

CLUB TOURS by Steve Ward

Since the beginnings in 1932, Sedgley Park has been known for its annual tour. Older members will remember with enjoyment trips to places like Upton-on-Severn and the Welsh Valleys, Cornwall and Northern Ireland. However, by the late 1980's, they were becoming a thing of the past. Even the annual trip to Shirley Wanderers had fallen by the wayside.

Around this time, Rick Wilkinson and Dave Bulcock took over the running of the 4XV and started to get retired players back. This led to the formation of a 5XV and eventually a 6XV. Having 90+ players out on a Saturday led to some wonderful evenings both in the clubhouse and surrounding pubs.

One evening in early 1993, Rick and Dave, along with myself and Gordon Brown, decided that it was time to restart the end of season tour. With this we put plans in place to go back to Shirley Wanderers to recover the "Bottom Trophy", lost some years before.

So 14 guys met at the end of April to travel down to Croydon. This list included: Steve Ward, Dave Bulcock, Rick Wilkinson, Gordon Brown, Mickey Davies, Barry Owen, Nev Savery, Graham Lightfoot, Ray Austin, Andy Anderson and Glyn Newbrook. In addition, we were joined in Croydon by John Eady and a friend. The rugby was hard fought and Sedgley came away with the trophy which was later damaged whilst being played by brownie.

With success of the lower sides and word of the tour spreading, a new tour was arranged for the following year and has continued forward from this date.

1993	Shirley Wanderers	16 tourists
1994	Blackpool	26 tourists
1995	Scarborough	34 tourists
1996	Nottingham	41 tourists
1997	Llandudno	38 tourists
1998	Ballinasloe, Ireland	67 tourists
1999	Whitley Bay	40 tourists
2000	Crystal Palace	30 tourists
2001	Southport	32 tourists
2002	New Brighton	36 tourists
2003	Scarborough	29 tourists
2004	Isle Of Man	34 tourists
2005	Omagh, N.Ireland	43 tourists
2006	Galway, Ireland	46 tourists
2007	Kendal	41 tourists

During these 15 years, more than 175 different members have come with us on our annual pilgrimage. These have included 17 year olds, such as Pete Walters and Mike Smith, up to Septuagenarians such as Pep, all intergrated into a single group.

Having given you a brief overview on the modern tours, please look out for the amusing anecdotes from the tours that will appear in following issues of this Newsletter.

EBBC SPONSOR 2nd TEAM

The EBBC have kindly offered to provide a Player Of The Month Award - the recipients of the awards will be decided by Rich Senior and Steve Hazleby. This could be a difficult decision for the two coaches, as the whole team is performing well and consistantly this season.

The EBBC was formed in 2001, and all its' members are connected to SP in some shape or form. They are willing to help out the club where they can. Up to date they have sponsored junior teams; supplying pre-match shirts, substitute suits, also providing Player Of The Year awards to the 3rd and 4th team (amongst other things). What EBBC stands for is still a mystery to non-members - but all that the members have to say about the matter is "everybody's b***y curious".

SEDGLEY PARK NEWSLETTER

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SOCIAL EVENTS OVER CHRISTMAS

Carol Concert - Wednesday 19th December
This annual event starts at 7.30pm in the middle bar at the clubhouse. It's a great night for all the family. As usual it'll be the fantastic Failsworth Brass Band entertaining us on the night, playing many traditional carols as well as more contemporary christmas pop songs.
New Years Eve Celebrations - Monday 31st December
For information, please ring Fiona Smith on 0161 2802921. Every year this night has been a great success.

PROPOSED EVENTS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Past and Present Tourist Night - looking at February (next issue of the newsletter will confirm). Anyone who has been on one of the modern SP tours (over last 15 years) get down to the club (wearing one of the tour shirts) for a typical SP drink and reunite yourself with fellow tourists. Drinks promotions will be on offer.

Un 16's by Jon Pepworth

The under 16's season has been disappointing having won 5 and lost 2 so far. We played badly in the lexus tournament this pre season.

Representative calls have disrupted us in some games, even so we have a very talented side and can compete with all Lancashire teams except Ormskirk who have many Lancashire and North of England players. Sedgley have 2 currently on county and 5 in the Greater Manchester side.

After last seasons glut of players our squad is now down to about 23. In the Lancashire Cup League we have won 2 and lost 1 to Ormskirk and with Manchester and Preston our next opponents it's a tough league. We played a weaker side against Woodhey High School under lights a few Wednesday evenings ago. It was a great success and should be tried more often.

Un 14's by Don Chapman

The under 14s did all that could be asked of them in their 4 matches in November, not conceding a try in any of their games.

The biggest improvement has been the general tackling of the team since a high scoring game against Rochdale at the end of October. The lads still need to work at their tackling technique but the work they have been doing is beginning to show benefit.

The games away against Tarleton 19-0 and Southport 30*-0 (fair play) in the Lancashire cup maintained the 100% start to the competition but the next 3 games against the 3 other unbeaten teams will decide the progress of the under 14s.

The friendly games against Eccles and local rivals Bury were a little one sided but allowed plenty of game time to lads who have recently joined the team.

December sees difficult games against Fylde away in a friendly giving the sides the opportunity to see each other before playing in the Lancs Cup in January, and Ormskirk in the Lancs Cup.

Congratulations to Dominic Barrow and Tom Whitton who have been selected and played for Greater Manchester development squad.

The under 14s would like to thank the club for their invitation to a meal before the 1st team game against Pertemp Bees. The meal was enjoyed by all though the win helped the enjoyment of the day.

Un 15's

The season started badly with the Lexus Tournament where the team lost all 4 matches losing heavily in 3 and unlucky in 1. The first full match of the Season was at Home against Tareyton which was one sided with Sedgley winning 46-0. Game 2 saw the first Lancashire Cup tie at Home against Bury in a very closely contested match. Sedgley were edged out 12-6 with Bury scoring in the last couple of minutes to secure the win. Game 3 saw old rivals Rochdale come to Sedgley and for the first time ever Sedgley won a close match 10-0. Game 4 was a tale of travelling round the M60 to Stockport only to find Stockport had travelled to Sedgley so the whole team travelled back home and the extra travel told on the boys who were beaten 15-5. Game 5 saw the rivalry with Bury resume at Bury's ground but this time Sedgley were soundly beaten 19-0. Game 6 brought new hope with Sedgley travelling to Tyledsley and another first for the team saw them not only win their first ever Away game but beat Tyledsley for the first time 17-5. Game 7 at Home to Eccles saw Sedgley's fighting spirit come flying out coming from behind to beat Eccles 10-5. So far so good, not only are the team winning but competing in every match and turning heads in doing so.

Played 7 Won 4 Lost 3 Points For 94 Points against 56.

Un 13's by Andrew Duffy

The Un13's have fulfilled 10 fixtures excluding the pre-season lexus tournament convincingly winning 6 of them.

Many new players arrived at the club this season, which has been very welcome providing a wider base of potentially excellent players.

23/9 The season started in earnest with the teams' very first Challenge Cup games at home to Widnes who promptly dismissed Sedgley 0-30. Widnes were the holders of the previous season's Un 12's Challenge title.

30/9 Tarleton away was yet another defeat when in previous seasons Sedgley have taken the spoils. We had 13 turn out which made Tarleton's job very easy. The outcome was 24-7.

7/10 Still unprepared then came our 2nd Challenge Cup away to Vale Of Lune. This was by far the biggest challenge the team has had to face playing on a vast full size pitch which, to press, the team had never experienced. Character was building all the way through this match and was rewarded by a well earned try losing 24-5.

14/10 Home tp Ryhl was a turning point where new additions to the squad had bedded and complimented the experienced players to out perform the visitors in all areas of play.

21/10 Sedgley were worthy winners at home to Rochdale. Sedgley's pack provided the platform for the backs to do their damage.

28/10 The score flattered Stockport as a penalty was awarded against Sedgley when a drive had put us over their try line in the dying seconds of the game. 24-19.

4/11 Away to Rochdale for a hastily arranged game following Warrington conceding the appointed Challenge Cup game due to a lack of a team. Rochdale were promptly dispatched by a team with growing confidence. These large pitches are now providing our powerful back line with the opportunity of width to outflank teams.

11/11 Away to Bury, Sedgley ran out a convincing 20-38 win.

18/11 Away at Fleetwood, this was our finest performance with a posted 7-37 win under lancs challenge rules (7-50 when the game concluded).

Round 5 of the Challenge Cup is coming up against LSH who lost against us 2 weeks back. Our coaches Mike Whittingham and Adrian Egan have been minded by game onlookers of how the team plays its fluent rugby which can only cement the direction the squad is being guided. Watch this space for a strong 2nd half of the season.

Under 12's, 11's, 10's, 9's and 8's

The next issue of this SP newsletter will feature write ups for the above teams.