



Blundell's

BLUNDELL'S R.F.C.
CANADA
2008

 RUGBY
TOUR OF CANADA
2008



I write as a very envious Head Master; one who has toured on many occasions with rugby teams. I would like to take this opportunity to wish the Blundell's School Canadian Tourists much happiness and success in their travels to Canada. Touring is so much more than playing the matches; it is about establishing good, strong, loyal and deep friendships. It is also about developing that special bond between coaches and players which is typically drawn to the fore on such expeditions. It is about building an understanding of different cultures and nationalities through a shared passion for rugby and it is about appreciating and sharing the support of others both on the pitch and off. Many enduring relationships will be formed. This is also an opportunity to offer my deep gratitude to Norman Ridgway who will be retiring after the coming season. The strength of Blundell's rugby is due in no small part to his enthusiasm, commitment and intuitive ability to draw out the very best from his teams. He is a modest man and rightly he would like me to thank John Brigden and all the other coaches. I am also grateful to Mr and Mrs Menheneott for working tirelessly on behalf of the rugby club to make this tour possible.

Ian Davenport

Ian Davenport

Head Master



RUGBY
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TOUR ITINERARY

D1 Wed July 23	Fly London Gatwick to Calgary Trans to UCal Sports Centre
D2 Thu July 24	AM: Practice @UCal PM: Local Sightsee
D3 Fri July 25	AM: Practice @UCal PM: R&R
	18.00 MATCH 1: v CALGARY HORNETS
D4 Sat July 26	Transfer to Lethbridge RFC (Billeting 3 nts)
D5 Sun July 27	Practice and local sightseeing
D6 Mon July 28	15.00 MATCH 2: v LETHBRIDGE RFC
D7 Tues July 29	Transfer to Regina (Billeting 2 nts)
D8 Wed July 30	17.00 MATCH 3: v REGINA DISTRICT XV
D9 Thurs July 31	Transfer to Saskatoon (Billeting 2 nts)
D10 Fri Aug 1	18.00 MATCH 4: v Nth SASKATCHEWAN DISTRICT
D11 Sat Aug 2	Transfer to Lloydminster. (Billeting 3 nts)
D12 Sun Aug 3	Practice & Sightsee in Lashburn & Lloydminster
D13 Mon Aug 4	14.00 MATCH 5: v LLOYDMINSTER DISTRICT
D14 Tues Aug 5	Transfer to Edmonton to TC 6 – AAA Norwester (Billeting 3 nts)
D15 Wed Aug 6	AM: Practice PM: Sightsee in Edmonton
D16 Thurs Aug 7	MATCH 6: v AAA NORWESTER RFC
D17 Fri Aug 8	Transfer to Jasper
D18 Sat Aug 9	Transfer to Banff.
D19 Sun Aug 10	R & R in Banff
D20 Mon Aug 11	Transfer to Vancouver – possible overnight stay en route
D21 Tues Aug 12	R&R in Vancouver
D22 Wed Aug 13	R & R on Vancouver Island
D23 Thurs Aug 14	Fly Vancouver to London Gatwick
D24 Fri Aug 15	Eta London Gatwick



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

2 June 2008

Dear Mr Brigden

Thank you for writing to me about your forthcoming rugby tour to Canada.

I am always very pleased to hear about pupils and teachers who are prepared to give up their time to organise such a major undertaking.

I wish all those involved the very best of luck for the tour matches, which I am sure will be well contested. No matter what the results of the matches played, I have every confidence that each individual will come home a winner in every sense of the word.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon Brown".

Mr John Brigden

SQUAD PROFILES



James Pool
Centre
Captain
28/2/90

Played 1st XV for 2 years as well as the Devon County XV, he is an elusive runner and excellent sevens player. Born in Northern Ireland, he is a good track and field athlete (when fit). Claims to be easy-going and confident as well as enjoying the guitar. He has good taste – he dislikes Manchester United – but appreciates Noel Coward’s work entitled ‘Blithe Spirit’.



Will Denford
Lock/No. 8
4/08/91

He has been a revelation in his first season in the 1st XV as a quality line-out jumper, having been converted from full-back. He has good hands, has decent speed and also enjoys playing cricket. He admires Danny Cipriani, and he is another who enjoys his sleep. Has some thespian tendencies and is referred to as ‘Bad Boy’ by his friends – both of them.



James Woodcock
Full-back/centre/wing
Tour Captain
28/5/90

Joined Blundell’s September 2006 and has played 1st XV for 2 years. He is a strong running back with exceptional work-rate and is a good motivator and very loyal. He has been studying Psychology (even though he can’t spell it) and claims to be highly intelligent yet ‘calm and chilled’ – which explains his love of daydreaming and sleeping. Hopes to become a pilot – not sure I’ll ever fly again.



Will Carrick Smith
Lock
2/04/92

Will is a competitive individual and is by a long way the tallest member of the squad. He is also a reasonably good discus thrower but can be dangerous with it. Enjoys golf, poker and shooting – presumably because all require a good degree of luck – and is a fan of Martin Johnson. Relaxed individual – always enjoys the sprint training sessions – and will be the first to tell you what the weather is going to do.



Ed Lock
Wing/Scrum-half
27/12/89

Chirpy, mischievous character who took quite a while to decide he was on the tour. Has played full-back, wing, scrum-half and flanker over the past 2 years – no wonder he can appear confused. Known to his friends as ‘Mr. Chubb’, only he has the key to his future. Definitely a ‘Jack-of-all-trades and master of.....some?’



Henry Dixon
Flanker
14/06/92

Born in Germany, he has been undercover for a while but will probably be found at the bottom of a ruck and is a good team man who could be a real force if he acquires some speed (pace, that is). Hopes to join the Marines and enjoys paragliding, skiing and climbing – clearly the indoor type!



George Wheatley
Centre/Outside-half
1/10/90

George had a good first season last year and is improving all the time. Dislikes Chemistry (don’t we all!) but hopes to teach Design and Technology for a career – presumably to collect on the free samples. He believes he is sometimes lonely and undervalued despite his love of Tuna and Lulu. He also feels misunderstood – which explains our reluctance to play him at outside-half!



James Evans
Prop/Flanker
9/06/91

Smooth talking member of the CCF, technically he is a very good prop but prefers flanker. I guess he wants to keep his good looks! Musician, academic and all-round good guy, he also rides horses, enjoys being outside and hopes to join the Army. I wish him good luck with his career – but he probably won’t need it!



Best wishes to Blundell's RFC for a successful and enjoyable tour!

I was one of the lucky ones! I played rugby in the good old amateur days when you played hard on the field but also played hard off the field. In the days when we took our rugby seriously but also when there was such fun and enjoyment to be had from the game.

I was fortunate to play at a time when rugby proved that it was the biggest free-masonry in the world and when touring was so memorable.

I have very many fond memories of schoolboy tours, club tours and representative team tours. They were all great social experiences where much 'bonding' occurred! Overseas tours presented such different cultural experiences that simply visiting such countries as Canada, USA, South Africa, Hong Kong and Korea was an education in itself.

Touring with rugby teams was a vital part of my personal education and development. The challenge of sport, the camaraderie that it built amongst team mates, and the friendships forged with opponents, the cultures experienced, understood and respected, the generosity of hosts, the value of travel and the confidence gained, all contribute to being a better person. What a way to learn about life!

My advice, as you embark on your tour to Canada is to learn from the rugby that you will play and the teams that you will encounter, enjoy yourselves, be an ambassador for your school and return a better person as a result of the experience.

Undoubtedly, you will have fond and ever-lasting memories. Whatever the results on the field, I am sure it will be a memorable experience for you all.

Very best wishes and good luck.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Bowring". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.

Kevin Bowring.
(RFU Head of Elite Coach Development - Former WRU National Coach)

SQUAD PROFILES



Matthew Goss

Half-back 7/01/92

A confident and talented games player, he can appear impudent on the field but is a feisty and competitive individual. Decision-making may be an area of weakness, looking at some of his girlfriends, but this can be worked on – on the pitch, anyway.



Charlie Newson

Wing/Centre 6/09/91

A good athlete who needs to grow in self-confidence and the tour should help this. He claims to be lively, witty and amusing (we are all watching out for this) and enjoys opportunities to use his speed both on the athletics track and the sevens pitch. He has nice handwriting and likes dance music.



James Hawkins

Wing 4/02/91

A strong running winger who dislikes training, James scored many tries for the 2nd XV last season. All-round games player, he is also a good javelin thrower as well as a quality swimmer. He believes himself to be cool, sophisticated, style conscious and mature and is also known to live in a fantasy world. He has the speed to be a real force provided the jewellery does not weigh him down.



Ben Oddy

Prop 1/06/92

An outstanding musician and scholar, he contradicts the stereotype for front rows, although he is the right shape and Mr. Brigden can hold a conversation with him. He is an undemonstrative forward, but knows his job, and is quietly competitive. He has also shown ability as a shot putter and will probably be in charge of the choir on tour.



George House

Back Row 19/04/92

The team intellectual, George has a good work-rate on and off the pitch. Man of few words, who, when asked to describe himself in 6 words could only find one! He is a fan of Lewis Moody but will hopefully give away fewer penalties on the tour.



Will Pettit

Flanker 6/06/91

An effective player who needs to be more dominant, Will has had some 1st team experience and will be looking forward to the pre-tour sprint sessions. Hopes to become a Doctor (hope I'm never ill!), he has musical talents and believes himself to be quietly confident. His major achievement to date was probably being born in Bristol and shaving his eyebrows at 3 in the morning!



Richard Hunt

Wing 23/05/92

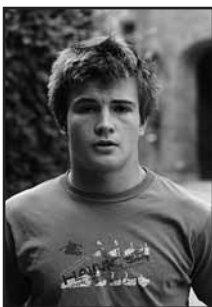
Richard is the late developer (so we're told) who could be the surprise package of the tour. Improved as a colt last season, he believes he is positive and determined despite being a Liverpool supporter and having a poor taste in TV programmes – Prison break?



Dan Sandford

Prop/Flanker 9/04/91

He just made it on tour after a soccer celebration injury. He needs a strong tour to stake a claim for a regular slot in the side, but has shown some consistency at 2nd XV level. His parents have Irish blood, which will hold him in good stead, and he has been very involved in getting the tour kit organised. Has a tendency to miss meetings – so will he make it to the airport?



Barney Loader

Outside-half 21/11/91

He has already shown good potential as a playmaker and could be a major force in the years ahead. A good ball player with good hands, he can also kick well. He admires Carlos Spencer and enjoys sitting next to Richard Hunt watching Prison Break. A useful cricketer and athlete who will do well with greater self-belief.



Mr J Brigden
School House
Blundell's School
Tiverton
EX16 4DW

05 June 2008

Dear John

RE: Tour to Canada

My first tour to Canada was with Exeter University / St Lukes in 1980 not long after I had completed a highly enjoyable teaching practice at Blundell's School. We lost 9-6 to Auckland in the final of a World Universities Tournament.

I returned to Canada with Bath in 1984 and both were fantastic trips. I am certain that all the Blundells players and staff will receive a massive welcome in Canada, learn from the rugby experience and enjoy wonderful hospitality.

On behalf of Exeter Chiefs may I wish you every success in Canada and we look forward to hearing about your exploits on your return.

Yours in rugby

Peter Drewett
Director of Rugby, Exeter Chiefs

EXETER RUGBY CLUB LTD

SANDY PARK STADIUM, SANDY PARK WAY
EXETER EX2 7NN

COMPANY REGISTRATION No. 3320422 ENGLAND

REGISTERED OFFICE

SANDY PARK STADIUM, SANDY PARK WAY
EXETER EX2 7NN

TEL: 01392 890 890

FAX: 01392 890 888

E-mail: info@exeterchiefs.co.uk

www.exeterchiefs.co.uk



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MANAGEMENT



Julian Strong

Prop

25/03/92

A local boy who supports Fulham (why?) - he is the strong, silent type whom the tour should help to become a major player. Claims to be independent yet helpful (not good for a prop) and actually enjoys all his chosen 'A' level subjects. His major claim to fame is scoring a try within 25 seconds of the start of a game against Downside (presumably while they were still praying!).



Norman Ridgway

Born in Essex, he arrived at Blundell's in September 1987 after 10 years in Australia. Has led four major overseas tours for Blundell's School, plus many others nearer to home. His rugby career involved Bristol University, clubs in Bristol and Northamptonshire, before playing in Victoria, Australia. Played against the All Blacks in 1980 (came second) and against N.S.W. in the Mark Ella era. He is held in great esteem by the senior coaches in the SW; a truly multi-talented sporting purist, who always insists on the highest standards of competitive sportsmanship. Coaches track and field during the summer and teaches mathematics. The pupils best interests have always come first for him but he doesn't understand the concept of 'a grey area', enjoys factorising hymn numbers in chapel, has a penchant for Oz red wine and generally has more energy than most half his age (whatever it is?).



Angus Yard

Flanker/Centre

24/08/91

A product of the Downs School near Bristol, Angus should be a major player over the next two years. His potential to be a quality flanker is in direct conflict with his polite, disciplined and understanding nature although he does have little interest in reading books. He is relieved that his 'wife' has allowed him to go on tour and he will look forward to three weeks 'with the boys'.



Alex Payne

Front Row

25/09/91

Unknown quantity but has the physical attributes to be a solid forward. Another of the thespian brigade, hopefully he can perform on the rugby pitch as well. He likes cars and gadgets and dislikes people with bad hygiene – and wants to play front row? He is also a scuba diver who likes Jeremy Clarkson – a mixed bag, here!



John Brigden

The gentle giant of Blundell's rugby and responsible for the deft, skilful and athletic nature of all the school's front five forwards (he tells me!); has convinced SH pupils that he was always a scrum-half at heart. He has played for many clubs, some of which are Bedford, Clifton and Tiverton, and has been the roadblock between Blundell's parents and the 1st XV coach. Swims every morning and is the daddy of the Polar Bear Club. He has been a Housemaster of the Junior School as well as a teacher of English and has the most beautiful handwriting. Is a lover of antiques (not just the coach), restores paintings and is one of the most respected schoolmasters on the circuit – too good to be true, really! Insists that when it is raining, more falls on him than anyone else.



Will Yard

Front Row/Backrow

1/6/93

Will has played a dominant role in the Junior rugby at Blundell's. Appearing in a variety of positions and all with success, very mobile and strong at the breakdown. He will be out to show his big brother a thing or two when Angus is not baby sitting him.



Leigh Menheneott

Husband to Ali (his wife told me to say that first), Leigh is one of the world's really nice guys. Currently housemaster of OH and teacher of P.E., he is also a qualified referee as well as a coach to junior sides in the school. Loyal supporter of the local community, he coaches cricket to the local club in his own time as well as helping to bring up four delightful children (so his wife says). He has been the major influence on the fund-raising programme as well as spending time relating stories of his youth at Gravesend Rugby Club. This is his first overseas school rugby tour – will it be his last?



ENGLAND RUGBY FOOTBALL SCHOOLS' UNION

ERIC J. BLACKMAN
PRESIDENT

Blundell's School Rugby Club are about to depart on an international tour to Canada. I have no doubt the Rugby fraternity of Calgary, Saskatchewan and Vancouver will give them a warm welcome and be generous hosts. However, a word of caution to the visiting team. Beware Rugby in Canada is on an upward learning curve. England Schools recently hosted an eight nation festival of international rugby and the undefeated team in the festival were the Canadians.

This tour will be a mixture of highly competitive matches, visiting new places, making new friends and establishing lifelong friendships with the tour party. It will also be about having fun. In years to come members of the tour party will recall daring deeds, songs sung and stories aplenty. I believe the last verse of the Harrow School song perfectly captures the spirit of a rugby tour:

"God gives us bases to guard or beleaguer,
Games to play out, whether earnest or fun;
Fights for the fearless, and goals for the eager.
Twenty, and thirty and forty years on!"

I am confident the pupils of Blundell's School will be a credit to their parents, their School and the England Rugby Football Schools Union.

Eric Blackman.

Eric J Blackman
President, England Rugby Football Schools Union

4 Merchants Road, Clifton, Bristol BSS 4BP
Tel: 0117 973 3510 Fax: 0117 973 1208 Email: ericblackman@therfu.com

MESSAGE OF SUPPORT

Going on tour is a fantastic way to see the world whilst forging new friendships and cementing old ones. If this is your first, I guarantee you will never forget it. At the age you are now I toured Zimbabwe with Devon and Cornwall schools and writing this has had me smiling and reminiscing over what we got up to and how much fun we had.

Being a Devon boy I played against Blundell's and always had a tough game against a fit and well drilled team. Now with Mr. Ridgway and Mr. Brigden coaching you I am sure that has not changed. Enjoy every game, respect your opponents, they will be big strong and very keen as are most Canadians I have come across.

To finish off, think of all the hard work you and your parents have done off the field, just to get you there. Transfer that into the games you play. A touring side that wins, is a testament to you as players and makes it much more fun.

Darren Crompton

Darren Crompton

Bristol F.C. Prop 115 kg

Age group Judo Gold Medalist

Former Richmond, Bath and Cardiff Blues player

England (1 cap) v South Africa 2004–2005, England 'A' player

Captained England U18's and U21's

Second only to Paul Hull in the list of most league appearances for Bristol.

A history of RUGBY AT BLUNDELL'S

RUGBY descends from an 18th century Cornish or Welsh sport known as "hurling" in which a ball was thrown up and the players acting either as individuals or as teams attempted to carry it to a goal. The goal could be set as far as several miles away thereby creating the opportunity for large-scale brawls in intervening villages. In Welsh the sport is called cnapan or "criapan," and has medieval roots. The old Irish predecessor of rugby may be caid, not to be confused with Gaelic "hurling" or "hockey" which has the difference that the ball was hit with a stick rather than carried. Rugby Football is commonly known as "rugby" and as "rugger". In the U.K, an old saying goes "football is a gentleman's game played by ruffians and rugby is a ruffian's game played by gentlemen". *Wikipedia*

The earliest mention of 'football' in the Blundellian was in 1861 and the first recorded 'rugger' match played by boys at Blundell's was in 1868 against Tiverton RFC, making the school one of the oldest anywhere to formally play the game. The Blundell's crest still proudly hangs in the main room at Twickenham in recognition of this. In the earliest days the Masters often played alongside the boys and against the stronger men's sides, the boys were often permitted to play 'with odds', twenty versus fifteen or fifteen against twelve.

The opposition for most matches came from clubs in the local area and the few school games were against Newton College, Allhallows and Exeter School. Fixtures with Newton College ended after one of the highest recorded victories by any school of 146-0, with H Mainprice scoring nine tries and S.P. Kingdon seven and P.J. Newby-Vincent converting twenty-five tries. A reputation for competitive rugby was quickly established and Blundell's Past and Present defeated the rest of Devon 8-0 in 1886, 10-0 in 1887 but lost 3-10 in 1888.

Earliest records referred to the games as '*football matches*' and they were played on any space that was available. Blundellians were apparently famous for their robust kick-and-rush '*hacking*' tactics perfected for games played on their school yard at Old Blundell's. The Tiverton Gazette of 22nd Nov 1870 reported '*There was a slight hitch at first as the Newtonians, when they saw Blundell's time-honoured yard, positively refused to risk their persons in it*'. Fortunately a local field was supplied by a Mr Glendinning and '*the Blundellians under the disadvantages of strange rules and a roomier ground than usual, were the harder pressed of the two*'; the result 0-0. This led to a letter to the Editors of The Blundellian which read '*Sirs-complaints have reached my ears lately that the Green is not large enough to play Football in, that the wall and trees are in the way, that there is no room for a good run down behind goals and several other inconveniences*'. 1870 saw a move to a regular playing field and the adoption of the new Rugby Rules with regular mention of '*scrummage*', '*backs and forwards*', '*collaring*' and '*the squash*' and the '*struggle*'. Senior rugby is still to this day divided into the Green, made up of the 3rd and 4th XVs and the Field for the more serious 1st and 2nd squads.

The 1877 Blundellian records several informal games, one in which the whole of the Sixth Form took on The Rest and another where the 1st XV played against twenty five of The Rest; both games ending in a draw, presumably owing to the lack of any running space.

1878 must go down in Blundell's long history as one of the finest as the school side did not lose any of their matches and did not even concede a single point. The Blundellian reports '*before I take leave of this, the most successful of our football seasons, I cannot forbear to add a word on the increased number of football accidents. These, though not serious, have often compelled boys to stay*



Squad in training for the tour

away from school for some time. Now football is one of the best things in the world, but it must not elbow education out of the way. It is to be hoped that attempts may be made, in unison with neighbouring clubs, so to modify the rules as to diminish the liability to accidents. Some such effort ought most certainly to be made by those who do not wish to see the old Rugby game supplanted by a milder and less dangerous form of football'. So some things never change!



The 1883 match versus Tiverton RFC was surrounded by controversy, 'At the conclusion of the game a dispute arose, Blundell's asserting that Tiverton had changed a man in the course of the game. Tiverton replied that the man who was changed had played without the Captain's knowledge, and it was decided to refer the question to the Field, which on November 17th pronounced in our favour, at the same time suggesting some arrangement might be come to. Owing to this decision it has been agreed to consider the result a draw;' ever the gentlemanly sport!

Until the 1920s the only schools on the Blundell's fixture list were R.N.C. Dartmouth, Downside and Sherborne and so a London Tour was started in 1921. Opponents on the tour were Cranleigh, Denstone, Dover and Mill Hill. Local rivalries were commenced with Taunton School in 1925 and Clifton College in

OB RUGBY INTERNATIONALS

England			Wales		
R.S. Kindersley	3	1883-85	PE.R. Baker-Jones	1	1921
C.H. Harper	1	1899	R.C.C. Thomas	26	1949-59
T.S. Kelly	12	1906-08	Great Britain		
H.A. Archer	3	1909	R.J. Rogers	1	1904
S.G.U. Considine	1	1925	H.A. Archer	3	1908
R.A.W. Sharp	14	1960-67	R.C.C. Thomas	2	1955
C.P. Kent			R.A.W. Sharp	2	1962
Ireland			Australia		
S.J. McDermott	2	1955	D.J. Shepherd	5	1964-66



1932 and still continue today. Cheltenham College and Kingswood were soon to be regular opponents, although King's Taunton did not enter the fray until 1945. The Blundell's XV's continue to compete at the highest level amongst the public schools of the South West, with Bryanston, Millfield, Monmouth and Plymouth College now being regular opponents.

The first OB to gain International Honours was R.S. Kindersley for England in 1884 but the strongest years for Blundell's were the two decades post WW2, when R.C.C.(Clem) Thomas gained 26 caps for Wales 1949-59 (Captain 1958-9), R.A.W. Sharp (Richard) won 14 caps for England 1960-67(Captain 1963 & 1967) and D.J. Shepherd won 5 caps for Australia 1964-66. Both Thomas and Sharp played in two tests for Britain in South Africa.



The first major post-war figure to lead the coaching of Blundell's rugby was Grahame Parker, who had been a Cambridge Blue in both rugby and cricket, before playing rugby for England. His reign over the 1st XV produced the likes of Clem Thomas and Richard Sharp. There then followed the difficult sixties and seventies, when numbers at most boarding schools fell and OB Ted Crowe manfully kept the sport going. In 1977, South African all-rounder, Terry Barwell arrived to revitalise Blundell's rugby. Barwell brought new ideas and training methods, and once Blundellians had adjusted to a more cerebral approach to the game, results began to pick up. Barwell was also responsible for the controversial change from the traditional all-white shirts to the striking cherry and white hoops of today. The eighties saw consistently strong XV's peaking in 1981 when Blundell's won the Rosslyn Park National Sevens title. In 1940 Blundell's had won the second ever Open Final 28-0 against Dulwich College, but during the eighties and nineties they were regular quarter-finalists and losing finalists in 1983 (16-18 to Ampleforth), 1993 (17-21 King's Canterbury) and 1995 (5-27 Wellington College).

**...WHEN A BLUNDELLIAN
CROSSES THE TOUCHLINE
TO REPRESENT HIS
SCHOOL, THERE IS ALWAYS
A SENSE OF PRIDE, OF
WILLINGNESS TO COMPETE
AND, ABOVE ALL, A SPIRIT
THAT IS THE ENVY OF
MANY OTHER
ESTABLISHMENTS.**

Norman '*pain is only temporary, glory lasts forever*' Ridgway took over the XV in 1990 and he has continued to build on the Barwell legacy, producing sides of the highest standards. Ridgway has raised the profile still further with International Tours to Australia, New Zealand, S. Africa and Canada. Blundell's XV's have a strong reputation on the top West Country circuit and even Millfield came a cropper on Big Field in 2000 and 2002. The 28-24 victory in 2000 was widely acknowledged (including by gracious opponents) as one of the finest schoolboy matches witnessed for many a year. The side was captained by Jemba Bull, who went on to represent England U18s and scored the only try against the All Blacks on tour. Other recent U18 Internationals have been Ryan Hopkins, Ben Boswell and Will Gingell.

Blundell's is amongst the smallest schools by number competing on its circuit and the competitiveness and sportsmanship of their XV's is well known. Firstly, when a Blundellian crosses the touchline to represent his school, there is always a sense of pride, of willingness to compete and, above all, a spirit that is the envy of many other establishments. Blundell's rugby sides don't quit, they pull together and that says a huge amount for the bond that exists amongst the players and within the School.

Secondly, we as a School are lucky to have such a wide variety of dedicated coaches, all of whom offer so much and all of whom contribute enormously to rugby development. They do it with an equal sense of pride and commitment to that shown by their players and I know that their efforts are appreciated by all. ...and long may it continue.

140 YEARS OF RUGBY





Blundell's

Founded 1604

The School is named after Peter Blundell, a Tivertonian, who died in 1601 one of the wealthiest commoners in Elizabethan England. He was determined to make the westcountry safe for the Protestant religion and munificently endowed a Grammar School in Tiverton to provide a stream of godly preachers. At a time when no other school west of Bristol could boast 50 pupils, Blundell gave instructions for a school of 150 boys, confidently leaving the carrying out of his will to Sir John Popham, a Wellington lawyer, who had prosecuted Mary Queen of Scots and was one of the judges who condemned Guy Fawkes to death. Popham oversaw the building of the school, the appointment of the first Masters, the setting up of a princely endowment of lands in South Devon and the establishment of Blundell's scholarships at Balliol, Oxford and Sydney Sussex, Cambridge.

The site of the old school, with uniquely untouched early seventeenth century buildings was perceived to be inappropriate for a 'modern' school in the 1870s and Blundell's moved to the larger Horsdon site a mile away in 1882. When there was some perception that the new owners of the old buildings might demolish them, there was a national outcry led by William Morris, the Pre Raphaelite and they were saved. They are now owned by the National Trust and the scenes made famous by Blackmore, who drew on his own schooldays to write the first chapters of 'Lorna Doone', are there for all to enjoy.

In the new school there have been many changes. Within living memory it was a school of 350 boy boarders, with a few day boys, all aged 13 to 18. Now it is a community of three linked schools with nearly 1,000 pupils of both sexes from the youngest years to 18 years old. The first girl came in 1975 and even the crustiest deem the change a success. It is only too easy to enumerate these changes, the new buildings, the steady enlargement of facilities and to ignore the continuities, such as the first recorded annual meeting of an Old Boys Day on St Peter's Day in 1725. They have been continuous since then with only two short gaps and the Feoffees (Trustees) have held dinners on or near that day in honour of the 'late Mr Blundell' in most years from 1611. As one regards the 1914-18 War Memorial with its almost 200 names, one can think of the Blundellian, whose diary recorded the Peninsula Campaign and Waterloo, or the Blundellian who charged with the Light Brigade. As it moves through its fifth century, Peter Blundell's school gathers its past and faces its future with the steady confidence of an establishment, that has for over 400 years sent its sons, and now daughters, into the world Pro Patria Populoque – 'For the Country and the People'.

Blundell's School

Tiverton

Devon

EX16 4DN

Tel: 01884 252543

Fax: 01884 243232

E-mail: registrars@blundells.org

www.blundells.org