

12<sup>th</sup> February 2024



## In Touch

Another week of rain and another cancelled match. When Ludlow Rugby Club bought the old MEB ground in 1984 the Environment Agency assured us that the ground might flood once in twelve years. Let me see, how many times has it flooded so far this season? Suffice to say that our first team has played 15 matches and most others in the league have played 17.

The Seconds did manage to save their game against Aston Old Edwardians by playing it away. We'll gloss over the 57-0 result but look forward to the return which will now be a double header on Chairman's Day on March 23.

So, the bonus was that there were no distractions as we settled in to watch England beat Wales in the clubhouse with old friends Pete and Kath England who were up for the beer festival at our sponsors Ludlow Brewery. We also got the chance to examine X-rays of the metalwork now supporting Andy Hamer's left arm, discuss where his skiing skills let him down, together with some firsthand witnesses to the accident on the first day of his recent holiday and proffer various ideas about how to advance his healing experience, chief of which is to wear a sling full time!

On Saturday, floodwater permitting, the Firsts will be entertaining Cheltenham 2.15pm KO while the seconds travel to Trentham.

We continue to support our local community and have donated Meal for two at Chairman's Day to a Charity auction for the Lingen Davies Cancer Fund at The Apple Tree on 16th February being held in memory of Warren Wilson. All details of the auction can be found on Apple Tree Facebook site.

I promised to bring you various factoids about our club as we gear up to celebrate its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary and many of those you will read over the coming weeks are courtesy of a former journalist colleague who played for and then supported Ludlow over many years. Dave Squib Edwards, sadly passed away in 2018 but much of his research went into a booklet prepared for the club's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and some more, in handwritten form, was left with me as club secretary at the time. A decent proportion of Ludlow's players over the years have actually been journalists, many of them starting locally and going on to national careers. As well as Dave they include Harry Baker who as an Advertiser reporter wrote about our club's formation. He went on to work for many years on the Birmingham Post and Mail. Author, Jack Dahn, also started on the Advertiser but went on to report for The Times. His family of course still have strong links with the club. Other Advertiser reporters to have played for the club were Derek Jay, Ronnie Dahn, Stan Jones, Philip Jones and Tony Hern. Richard Ewels and of course, yours truly, both reported for the Shropshire Star before going on to careers at the Express and Star and in my case to Derby and Bristol. No wonder then that Ludlow has always been able to command headlines!

When I came to Ludlow in 1968 I think there were more than two dozen pubs. I remember trying to get round them all and failing badly so it's unsurprising that our club has had a long association with the town's hostelries. It started life through a meeting at the Feathers in 1934 which became its headquarters for just a year before allegiance was transferred to the old Angel Hotel, conveniently situated opposite the jeweller Geoffrey Robinson's shop as he was the secretary and it became the home for committee and selection meetings. Players changed at various venues including the New Inn at Galdeford and the British Legion club in Mill Street.

A change of playing venue from Burway to Ludford Park in 1947 meant a move to the Charlton where players also changed but it lasted only until 1948 when the ground reverted to Burway and the club to a new HQ at The Bull. There,

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under Bill and Kitty Shelley and later Jack and Hilda Smith, the club happily settled, the bar and a shed in the yard where they changed, becoming their regular roost.

Social events often took place in the old Town Hall, The Feathers ballroom, Craven Arms Hotel, Globe Inn and sometimes the Swan Inn, Tenbury. The fourth team was known to favour the Rose and Crown in Church Street for its dinners and social events. It had the advantage of a lockable yard door and discreet rear access!

Before the club settled in 1984 at Linney and began development of the ground our sides had played and changed at a variety of venues. Burway was the inaugural ground with players changing beside the pitch, coat hooks on nearby trees sufficed, later the pavilion was rented from the cricket club but this meant early season matches had to be swapped because the pavilion was still in use. Ludford Park was used for a season and in 1957 by cooperation with the golf club the team moved venue to a specially prepared pitch at Ludlow Racecourse. A steam roller was hired to prepare the pitch but somehow a raised diagonal always persisted and I recall finding it on several occasions as I accelerated towards the try line, only to find myself flying headlong. It was possibly this that caused Robert Hern to break his ankle in the inaugural game against Birmingham University which we won 8-0. I must ask him.

I hope to see you all on Saturday.

See you soon,

*Andy Wright*

President Ludlow Rugby Club

The poster features a dark, textured background with a gold and black color scheme. At the top center is the Ludlow Rugby Club crest, a stylized castle tower, with the text "Ludlow Rugby Club" underneath. Below the crest, the years "1934" and "2024" are positioned on either side of a large, bold "90<sup>th</sup>". Underneath this, the words "Anniversary Ball" are written in a large, elegant, white script font. The date "Saturday 20th July 2024" is printed in a white sans-serif font, followed by "LUDLOW RACECOURSE" in a bold, gold, all-caps sans-serif font. A list of event details follows in white text: "Join us for an evening of celebration.", "- Fizz on arrival - 3 course dinner -", "- Live entertainment -", and "- 6:30pm Reception - Carriages 1am - Dress code: Black tie". The ticket information "Tickets £60pp" and "Tables of 10" is displayed in a bold, gold font. At the bottom, a white text block states: "Tickets now available. It is anticipated that this event will be in high demand. book early to avoid disappointment. To book tickets please email ludlowrfevents@gmail.com".