

Broughton Rugby prepare to mark centenary

During the new club rugby season north Edinburgh's Broughton club will stage a number of events to mark its centenary.

First up will be a "President's Day" lunch scheduled for 12 October – almost exactly 100 years to the day when Broughton kicked off against the long defunct United Colleges.

President this year is Kevin McArthur although among Broughton's claims to fame is that they are believed to be in a rare breed who have had TWO women serve as overall club president.

These are the pioneering Rebecca Glendenning (née Long) and more recently, Steph Fleming.

Mark Brown, who is producing a book on the club's history, said: "In 2003 Rebecca became our first female president in 89 years and the club takes pride in the way we have embraced the women's game. It signals inclusivity and the women bring a lot to what is now essentially a player run club.

"Things have changed to the point where we find rugby teams are much more transient; players tend to come along because their friends have told them it is a good place to be involved rather than through any structured pathway."

Many who have played at Broughton's home ground of Wardie will be familiar with a notorious sloping pitch.

Mark explains: "Our slope is to do with drainage issues from when Nissan huts occupied the ground commandeered by the Royal Navy during the second world war."

If that remains a talking point then older members recall with pride, too, a Broughton team of talents including Eric Donaldson, Neil Fisher, David McIntosh, Dougie Gallagher, Jimmy Calder and Gordon Hockaday, among others, who enjoyed a halcyon period largely before league rugby was introduced in 1973.

Latterly, Broughton have been particularly well served by Duncan Nicolson, a prop forward who many felt could have gained much more exalted status.

One promotion came in 2004-05 when Division Five (East) was won 24 hours before a fixture against the touring Swedish national side!

Broughton has welcomed many international stars thanks to their 'hottest ticket in town' pre-international lunch towards the end of the amateur era with speakers such as British Lions John Taylor and Gerald Davies from Wales happy to give their services for free along with Ireland's Des O'Brien.

Irishman Syd Millar, a British Lions player, coach and manager, once spoke at the annual Broughton club dinner.

All these events could not have happened without a stalwart backroom team and Mark Brown pays tribute to the likes of Sandy Scott who ran the clubhouse bar for over 30 years, Tom Richardson, Hwyl Williams, Gordon McMillan, club secretary for 34 years and Olive Lyall, an SRU "Volunteer of the Month" award winner.

"What today's players are unlikely to understand is that these officials would often run up to five teams each weekend using only a pay phone and postcards notifying selection unlike the internet world of today" says Mark.

- Broughton are holding a centenary dinner on Saturday 2 November at the Village Hotel, Crewe Toll with guest speakers John Beattie (ex Scotland/double British Lion) and Sandra Colamartino (the first Scottish women's team captain).
- For details see <https://docs.google.com/.../1rf74IUkcXtjdCICD.../viewform...>

