



## **The Dysart Days** **by Malcolm Wallace (Wally)**

We are currently in a wonderful clubhouse with first class pitches all floodlit, Netball courts, gym and a very good size car park. We've certainly come a long way since the Dysart arms, with a garage to change in and 2 baths for 4 sides, plus rubberised sandwiches after the games and all crammed into a small public bar. We also had to purchase all our own kit including club shirts.

The players today really have it all. Having said that, we made the most of it at the Dysart and had some fantastic times there. We were really close, well we had to be in that small public bar. We regularly had drinking games and the sing songs every week were thoroughly enjoyed by one and all. The cow pies provided by Emmy were second to none!

We all enjoyed the Welsh songs led by Glyn Jones and the Irish ones led by Jim Keohane, Tom Turnball and Noel Quinlan. Jack Neate would sing "Soldiers of the Queen" and "Keyhole in the door" and Bavey would sing "My Mother in Law"! I was even known to lead a few songs myself. "Mother Kelly's Doorstep" was one of my favourites. At the end of the night, Emmy would shout out those immortal words: "Come along you Rugby boys, it's way past time". We would gradually leave after wading through huge puddles of beer on the floor!

In the Summer, some of us would attend a painting party at the changing rooms. We would paint the Rugby posts, the changing rooms and the baths. John Crotty would service the boiler that he supplied when we first moved to the Dysart. As mentioned by John Crotty, Glyn Jones would come from Park Royal every Saturday morning to mark out the pitches. Bob Edmonds would light the boiler every Saturday morning. Roy Hopkins was a London Society referee and would quite often ref some of our games and a very good ref he was too.

Playing at home was a real advantage for us. We would have a great warm up by running up the hill to the band stand pitch, the opposition would drive up. At half time we had lemons instead of oranges. We were used to them, the opposition weren't! The biggest advantage we had was thanks to Glyn Williams. When he became captain, he made it compulsory to train if you wanted to play in the first team. Because of that we went from strength to strength, winning most of our games. If we ever got dropped, some of us would do extra training to ensure getting back into the first team. Most of us were very dedicated in training.

One of my happiest memories was a long chat with Fred Hallows. Myself and some of the other 1<sup>st</sup> team players had been playing amateur Rugby League on Sundays for Ealing. We thought this would be OK as it was amateur. The RFU had other

thoughts! Fred told me that I would have to stop playing league if I wanted to continue playing for the G's. I said that it was so unfair as I wanted to play on Sundays, which of course would help with my fitness and my playing of Union. Fred suggested that I form a Sunday union side. He said that Noel Quinlan, the fixture secretary, was attending a fixture meeting that week and that I should go along with him to pick up some Sunday fixtures. I did attend and that was the start of The Dysart's Sunday side. I ran the team for about 5 or 6 years and great fun was had by all. Saturdays were for serious Rugby; Sundays was mostly for fun Rugby. It was compulsory to drink at least 1 pint of beer before the game followed by copious amounts after the game. Sometimes we would bring on Port or Sherry at half time for the 2 teams and the ref.

The great Kiwi, John Warren loved the fun Rugby so much that when he went back to New Zealand, he formed a fun side at his club, Shirley RFC at Christchurch. John's nickname was Wan\*\*\*, so one of the team suggested they call the team Shirley Wan\*\*\*s. They have been playing since the early 70's and hold the World record for 'the most number of games unbeaten!' They bring on the Port or Sherry for the 2 sides and referee every week.

All in all, it wasn't too bad a time at **The DYSART ARMS !**

**Malcolm Wallace, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2021**

*Fortis in animo*