



BLACKHEATH 1858 RUGBY

Where Club Rugby Started

Club V Worthing Raiders

Match sponsored by
Charlton Triangle Homes
&

The Woolwich Polytechnic Masonic Lodge

15th April 2023

Kick off 3pm

Match Programme

www.blackheathrugby.co.uk

The Woolwich Polytechnic Masonic Lodge No 3578

The Woolwich Polytechnic Lodge was founded February 1912. It has always been associated with the Woolwich Polytechnic sports ground and subsequently with the Blackheath Rugby Club both at Blackheath and Eltham.

As is the custom with Masonic Lodges, we have a very active charitable foundation and support both national and local appeals, in particular the Greenwich and Bexley Hospice and TLC, which provides teddy bears for children in hospital, as well as many others.

We meet at the Westwood Masonic Centre in Welling in Kent on Thursday evenings and continue to look for people who might be interested in joining Freemasonry.

Woolwich Polytechnic Lodge



Telephone Dave Tickner
07831 231 911

3578

For more information



Telephone John Waller
07808 766 973



Compliance House



President's Address

We welcome President Bob Reynolds and all the Worthing Raiders officials and players to Well Hall for the final home match of the 2022-2023 season. We also welcome our guests from our match sponsors Charlton Triangle Homes and Woolwich Polytechnic Lodge

We visited Worthing in the re-arranged fixture back February and came away with a 20-28 victory thanks particularly to an impressive second half performance. Worthing have had an excellent season and currently sit in 3rd place in National 2E with 17 wins from 24 matches played.

It's been 5 weeks since the last home match which was the 48-19 victory over Tonbridge Juddians. During the intervening time, the Men's 1st XV has played three away matches. Firstly, a hard-fought victory over Bury St Edmunds 12-21. Then a comfortable victory over bottom-of-the-table Westcliff 17-94. Last Saturday the team travelled to second-placed Barnes. Our pack was under pressure from the first scrum and the whole team had a very difficult afternoon against a highly motivated Barnes team. The final score: 21-10 to Barnes.

The 5-point win at Westcliff confirmed that Blackheath would be the National 2E champions for the 2022-2023 season, winning promotion back to National 1 at the first attempt. Roger Clarke, Chairman of Kent RFU and the Kent Representative on the RFU Council, is going to present the trophy and medals to the team immediately after the match finishes today. Congratulations to Head Coach James Shanahan, Assistant Coaches Tom Stradwick and Adam Barnard and also Captain Ed Taylor on a very successful season.

In National 1, it's very tight at the top with Rams, Sale FC and Cambridge all vying for the top spot which will give them promotion to the RFU Championship. Hull and Leeds Tykes are definitely relegated from National 1, along with Esher or Taunton.

Freddie Owens played his final match for the Club last Saturday at Barnes. He has made 158 1st XV appearances over the past 8 years. He is moving to start a new life in Australia. Harry Holland is also heading for Australia. Harry joined us at the beginning of last season and has played 26 matches scoring 7 tries.

James Catt joined Blackheath back in 2008. He has 172 1st XV caps and has been a powerful ball-carrier for the Club. Catty has decided that the time is right for him to retire. Also moving on is 1st XV backs coach Adam Barnard who has been with us for the past 5 seasons.

Also leaving us is Sarah Saunders who has done an excellent job as our Commercial & Marketing Manager for the past 2.5 years.

We wish all this group well in their new ventures and thank them for all that they have done for the Club.

The Club XV, playing in the RFU Halbro Raging Bull Division 1, recorded a comprehensive victory last Saturday at Barnes 19-48, amazingly recovering from being 19-0 behind. They are now in 5th place in the table, which is a great achievement. Today they play a friendly against Sevenoaks 2nd XV as Worthing Raiders 2nd XV have withdrawn from the league. Congratulations to coach Henry Wheadon and team manager Craig Molloy for putting together a successful Club XV season.

The City Lunch, held at The Kia Oval on 31st March was a really fantastic day. I particularly enjoyed ex-England Captain Martin Corry's talk. Congratulations to Sarah Saunders and to James Fleming for making the event so successful.

My 5-year term as President of our great Club is drawing to an end, and I will formally hand-over to Rory O'Sullivan at the AGM on Tuesday 4th July. It's been a fantastic honour to be President and it's been really great to meet all the amazing people who belong to our Club from the Minis, Juniors, Girls, Women, Bandits as well as the 1st and 2nd XVs. There are many, many people who I could thank for their support and help over the past 5 years. The management of the Club is in good hands, and I am very excited about the plans for future development that will be discussed at the Special General Meeting on Tuesday 18th April.

Dr Alan Thompson





Managing Directors Address

Blackheath v Worthing RFC

Saturday 15th April 2023

A warm welcome to today's opposition from Worthing RFC.

It's a huge personal privilege to have gained promotion back to National 1 at the first time of asking and to have been a small part of that success.

Massive congratulations to Ed Taylor and our squad of players. We now know for certain that we must have a 1st XV but also a 2nd XV playing regular rugby and being ready to step in to cover injury or unavailability each week. It makes training on Tuesday and Thursday more worthwhile, it improves the quality of the sessions and builds a better club atmosphere and ultimately yields better results.

Gaining promotion also shows the importance of having a clear and simple plan along with full commitment from everyone involved at Blackheath, without it we found out to our cost what can happen, so big lessons learned there.

Whilst we look forward to re-visiting old friends at clubs such as Cinderford, Darlington, Sale, Plymouth and Esher, we have made some new friends and say good luck to all at Westcliff, Guernsey and Rochford - all clubs we had never visited before in a League campaign and clubs where hospitality and a true rugby welcome were to the fore.

Sadly, we are losing some familiar faces at the end of this season, James Catt and Freddie Owen are retiring and relocating respectively and of course what that means is that we will be welcoming some new faces for the coming season. There are still one or two players considering their rugby futures, so don't be surprised if there are more notices of departures in the coming weeks. We will be announcing new signings shortly because we all realise that we will need to bolster the squad with some key positions as we head back to National 1.

We know today's game will be a challenge as Worthing are a good side, especially with their links to Harlequins, which means they have some very exciting players on display some weeks and play a very enjoyable style of rugby.

We did just enough last time we met at The Rugby Park to earn a hard fought win, so I'm sure that today will be another hard fought game and a great game of rugby, for all of us to enjoy.

We hope you can all stay after the final whistle to see the presentation of the National 2 East Winners Trophy and also to enjoy awards presentations and the after party that's being provided upstairs in the Club bar, with the players and coaches.

It's been a great season and deserves to be celebrated accordingly. Thank you for all your support – it really is appreciated - and we look forward to welcoming you to Well Hall for our first home match in National 1 League in September!!

Come on Club!!

RT





Head Coach's notes

As we approach the last home game of the season, we caught up with our Head Coach, James Shanahan, to hear his reflections on the season..

The Renaissance

What a difference a year makes! This time last year, relegation was staring us in the face. A very tough thing to be involved in. The “what if” moments, 17 of them (17 defeats by less than one score). But after the away defeat at Cinderford it was all about this season and winning promotion. The Renaissance (re-birth): mine, the Executives and the players total focus was getting back to National One.

We were deemed to be heavy favourites by all but that doesn't mean it's going to be or was easy. Not many clubs get relegated and bounce straight back - Esher didn't and as we can see, our local rivals, TJs, are just outside the top half of the table this season.

Now many around the club will be now thinking “are we good enough for Nat 1?”. “We need to strengthen the squad!” “You wouldn't get away with that at National 1.”

WELL, let's not focus on that NOW!

Let's celebrate this season. Why look at the past or the future. Live in the now. Focus on the present. As currently, the present is - excuse my French - f***ing good. It doesn't matter what happens in the next two games (don't take that as the squad or myself aren't putting everything in to win those games) but we haven't just won the league, we have dominated with an average winning score line of 39-14.

This hasn't been easy. Every game, especially away from home, has been the opposition's World Cup Final. Go through the season and see a team at their home ground throw everything they have mentally and physically against us to come second; then look at the following week when they underperform and lose a game they should win.

Why?

Because they have put every ounce of their emotional energy into trying to beat Blackheath. Our opponents today, Worthing, said they had prepared for 3 weeks ahead of our game when we played them away. Bury St Edmunds, the same.

That's just one game. We had to do this for 23 games. Huge credit to our players and respect for having that emotional energy every week (ok blips v OAS and TJs). We knew January and February were the months where you win championships. 10/10 in results which gave us that ability to see out the League with 3 games to spare.

How have we set out to make sure we bring that emotional energy to each weekend? Well, I hope you have seen from previous pieces I have written, that we have tried to put themes together. Focus on blocks of games - 5 max not 26 games. That isn't sustainable. Think of days at work when you aren't feeling it, Monday morning after a big weekend or coming back from a holiday. How do you get yourself back into it? Maybe little focuses, little things you have planned that you can't wait for - birthday, night out, sporting event etc... well that's what I've tried to do, bring little focuses which we all knew were to achieve our objective and obtain our goal of promotion. Of winning the league. But we didn't really talk about it. We focused on process - what do we do well? What's our USP? Well, let's do that as many times as possible in the game. Do that and the result looks after itself.

For example, the week before the Bury game was Cup Final week. We knew that getting a win at Bury meant the title was ours. That was our 'why', Cup Final time - get the result and win the league.

Let's celebrate the Club XV which we started again this season. It's not been easy. Everyone wants to play 1st Team, it's human nature but credit to all the lads who have played in the Club XV. Huge thanks to Craig Molloy who volunteered to be the Team Manager of the Club XV and has had to deal with all the unseen stuff that I promise you takes up a lot of energy and time. The coaches: Henry Wheadon and Hennie Griesel. Without the Club XV, I honestly feel we would not have won promotion. That team is that important to us.

Landmarks to celebrate:

- Jake Lloyd - 100 tries in a Club shirt.
-
- Tom Stradwick - 200 games in a club shirt.
-
- Freddie Owen - 150 games in a club shirt.

These are amazing achievements in an era when loyalty is hard to get. When I arrived at Blackheath, I was told by many: "Oh he's a good Club man". I wasn't sure what they meant as to be honest, a number of these so-called Club men seemed only to be Club men when it worked for them. Within this current squad, however, we have many Club men. Loyal, honest, hard-working, they strive for the best for the squad which in turn means for the Club.

Like every season some farewell's unfortunately:

Adam Barnard, aka "Barney" is having some time away from rugby. He has a new career and wants to have the ability to focus on that. I'd like to thank Barney for all his work. I've known Barney for over 16 years. What I love about him are his energy, his loyalty, his honesty. He's a good man and a good coach and I'll miss him being around. I know the squad will miss him as well.

James Catt- the "Barrell". Catty doesn't say much. Leaves all his actions on the field. A hard man. Someone who has been a huge part of the Club for over 10 years. He's a lot younger than he looks 😂. He came back last year v Sale away, after not playing due to injuries and Covid for over a year. Then he played 80 mins against one of the best teams in the league. That's the class of the man. A warrior. If you go to war, take Catty.

Freddie Owen- he's had enough press. Left early to get all the praise didn't he 😂. Great person and Clubman.

Harry Holland- he's off to Oz. He said he wants to work on his tan with his milky white body. I can understand this being of the African Sunset complexion (ginger). Harry just wants to hit things (mainly colts in training 😂). A physical player, he wants to carry hard and tackle hard. A good character around the squad. He will be missed on and off the field.

Oli Claxton- unfortunately his season was cut short in January with a knee injury. A very honest and loyal player. I massively appreciated his huge positive energy last season when it was hard to be positive. His energy this season was a key part of why we are going back to National 1.

Others may be moving on and / or retiring but they have not confirmed yet with me. So, if you see Burch give him a kick - "one more year!!"

I'd like to thank Ed Taylor- our captain. Ed is a great man. Last year was a baptism of fire but he still kept positive, still pushed the squad and I'm glad he's been rewarded with winning the League this season. Don't worry – he's not leaving, I'm just recognising his efforts and thanking him 😂

Russell- thanks for letting me push, push, push 😂. Without others that follow your vision, it just doesn't happen. I've pushed him and he's pushed the Executive Committee, who I thank for believing in the vision.

Iain Dinning, he's as miserable as me and Scottish BUT his heart is Black and Red. You can't meet a more committed Club man. His efforts and the banter he takes (friendly) from the squad shows they care for him and he's a huge part of our success. Thank you Iain and the sidekick Dennis.

Frank and Albert- what a pitch. I was at Twickenham with Cambridge University for the Varsity match and I can honestly say that our pitch is better. Huge credit to them. The pitch allows us to play the brand of rugby we all want and is the envy of many teams across the League.

We continue to focus on recruitment for next season and retaining the squad. Those who have signed for next season at the time of writing are:

- Archie Holland
- Henry Paul
- Luc Jeannot
- Oli Walliker
- Alex Witchell
- Brendan McMillan
- Tom Stradwick
- Ed Taylor
- Paul Schroter
- Stephen Clark-Leonard
- Tom Baldwin
- Jack Daly
- Tom Ffitch
- Jake Hennessey
- Matt Armstrong
- Alex Harris
- Leo Fielding

Plus, we have a number of new signings that are very exciting and we are expecting many more of the current squad to re-sign.

So the future, yes - we are looking at the future. BUT, let's enjoy today. Enjoy being together as a Club, receiving the trophy and the medals. Celebrating the Renaissance of 2022-23. Don't worry, Part 2 is planned - The Sequel. I'm hoping it's like the Godfather - Part 2. Better than the original!!

Enjoy the game today – **C'mon Club!!**

Shanners





Match Report

Blackheath v North Walsham

The side sitting second from bottom of National League Two East, facing the club twelve points clear at the top, will rightly feel mighty disappointed with the end result of this contest.

North Walsham fought magnificently, leading from the fifth to the 58th minute, their backs slicing through the Blackheath defences, making the visitors' tackling look decidedly ordinary.

In the end, however, the Club's forward power took control, giving Blackheath the full quota of five league points while the Norfolk club finished empty-handed.

The first quarter belonged entirely to the hosts. A soft penalty gave Walsh a close-range lineout, from which centre George Loose joined the maul to claim the opening score and, moments later, full-back Dan Smith was scything through the cover for a second try.

Fly-half Matt Hodgson added the conversion, and a 45-metre penalty, and to the delight of the vocal home support, Walsh held a 15-point lead on 18 minutes.

However, the hosts had no answer to the Club scrum, which consistently drove the opposition backwards, and as the penalties came, the visitors opted for the set-piece five-metres from the Walsh goal-line, from which Tom Baldwin touched down at the base.

Tom Stradwick, making a storming return from injury, powered across for a second converted try, following a short lineout, and despite minimal territory, Blackheath narrowed the deficit to a single point at the break.

Walsh again took the initiative after the re-start. Scrum-half Connor Dudley sped over on 43 minutes, put through by the impressive Hodgson, who also converted.

Almost immediately, Jake Hennessey was caught just short of the try-line, the Club outside-centre popping the ball up for Stradwick to claim his second try, but Hodgson's second penalty kept the hosts four points ahead.

However, as the steady drizzle intensified, Blackheath's pack once again took the upper hand, with Freddie Owen driven over from lineout ball, followed by Chris Bell diving over after huge pressure under the uprights, Oli Burgess' fifth conversion extending the Club's advantage to ten-points.

Walsh attacked desperately in the closing moments, searching for a fourth try, even spurning an easy three points in the process which would have yielded one league point. All to no avail as, this time, Blackheath's defence stood firm, denying Walsh reward, and claiming an eleventh successive win.

North Walsham

Tries: Loose 5, Smith 8, Dudley 43

Conv: Hodgson 8, 43

Pens: Hodgson 19, 50

Blackheath

Tries: Baldwin 23, Stradwick 34, 45, Owen 58, Bell 69

Conv: Burgess 23, 34, 45, 58, 69

Attendance: 600

Blackheath Team

- 15 . Nick Foster
- 14 . Andy Denham
- 13 . Jake Hennessey
- 12 . Matt Armstrong
- 11 . Alex Harris
- 10 . Oli Burgess
- 9 . Jack Daly

- 1 . Archie Holland
- 2 . Oli Walliker
- 3 . Andy Boye
- 4 . Tom Stradwick
- 5 . Ed Taylor (Capt)
- 6 . James Catt
- 7 . Freddie Owen
- 8 . Tom Baldwin

- 16 . Alex Witchell
- 17 . Luc Jeannot
- 18 . Harry Holland
- 19 . Chris Bell
- 20 . Alex Brown

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Thank you to our friends at Cook in Blackheath for supporting us with a Gift Voucher for our pre-match raffles through the season ahead. If you haven't tried their tasty dishes then we heartily recommend that you do and make sure they know you are a fan of Blackheath!!



We would also like to thank Mike Wren and his team at The Long Pond pub in Westmount Road, Eltham. The Long Pond serves a delicious range of more than 30 different beers – mostly brewed in Kent and Mike has kindly donated a £25 gift voucher as a raffle prize for the pre-match lunch at every home game this season. Please do pop in for a pint and mention Blackheath!!



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BLACKHEATH RUGBY OFFERS FREE MEMBERSHIP TO SUPPORT YOUNG ADULTS

June 2021, Blackheath, London: The oldest open rugby club in the world founded back in 1858, [Blackheath Rugby](#), has agreed to offer free membership to help support young adults, both men and women.

The move is in response to the Covid-19 pandemic over the last year or so which has had a significant effect on all aspects of life across the UK.

As has been widely reported in the press, lockdown has especially impacted the young population, particularly the 18 to 22 age group, to which Blackheath Rugby is keen to provide assistance.

Whether leaving school or heading to University, these youngsters have had their education and social world disrupted and, in many cases, detrimentally affected.

Those who have sought employment rather than full time education have in particular found it challenging to secure a job and, if successful, have found themselves starting this important next chapter of their lives by working from home which in itself can be both difficult and isolating.

Given it is well documented that exercise can be a huge help when dealing with mental health issues, free membership will mean these youngsters can come to the club's twice-weekly training sessions, meet their peers and socialize together when they are able.

Managing Director of Blackheath Rugby, Russell Ticehurst, comments, "The Executive Committee of Blackheath Rugby and I wanted to reach out to the young adults in our community and beyond so we have made the momentous decision to offer free membership to those in the 18 to 22 age group.

“We agreed that it really is a way that we can support this age group in a positive and constructive way and, although there will be a financial cost to the club, we unanimously felt that it would be an important statement for the club as a whole to make.

As a club, we look forward to lending support where we can at this very difficult and uncertain time for youngsters who are particularly vulnerable under the current circumstances,” he concludes.

Like so many sports clubs and organisations, the last 18 months have also been a struggle for rugby clubs in all leagues all over the country. Blackheath is no exception and it has been the same for the club’s 1st XV players in National League 1 as well as the hundreds of members in its other men’s, women’s and youth teams.

Without the turnstile income, spend down in the club bar and companies reluctant to pay out sponsorship fees without any match rugby, many clubs could have drawn the curtains, sat back on their heels and simply waited for the end of restrictions. But not so for Blackheath Rugby.

Despite the challenges over the past year or so, the Club has instead taken the time to develop a new strategy for the future that saw it take the bold decision to invest in the business to ensure its immediate existence and future longevity. In the first instance, this financial commitment saw the Club bring in a new commercial manager.

The Club also used the time during lockdown to positive advantage by investing in technology in order to overhaul its website and bring it into the 21st century, brought in iSport to manage its membership, EPOS and communications and formed new partnerships with Tacklebag to create an online shop to sell the official club kit and with Urban on Demand to push its club merchandise.

With all these initiatives now in place, this established club is positive that it will be well placed to flourish once the country is back to normal and continue to be around for many more years to come.

Anyone falling into this age group who would want to join the Blackheath Rugby family should go the club website www.blackheathrugby.co.uk/membership

**For further media information, images or to interview Russell Ticehurst, please contact Helen Heady of Heady PR, on behalf of Blackheath Rugby,
M: + 44 (0)7966 491 509 E: helen@headypr.co.uk**

Today's Match Mascots

Name: Finn Keohane

Age group: Retired!

When did you start?: U6s

Hero at Blackheath?: My brother Ted!

Favourite 1st 15 player: Ed Taylor

Rugby hero: Owen Farrell

Favourite TV show: Dennis the

Menace of course!

Hobbies: Photography

Interesting fact: I can be very sarcastic...



Name: Ted Keohane

Age group: U11s

When did you start?: U7s

Hero at Blackheath: My coaches!

Favourite 1st 15 player?: Henry Paul

Rugby hero: Johnny Sexton

Favourite TV show: The Simpsons

Hobbies: Climbing, swimming and reading

Interesting fact: I grew up in India



NATIONAL LEAGUE DIVISION TWO EAST

SATURDAY 15 APRIL 2023

Kick off 15:00

BLACKHEATH RUGBY

WORTHING RAIDERS

MATCH SPONSORED BY CHARLTON TRIANGLE HOMES

| | | | | |
|----|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----|
| 15 | FOSTER, Nick | Full-back | SIMS, Harrison | 15 |
| 14 | LLOYD, Jake | Right wing | BOWEN, Tom | 14 |
| 13 | BURCHAM, Markus | Outside centre | DERRICK, Tom | 13 |
| 12 | BURGESS, Oli | Inside centre | FORREST, Jack | 12 |
| 11 | HARRIS, Alex | Left wing | BARNES, Curtis | 11 |
| 10 | FFITCH, Tom | Fly-half | EVANS, Sam | 10 |
| 9 | BELL, Chris | Scrum-half | DAVIES, Iago | 9 |
| 1 | HOLLAND, Archie | Loose head prop | BRUCE, Fraser | 1 |
| 2 | WALLIKER, Ollie | Hooker | LUKE, Elliott | 2 |
| 3 | BOYE, Andrew | Tight head prop | SARGENT, Dan | 3 |
| 4 | STRADWICK, Tom | Lock | LAKE, Jack | 4 |
| 5 | TAYLOR, Ed (C) | Lock | LEE, John | 5 |
| 6 | CLARK-LEONARD, Stephen | Blind side flanker | PERKINS, Liam (c) | 6 |
| 7 | HOLLAND, Harry | Open side flanker | SMITH, Jonathan | 7 |
| 8 | BALDWIN, Tom (VC) | Number 8 | TAGGART, Frank | 8 |
| 16 | WITCHELL, Alex* | REPLACEMENTS | DOOREY-PALMER, Jack | 16 |
| 17 | JEANNOT, Luc | | GATFORD, Grant | 17 |
| 18 | CATT, James | | SUNRAY-JELLIS, Tom | 20 |
| 19 | DALY, George | | DAVIES, Alex | 21 |
| 20 | DENHAM, Andy | | CLARE, Charlie | 22 |

Referee: Jack Sutton

Assistant referees: Phil Bowers and Andre van Zijl

* Blackheath Rugby Colt

With thanks to our player and position sponsors this year.

Alan and Jackie Thompson

Albert Patrick

Anthony Keogan

Barry Nealon

Barrie Wooderson

Chris Davies

Chris Morgan

Clare Elliot

David Hanrahan

Dom Walton

Ellie Sullivan

Gary Sheppard

Gunfire

Helma Zebregs

James Fleming

Jason Aldridge

Jon Saunders

Kirsten Jowett

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Mike Newsom

Nick Probert

Pamela Kilmister

Paul Bromley

Paul Matthews

Peter Chambers

Richard Sheridan

Rick Whiteman

Russell Ticehurst

Stephen James

Steve Lewis

Team Sherry

Team Shezza

Tonina Patrick

The FBOTs

The Super 70's

BLACKHEATH RUGBY SUPPORTERS' CLUB

supportersclub@blackheathrugby.co.uk

Volunteering is an integral part of any sports club, with Blackheath Rugby being no exception. Founded in 2014, the Supporters' Club is an important link between the volunteering and social sides of the Blackheath Rugby: we watch, we cheer, we drink, we clean, we paint, we fix. But, most of all, we have fun!



If you would like to find out more about volunteering and how you can help the Club, or if you would like to come to a pre-match lunch and meet other supporters, please get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.





BLACKHEATH
RUGBY

To support one of our players, our staff, a
position for the season or other sponsorship
opportunities please contact;
sarah.saunders@blackheathrugby.co.uk

THE WORLD'S OLDEST OPEN RUGBY CLUB

Blackheath F.C. founded 1858

In the 2018/2009 season Blackheath Rugby celebrates 160 years since its foundation. It must not be imagined, however, that when the boys from Blackheath Proprietary School started playing rugby on the Heath in 1858, they were a club in the sense that one would understand it today.

They did not have an official secretary or treasurer until 1862 and matches would be arranged on an ad hoc basis. The players were very young in those days. In 1863, Francis Maule Campbell was only 19 years old when he was Treasurer of Blackheath FC and also the newly formed Football Association. Fred Stokes was just 16 when he played the first game for Blackheath in 1871, 19 when he played for England and 24 when he became the second President of the RFU in 1874.

The situation is described rather well by Arthur Ash who founded Richmond FC in 1861. In a letter to a meeting to form the Football Association in December 1863, he wrote, "They (Richmond) would have sent representatives to the Association meetings from the first, but for the fact that they had no organised club (as distinct from a team playing under the name of Richmond, be it understood)". Then followed the organisation of Richmond FC as a properly constituted club.

This seems to have followed the pattern set by Blackheath in 1860 because the Sinclair brothers Alex and John, along with Burnett and Gower etc. attempted to formalise their situation by calling themselves the Old Blackheathens, with William Burnett as their captain. In theory, this was to be a Proprietary School Old Boys team, however due to lack of numbers, they always had to rely on outsiders to make up a team that would consist of up to twenty players.

After two years trying, the boys finally had to admit that they were an open club and so at the start of the 1862-63 season, they changed their name to Blackheath Football Club. The event was celebrated at the Jubilee Dinner held on 24th February 1912, and later at the 75th Anniversary Dinner in November 1937.

In 1958-59 the Club celebrated the centenary of the foundation.

The lack of any written documentation to establish the date of the foundation of Blackheath Football Club leaves many historians in a quandary regarding the date. There are, however, documents that indicate that rugby was instituted at the Blackheath Proprietary School around 1856, and also that the boys who founded the Club were playing on the Heath in 1858. The memoirs of former Prop School pupils published in 1933 by J.W. Kirby BA, contain references that rugby was played by the school on the heath from that time and the names given as founders of the Club were consistent. The claim is also supported by references in Marshall's "Football the Rugby Game" published in 1892 and everywhere, the date being unquestioned at the time.

Blackheath is the oldest independent rugby club, meaning that it was not attached to any institution such as a military establishment, hospital, school or college. There was a number of institutional sides that are older than Blackheath and it was they who provided the Club's opposition. The Proprietary School and Blackheath FC had annual fixtures against each other for many years. It was on these occasions that the school supporters would shout "Up School" to the counter cries of "Up Club." Blackheath FC are still known as "the Club" to this day.

The development of Blackheath FC is so much a part of the development of Rugby Football that it is virtually an early history of the sport itself. By walking out of the meeting to form the Football Association, Blackheath caused the schism in football that divided it into two codes - soccer and rugby. They were founder members of the RFU, co organisers of the first ever international match and host to many more at the Rectory Field.

Blackheath hold the record for the most international caps gained by its players until the Professional era started in 1995-96. In 1888-89 the London Society of Referees was formed by A.J. Budd and G.L. Jeffery. Both were captains of Blackheath. At Easter the following season, Percy Carpmael, another Club captain, founded

the Barbarians touring side. In 1906-7 three players, W.S.D Craven, 'Birdie' Partridge and Clive Liddell, founded the Army Rugby Football Union and for many years the Rectory Field, Blackheath's home since 1883, was the Army's home ground in London.

In recent history Blackheath were running over 20 teams with only two home pitches. To ease this situation a second ground was acquired nearby at the start of 2007-08. The site at Well Hall, Eltham, was developed into a community facility.

An 'All weather pitch' was opened in August 2009 by representatives of the RFU, Greenwich Council and other bodies who helped to raise the funding for its installation. So it was in September 2016 it had become imperative for the development and future health of the Club to move 1st XV matches from its

long-time home at Rectory Field to these premises at Well Hall.

This caused much heartache but with the ongoing developments and improvements at Well Hall, the Club now has a home base worthy of National 1 rugby. Rectory Field continues to be used by many other teams of the Club and remains fondly in all our memories.

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1858 **RUGBY**



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OUR PASSION.
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BLACKHEATH 1858 RUGBY

Become part of the family and partner with the oldest open Rugby Club in the World.

**Founded in 1858, Blackheath FC is known in every corner of the globe as CLUB.
We started and others followed and now you have the opportunity to be part of our
heritage, and our future.**

Player and Position Partnership

Specific player sponsorship £250pa

Position Sponsorship (includes web link to your business) £500pa

Player and position combined (includes web link to your business) £650pa

Match Day Ball (includes e-programme advert and PA shout-outs) £650pa

Web Site

Your logo and link on our sponsorship page £550pa

Your own webpage on our site £1,500pa

Well Hall Advertising Boards

Pitch side advertising board 2.4 Metre Board £1,500 , 6 Metre Board £2,200

Side of stands £2,500pa

Road Side (S.Circular) Face in fabric banner banner £1,500, Face out fabric banner £2,500

Scoreboard Banner £2,500

Dug out roof (flight path) £5,000

Covered Stand (headline) £8,500

Match Day Sponsorship

Free ground entry for you and 10 of your guests

Table for 10 at our pre match course lunch (or buffet for 20)

Signage on main match board on South Circular

Present the Man of the Match award

Logo and Hyper link on our website (permanent for the whole season)

Multiple shout-outs on match day PA

Pre match advertising on social media and club newsletters

10 seats in the covered stand to watch the match

Après match thank you on social media £2000

Contact sarah.saunders@blackheathrugby.co.uk for more information