

PARKNEWS

Season
2011-12

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The e-magazine for all Rosslyn Park supporters

NO JOY FOR PARK AT CINDERFORD



Steve Parsons makes a break at Cinderford [photo: David Whittam]

Welcome to Parknews. Park were anticipating a tough match at Cinderford, and that is precisely what they got. For the first 16 minutes, it looked a question of how many Park would win by as the home side endured immense pressure. The first time Cinderford broke out of their own half they scored, and after that Park never got their noses in front. There were plenty of promising moves but far too many handling errors for most of them to bear fruit. Passes that would comfortably have been accepted during our winning run were now spilling forwards. These things happen: Ealing endured a poor run recently and seem to have corrected it. We need to do the same. Confidence seems to be a factor in these things, and that is where supporters getting behind the team really does help.

Catching up 11 points on Jersey looks a tall order with only 11 games to go. But there is no reason why they are immune from the bad patches that affect everyone else. We can only do those things that we can control, and we need to ensure that if Jersey do slip we are in a position to take advantage. On Saturday week we are at home to Macclesfield who are now level with us on League points. There could hardly be a better chance to demonstrate that the past 3 matches have been just a blip.

This weekend

The 2s again did not play last weekend, and we understand that Old Albanians, scheduled opponents for this weekend, no longer run a 2nd XV. If anything can be arranged, then the 'Club Diary' column adjacent to this will be amended to include details. However, there are two good competitive matches in Richmond Park involving the 4th XV and the Hatters, and you can then stay on the Clubhouse to watch the England International on the big screen. The Clubhouse will also be open on Sunday when we stage a cracking Youth match kicking off at Noon. The U16's Surrey League One match against Sutton & Epsom will be the only time this season that this age group

Continued back page.....

Club Diary

Saturday 4 February

1st XV No fixture

2nd XV TBA

STOP PRESS

03/02/2012

Both our own pitch and the pitches in Richmond Park are frozen and unfit for play. With a heavy overnight frost forecast the decision has been taken to call off all home matches tomorrow. The Clubhouse will therefore not be opening.

Apologies for any inconvenience caused, but clearly the weather is beyond the Club's control and it was felt better to take the inevitable decision now rather than to leave things up in the air.

Park U-16 v Sutton & Epsom

Surrey League 1

Home KO 12:00

Saturday 4 February

1st XV

v

Macclesfield

National 1

Home KO 2:30

Send all letters, articles, reports, photos etc to news@rosslynpark.co.uk

HANDLING ERRORS COST PARK DEAR

Cinderford 22

Park 12

National 1

If Cinderford looked anything but a side that has spent most of the season battling against relegation, then Park didn't look much like title contenders either with a disappointing display. The home side had to weather 16 minutes of concerted Park pressure straight from kick off. Two penalties were hammered into the home 22; breaks up either wing were halted for handling errors; the much vaunted Cinderford scrum was driven off their own ball in their 22; there was a forward surge towards the line. The home defence was excellent, and perhaps it was also a case of too much icing and not enough cake, but whatever reason, Park's considerable exertions failed to yield any points.

The first time Cinderford secured any reasonable possession, a hoof up the left was followed by a maul which bundled hooker Sam Wilkes over the line for a 5 point lead, completely against the run of play on 17 minutes. Suddenly Rugby seemed a simple game.

Seven minutes later Cinderford's direct style again brought dividends, a good run up the right and a pass inside allowed flanker Will Foden to run in close to the posts, converted by Dan Trigg for 12-0 on 24 minutes.

Cinderford were by now competing on more than even terms. They gained a penalty in the Park 22 and opted to scrummage, but the defence held firm until relieved when the home side were pinged for obstruction. Park countered but had difficulty in breaching the 'red zone'



Mike Baxter about to send Nick Huggett on a run

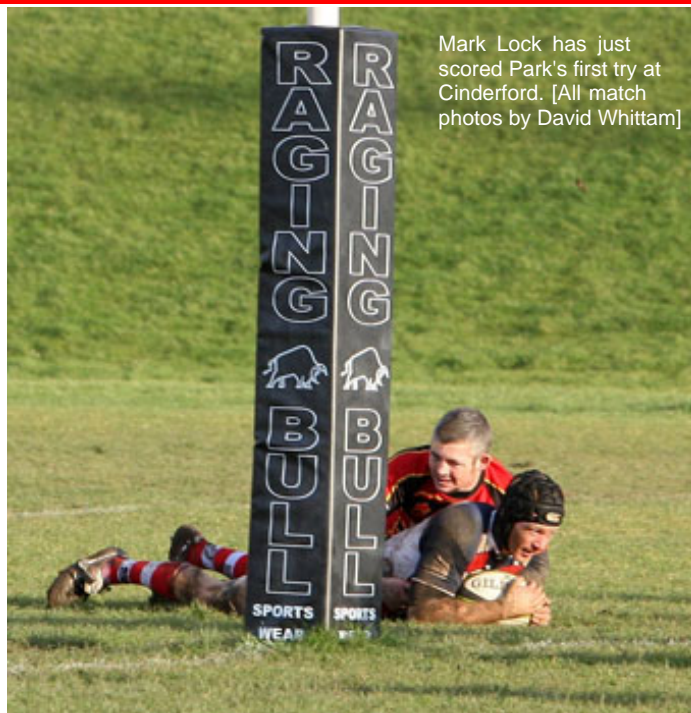
until a super attack through the middle saw skipper Mark Lock lead by example and crash through by the posts giving Ross Laidlaw a simple conversion for 12-7 to bring Park right back into contention four minutes before the interval.

However, with the half-time whistle beckoning, slack defending allowed home winger Stapleton to pick up the ball, run past two tackles on the Park left and run round close to the posts, Trigg converting, to make the score at the interval 19-7.

Park made the best possible start to the second half with a superb try almost from kick off. A devastating burst up the right by Steve Parsons found Dom Shabbo in perfect support to finish off the move in the corner to put Park back in it at 19-12. The angle for the conversion attempt defeated even Laidlaw.

Cinderford came back, gaining a penalty on the edge of the Park 22, which they kicked to touch. From the resulting line out Park lock Stan McKeen was sent to the sin bin on the intervention of the touch judge and Park were left in desperate defence and a man short. When eventually Park were caught offside, Trigg took the 3 points for 22-12, leaving Park needing more than one try to turn the game around.

The visitors had sufficient attacking possession to have accomplished that several times over, but move after move was spoilt by uncharacteristic handling errors. On gaining a penalty, Laidlaw was asked to attempt one at the very limit of his range in the conditions, while most touchline support was begging for it to be hammered to the corner to go for the



Mark Lock has just scored Park's first try at Cinderford. [All match photos by David Whittam]

try. It narrowly missed. Park themselves conceded a penalty around half way which Cinderford missed.

Park switched to all-out attack but again knocked on when approaching the line. They quite brilliantly turned over possession in the home 22, but again spoilt it by mis-handling and when they conceded another penalty the game was up.

During their run of victories, Park showed an invincible 'togetherness' that refused to accept defeat. By comparison this performance – hard as they tried – looked a tad dispirited. With no match next weekend the coaches have a couple of weeks to re-ignite that spirit before Macclesfield – level on points with Park – come visiting.

Park: Edwards; Parsons, Shabbo, Gower, Rudd (Mantella); Laidlaw; Baxter (Barr); Ovens, Richmond (Gotting), Huggett (Ward); Lloyd-Jones, McKeen; Trayfoot, Rowland, Lock (Campbell)

Park scorers: Lock (T), Shabbo (T), Laidlaw (C)



Dom Shabbo takes contact

UNDER-11s GREAT WIN



The Park U-11s recently travelled to Millfield to take on a select side in the form of the England (SW) Prep School Barbarians. Just to be asked to play such a prestigious fixture gives an impression of the esteem in which the Park youngsters are held, but to add to that - they won! Having played the SE side with Park players in the selected side it was only fitting they were given the chance to take on the SW with their full squad.

Richard White



If you want a taste of good class youth rugby, the Under-16s play a crucial League match at the Rock this Sunday kicking off at noon. The Clubhouse is open and admission is free.



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT ALFIE?

The phrase 'prolific try scorer' gets banded about too often these days but Rosslyn Park U16's have a try scoring machine in their centre-cum-wing Alfie Dudman Jones.

It is not so much the number of tries he has scored this season, even though his total of 26 from 11 games (a strike rate of 2.36 per game) is very impressive, it is the number of hat-tricks that is astounding.

Alfie notched up his 6th hat-trick of the season in the 30-8 victory over Richmond recently which is quite a phenomenal achievement. Spare a thought for Wasps though who have been on the end of two of Alfies

hat-tricks this season – the first in the 39-12 win in the U16's opening game of the season and the second in the recent return match which produced a 38-26 victory! (Park in fact had two hat-trick scorers in this match as Theo Brader Tan also bagged three tries!). So Wasps lead the way having conceded six of Alfie's tries but they are closely followed by Harpenden against whom Alfie scored four tries in a match earlier in the season.

Scoring tries is something the U16's have a habit of doing as they have notched up a total of 83 tries so far this season in the 14 matches they have played to date!

What makes Alfie's achievement all the more remarkable is that he has learnt all his rugby at Rosslyn Park (having joined us in the U10's) as his school do not play rugby. Whilst the U16's coaches will take some credit for Alfie's development there is surely no coincidence that his improved strike rate this season has come after having been taken under the wing of 1st XV coach, Jan Bonney, as part of Park's Elite Youth programme.

Alfie's performances have yet to be recognised by Surrey but their loss is Parks gain – he is not the only star in the U16 squad this season though as the U16's squad has supplied county players for Middlesex, Surrey, Berkshire and Dorset & Wilts with two players, Kieran Treadwell and Max Hayes (who has been with the age group since he was 7!) making into the London & SE and the South West divisional squads respectively. We hope that as a result of this they will get a shot at the England U16 squad.

It will not be long, we hope, with the continued support of Jan Bonney and the 1st XV players that some of this U16 squad will graduate into the club's senior sides. *Martin Wallace*



HATTERS TAKE ENCOURAGEMENT FROM LOSS

Dorking 2nd 20

Hatters 7

Zoo Sports Shield – Div 3

By Joe Wigley

The Hatters arrived early for their stiffest test since they turned a corner before Christmas. With Box Hill in the distance, confidence was running high as a strong squad took to the field to face a Dorking 2nd XV who were sitting a comfortable second in the league, having lost only to Hammersmith & Fulham 2s and London Cornish 2s.

Almost from the kick-off, however, Dorking put up a searching kick deep into the Hatters' half which, with the help of an incredibly lucky bounce, fell straight into the arms of the Dorking winger who finished well around the outside. Trailing 7-0, Park began to exert some pressure in the midfield, winning two penalties in kicking distance in quick succession. Pilkington's attempts having drifted marginally left, Dorking were able to push the ball up the right wing for a second score around the outside to bring the score to 12-0.

The Hatters struggled to impose themselves on the game in the first half as their lineout misfired against a strong Dorking outfit, denying them the driving maul which had been used to such good effect in

previous fixtures. While Park were dominant at the scrum and picks and drives worked well from the base of the ruck, they were unable to generate sufficient clean ball to stretch Dorking in defence.

The Hatters rallied in the second half, beating the home side onto the back foot. Powerful running, with a notable break from Wilson down the centre of the pitch, gave Park the territory they needed. After a clever kick behind the Dorking defence, Owen Jones was able to gather and cross the line for the Hatters first points. At 12-7, with Pilkington's conversion, it was all to play for. Park continued their surge but were unable to convert the pressure as the lineout faltered and poor handling let Dorking off the hook. Perhaps, the decisive moment came when, despite having camped on the Dorking line, Park's several attempts at a pushover try from repeated scrums on the five-metre line came to nothing. This buoyed the home side who were able to add a penalty and converted try to their tally against the run of play.

While the final score of 20-7 is disappointing, it is testament to how far the Hatters have come in the last few weeks that they were competitive to the end and could have stolen victory right up to the final ten minutes. Hammersmith and Fulham next week will be tougher still but, if we can put in a similar performance, the second half of the season will continue on its upward trajectory. Man of the match deservedly went to Owen Davies as did, equally deservedly, DotD.



ROSSLYN PARK

HSBC



NATIONAL SCHOOLS SEVENS

THE STUNTMAN STRIKES

Nosey Parker

Reports on a typical day out with Park's faithful away fans (not suitable for children)

Los^Losing at Cinderford was incidental to a bigger nightmare for Park's loyal travelling supporters last Saturday. Paddington seemed to be a bit busier than usual for a Saturday morning. Alas, a big race meeting at Cheltenham – which was the station at the end of our line to Gloucester. At Swindon, where we had to change trains, First Great Western had made provision for this by providing 50% more carriages than usual on the Gloucester / Cheltenham service – thereby increasing the total available to three.

On squeezing out at Gloucester we, your correspondent and Brian Lawrence, made straight for the 31 bus stop and the village of Littledean, entering the Belfry at 10:38 (you can set your watch by these country buses). Exactly an hour later we were joined by Garry and company, who had taken an earlier train, stopping to take on ballast in Gloucester in the form of a J D Wetherspoon breakfast, with the odd sundry libation elsewhere thrown in. It was generally agreed that the Belfry's "Old Lubricator" was a decent pint (or several). But eventually one has to move on.

While waiting at the bus stop opposite the pub, a car tooted and the driver waved. It was Club Secretary, Bob Evans, on his way to the pre-match Committee Lunch. "B****ard! Could have offered a lift", was the general – and far from unspoken – consensus.

Boarded up

No sooner had the bus delivered us to Cinderford than it was discovered that the "White Swan" was boarded up. (This was – in fairness – a truly awful pub, and the decision to render it inaccessible was probably taken in the interest of local citizens). We hit the rugby club bar instead. There we found that Don (whose day job is as Scorer for Middlesex CCC – so he doesn't get through many pencils) and his mate Steve. Steve is actually a Wasps supporter, but attends Park matches in drinking capacity only. Don was resplendent in a Rosslyn Park cravat. The Club shop stopped selling these the week after Obolensky's try but, hats off to Don, you have to be pretty comfortable in your own sexuality to go anywhere near Cinderford wearing a cravat.

The game passed by, and is reported elsewhere. Everyone then piled onto the 31 back to Gloucester, where we had 2 hours to fill before catching the 19:14 train back to Swindon. Good news was that Garry knew a decent pub, so we followed him. It was indeed a fine one, set in a courtyard, all Tudor beams and a choice of real ales. Discussion of the match in civilised tones was now possible, but disaster was just around the corner.

Animated

Andy wished to make a point and had become animated (or as animated as is possible for a middle-aged sot, clutching a pint of Doom Bar to his paunch). This involved demonstrating a gesture made by one of the Park players, which to the casual observer may have appeared as a sideways-on Nazi salute. But it was also, alas, an unintended karate blow of devastating proportions upon the *faux antique* floor-standing lamp to which he was adjacent. The attractive carved-glass bowl and internal light bulb were sheared off completely, as if meticulously sawn, and hit the ground with a terrifying smash. His hand, which rightly should have been torn to shreds was undamaged, something he surely could not have achieved if remotely sober. This feat can usually only be accomplished by the best Martial Arts experts - and thus the truth emerged. It is funny how people have hidden depths. For years no one had realised that this quietly-spoken, innocuous creature of drink was in fact the unacknowledged Stuntman for Bruce Lee. Andy will henceforth be known in these columns as Stuntman.

The gov'nor was duly appeased, and it was decided that it was only fair to remain and spend more money by way of recompense. Fate had now indelibly marked our cards.

On arrival at Gloucester station we looked at the platform indicator, and against the 19:14 to Swindon was the simple word 'CANCELLED'. Moreover, there was no further train to Swindon that evening. The gentleman in the ticket office suggested getting the 19:45 and alighting at Bristol Parkway to pick up the London train there. This we attempted to do, but upon alighting at Parkway the helpful guard told us that we'd catch an earlier train if we travelled on to Bristol Temple Meads, so we gratefully accepted his advice.

He was almost correct! We arrived at Platform 9, and there was the London train at Platform 7. We scampered through the underpass, only to catch the tail lights of the London train as it left. We protested to the station official, who had signalled it to depart, that he could have waited 30 seconds longer so that some highly inconvenienced passengers might have caught it. (If you are old enough to remember "On the Buses", then this young man looked exactly as Inspector Blake would have looked as a teenager. Were they related?). He said that the reason it could not be held was that it was already 15 minutes late. To emphasise the point, Blakey Junior then sauntered off to make exactly the same speech over the station tannoy, as if this act invested his explanation with some additional inalienable authority.

Fines

It appears that the logic of this is that the company that owns the platforms fines the company that runs the trains if the train spends more than its allocated time at the platform. Got that? Part of the genius of privatising the railways was the replacement of people who might perform useful functions – like selling tickets, or a Station Master who might be able to decide to hold up a train in order to help customers – with an army of higher-paid accountants whose sole purpose is to issue notices among themselves fining each other's companies, thus effectively incentivising those same companies to provide an even worse service.

It is now 20:50, and an hour to the next London train. Furthermore the only bar on the station shuts at 21:00. There is a schism. Garry leads most to an adjacent Wetherspoons. The Scorer's mate Steve, by now rendered almost *hors de combat* missed the turn off for Wetherspoons but instead fell into a pub called the Engineer. Brian and I believed we had hit on a better idea. We had carefully noted tables and chairs outside the station bar, which itself had some decent real ale. We therefore decided to get in some beers and plonk ourselves at an outside table: surely no one would believe that two senior citizens – already dreadfully inconvenienced by the railways themselves – are causing any trouble sitting there with a quiet drink. Wrong. Some minutes later we are harassed to drink up, and it was then too late to join the others. We retreated to the comparative warmth of the coffee bar in the subway, where the indicator showed that the London-bound train was now delayed.

Auto-pilot

Garry's army returned. And it is one up for the human spirit in its eternal struggle with alcohol that Steve's auto-pilot had kicked in and he had made it as well. The sign of a good trencherman.

Eventually we piled onto the train. When the ticket inspector hove to we were resolute that if he said one thing about our tickets being invalid then we would unleash upon him the full force of our newly-unmasked Martial Arts expert. No need – he was depressingly jovial. Fate had dealt us one good hand inasmuch as we are adjacent to the buffet car. Most of us returned from it, cans in hand. Steve, however, had become hypnotically attracted to the operative behind the counter. This must have been one of the great chat up routines of all time: English was certainly not her first language, and her speech was additionally disguised by a rich African intonation. Steve's own utterances had by now, in both construction and articulation, ceased to bear any resemblance whatsoever to *any* known language. She eventually did what any beleaguered damsel would do in such unpromising circumstances and pulled down the shutters.

The Stuntman, meanwhile, was in a deep repose with his mouth wide open, providing anyone prepared to risk his wrath with target practice from a bag of 'Nobby's Nuts' that happened to be lying open on the table. As midnight beckoned we finally chugged into Paddington. Good day out!

From front page... will get to play on the 1st XV pitch and as it is a top of the table clash (2nd v 3rd) it provides a real chance for club members to see the next generation on display. The Slingbacks also have an away match at Woodbridge on Sunday afternoon, kicking off at 2:00PM and they would very much welcome your vocal support.

Clubsides

Will Thorogood reports that the Hatters found the Dorking Gap on the map, and headed that way to play Dorking 2's. Unfortunately, they were able only to find Dorking's defensive gaps once! In what sounds like a tough, and close encounter, the "Hatters roll" came to an end with a 20-7 defeat. I'm sure the Hatters will bounce back this week, none the worse for their set-back, for the game against local rivals, Hammersmith&Fulham 2's.

The Nomads were off to Bushy Park for their Surrey Premier match against Teddington 2's. A lot of pride was at stake, in that Teddington had put 60+ points, unusually, on the Nomads, in Richmond Park back in October! Another tough battle, but, this time, they came out glorious victors, 22-8! Wimbledon 3's this week, and another record to be set straight!

The 4's, the only Rosslyn Park team to be playing at home at the weekend, played their MMT1 match way down in Richmond Park, against Ealing Cougars (4's). The 4's started off slowly, allowing Ealing to score a well worked try within the first five minutes. However, this spurred them to play some physical rugby, against a big Ealing pack, and some expansive back play. A mix of some exciting football, and a "Leviathan battle". They quickly regained the lead, but with opposition ripostes! Ding-dong, throughout, but towards the end the 4's managed to run away with it, scoring 6 tries in total, encompassing different rugby styles, to 4 Ealing replies. A good, convincing win, well done....36-24. Just a quick word of thanks to Trevor Leydon who had to take over refereeing duties, for the last 10 minutes of the game, when the Society ref pulled a calf muscle.

Muriel Tanner

We are sad to learn of the passing of Muriel Tanner, wife of Derek Tanner and mother of Tony and Peter. If it was her husband Derek who took the Rosslyn Park National Schools Sevens from a relatively small Public Schools tournament to the massive inclusive festival we know today, then he would have been the first to say that he could not have done it without Muriel's active support in uncomplainingly carrying out much of the administration. Our deepest sympathise go to her family.

National One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Try	Loss	Pts
Jersey	21	18	0	3	599	281	318	11	2	80*
Ealing	21	14	1	6	632	445	187	13	4	75
Fylde	21	13	0	8	618	494	124	15	4	71
Rosslyn Park	21	14	0	7	590	453	137	10	3	69
Macclesfield	21	13	0	8	592	489	103	14	3	69
Blackheath	21	11	1	9	546	525	21	9	6	61
Tynedale	20	10	0	10	535	465	70	14	4	58
Cambridge	21	11	0	10	560	627	-67	8	2	54
Sedgley Park	21	10	0	11	508	600	-92	10	3	53
Coventry	20	10	1	9	439	482	-43	5	2	49
Blaydon	19	8	1	10	473	452	21	10	5	49
Cinderford	21	8	0	13	474	461	13	6	8	46
Wharfedale	21	8	0	13	450	525	-75	6	6	44
Stourbridge	21	5	0	16	453	582	-129	4	7	31
Barking	21	5	0	16	372	610	-238	2	4	26
Birmingham & Solihull	21	6	0	15	350	700	-350	3	2	24*

*= Deducted 5 points

Jersey maintained their grip on the title race with a 32-14 win at Wharfedale, including a 4-try bonus and their rivals can now only hope that the Islanders suffer a loss of form. A 31-19 (also 4-try) win at Stourbridge saw Ealing ensure that the gap between themselves and the leaders remained at 5 points. With – coincidentally – the top four clubs each playing clubs in the bottom five, Fylde were the team other than ourselves to step on the banana skin with a surprise 19-20 defeat at Barking. Fylde scored 2 tries to 1 but were undone by 5 Ratford penalties.

Macclesfield went down by 25-24 at Tynedale, but in gaining two bonus points they are now level with ourselves, and are our next opponents. There was much interest as to how the now unpaid Cambridge players would fare, and their reaction was positive with a 35 – 27 win over Coventry, including the 4-try bonus. Blackheath had a tremendous 37-30 away win at Sedgley Park. Poor Birmingham & Solihull look destined to second successive relegation following a 47-7 whacking by Blaydon. The Bees are now 20 points adrift of safety with only 11 matches left.

This weekend's match: Blaydon v Tynedale.

Can you help?

The Slingbacks will be celebrating their 15th anniversary with a spectacular bash at the club on 10th March - more details on that later, but it promises to be an absolute belter even by the Slingbacks' exalted standard. A feature of the evening will be a raffle in aid of cancer charities and - in keeping with a mega-evening - they are on the lookout for some mega-prizes. If you, or your company, would be prepared to offer something for this worthy cause, then please get in touch with Clare Bowen at clarepbowen@yahoo.co.uk

Wharfedale away match

Supporters booking advance rail tickets for the Wharfedale away match on 18 February should note that kick off for this match is 14:00. The nearest station is Skipton (change at Leeds). It's a taxi ride from Skipton station, but you should find some other Park supporters around to share the cost with (if you don't spot anyone at the station, try the Narrow Boat pub).

Next Parknews

We hope to put together a Paerknews next week, but with no 1st XV match to report on it does rather depend upon the other sides sending in reports of their activities (which may not come to much if the predicted freeze arrives). Readers' letters are, of course, always welcome. The address for all articles, letters, etc is at the bottom of the front page. If it's not on the website by Wednesday lunchtime, then assume there won't be one.

Dates for your diary

Rosslyn Park Six Nations City Lunch at Vinopolis- Friday 16th March 2012

Former Players Lunch, Fylde 1st XV Game- Saturday 24th March 2012

Rosslyn Park HSBC National Schools Sevens 2012- Monday March 26th-March 30th 2012

London Floodlit Sevens 2012 - Thursday May 3rd 2012.

Rosslyn Park Summer Ball- Saturday May 5th 2012.

Contact the Club Office if you are interested in booking for any of these events. Additionally, see previous page, we also have the Obolensky Association Dinner coming up on Wednesday 15th February. Please make a note in your diary to support these events.

Although Parknews is accessible from the Rosslyn Park website, it is independently edited and any views expressed are not necessarily those of the Club's Committee or Officials unless specifically stated to be so. The Editor warns potential litigants that he is skint and not worth suing.