Hall and Woodhouse, the brewers of Blandford St. Mary have helped the Club from the start and in 1990 the Club rented the old skittle alley of the Star Inn in East Street and turned this into a Club House. Over the years this has been altered and enlarged. More recently due to the generosity of Mr. & Mrs. Bryan Burrows the Club has obtained the freehold. The Club House was officially opened by Peter Stoop and Frany Matthews Senior Officers of North Dorset RFC who were our original sponsors for membership of RFU.

We played at Larksmead Recreational ground, until we moved to The Mildown School where we use two full size pitches and one junior one, for matches and training, we still have the clubhouse in the town centre and after looking at moving this year the

club agreed to stay, it makes us unique as all of the other teams we play have pitches near the grounds, but it helps us keep up or traditions of a very social club. In the summer months the club has a successful evening league cricket team and Tug of War team that has won many trophies over the years.

The clubhouse get used all year around for function, birthdays and local skittles teams use the alley, this year has seen more improvements with a new bar constructed, and a new patio area and car park will be finished shortly.

A new set of mobile training lights from Ram rugby has hugely improved our training facilities and we now have a fully lit pitch whci has made a huge difference with constant numbers traing all of the winter which is a massive improvement for us.

(RW) Any long-servers, with positions on the field and off-the-field, senior stalwarts? Have any players graduated to a higher level. If so who would they be, please?

(JF) Our ex president Doctor Ian Wilson is a major stalwart of the club and has been involved from the beginning and still very rarely misses a game or a bus trip! HE has even moved house to next to the pitches so he can keep an eye on the teams, DOC as he is knowen was picked to play for Scotland in his time. Our continuing thanks must go to Mr and Mrs Brian Burrows who gifted the clubhouse to us in 2002, and this very generous gift has guarenteed the club a very long future. Brian is the current President of the club. We have many long servers who still play for the club probably the longest is EDDY Poindestre who at over 50 has played for the club for over 30 years and still turns out for th 2nd xv.

We encourage any younger members of the club who have talent on the field to go off and play at higher levels, we have in the past sent players to Salisbury, Dorchester, Bournemouth and they have successfully played for these teams and for the county, then returning to help out the club and play for the Blandford teams, so bolstering the experience, like James Burry andd Jimi Collis have this season returned to us. We also have one internatioanally recognised player Joe Brake who was capped for Zimbabwe.

(RW) Would you give me an overview of the season so far, compared with recent ones? Also who is your 17-year-old wing? Can you give me detail about the match in which he scored two tries for the first team? Was it his debut?

(JF) This year has been a very successful one, a blip with lossing the first two games and we have gone on from there un beaten and winning the Dorset and Wilts Junior Vase, against Weymouth, which is the first silver ware the club has won for a very long time if not ever, with this and being top of the league for so long and currently 13 points clear with only a few games left it hopes to be the most successful year of our histroy if we get promoted to Southeren Counties where we were a few seasons ago, and we are to play the semi final of the Sounthern Counties Plate competition this weekend if we can win this competition we will be Southern Counties champions and are looking for more silver ware, to make this the most successful season of Blandford Rugby Club. Two seasons ago we were in Dorset and Wilts 2 and got promoted last season to Dorset and Wilts 1 and finished 5, we now hope to win the league so it has been a huge turn aorund for us in the last couple of seasons, all clubs go in cycles with players retiring and people moving on ,we have a large army

base in the town but are very conscious not to rely on them, we are lucky to have a couple of players who are here for a few seasons and can commit.

(not sure who you meant by a 17 yr old winger???)

Tom Christopher is 20 and is a home grown talent who has played for the club all his playing career, and the 1st xv for the last two seasons, and Sam Gritton is 17 and plays for the 2nds and is also home grown, and will look to play 1st next season.

(RW) Any other general background about the club and anything else that you would like to be mentioned? When was the club formed? Is there anything unusual about the club?

(JF) We have had at times three sets of Brothers playing for the first XV, Justin and Nick Frampton, Alex and Mark Ricketts, James and Olly Burry.

As I said we play at a school and hire the pitches and changing rooms, and our clubhouse is a converted skittle alley in the town centre which means it is always busy well in to the night as it is central to the town, and is our back bone of the club, to keep the social side of playing rugby, I feel it is very important and there are too many teams that don't come back after games for food or a beer, which is a shame at grassroots level.

Has the club won Dorset & Wilts trophies in the past? Was this the first time in a few years?

This is the first of any cups or silver ware in our history. We have been in southern counties before but drop down again.

(RW) Would you identify the player in the photograph and what position he plays, please? Is there anything additionally you could tell me about him? Is he a Blandford product etc?

His name is Steve Hancock plays 9 he has played for the club all his career and his family, at a local game against Milton Abbey Old Boys there was dad Darren, sons Steve, Dave Josh and Sam, quite a family to turn out. They have all and still play for the club when they are around and help coach the Juniors. Just one of many families that are involved in the club.

(RW) Jay, please confirm your own role or roles with Blandford and how long have you been involved with the club? Do you have any relatives who play or played for the club and indeed did you do so and in what position? Are you known as Jay?

(JF) I am the current Chairman of Blandford Rugby Club, I took over at the beginning of last season, when John Gillingham resigned, I got talked in to being chairman after not being involved in the running of the club before, I have played for years and my brother plays, my Father and Gandmother where huge supporters of the club and never missed a game, I got involved because I thought the club needed a younger input (should have kept my mouth shut) to the committee and running of

the club, I still play for the 1st/2^{nds} at Hooker, at 33 I am the youngest ever chairman of the club.

I never realised quite what a huge undertaking it was to run a club, but I am very lucky to have a great committee with some new faces on it and a huge amount of support from the players and families alike, I am a great believer in if you do something do it to the highest possible way and put your all in to it, even if it takes over your life!! But when teams are winning and the clubhouse is buzzing it makes it all worth while, the hard work really starts now and next season to keep the club moving forward.

As I said my brother plays my cousins have played, my Dad never played for Blandford he played for North Dorset as Blandford was not running then, last weekend I went with our 2nd XV to Salisbury and it reminded me what I really love about rugby, when I got there they had a VP lunch and I bumped in to some old friends and players of my fathers and had a beer with them, I have made some great friends through rugby, it is a brilliant way to meet people and get involved in a common interest, you make friends for life, after beating each other up for 80 mins, it is very important to have a beer with the opposition afterwards, it is a brilliant way to teach youngsters respect, it's a brilliant game.

I am known as J really name Justin Frampton.