

## **1. Introduction**

It has been an extraordinary year for the Club. We have seen success in so many sections. There has been growth in numbers across the board and we continue to flourish and grow.

You will see from the reports below the successes of the groups. We look forward to continued success in the upcoming season.

## **2. Playing summary**

### **2.1. Minis (Tom Brading)**

A season of two halves

First half of the season -

Following on from Simon Sproston's hard work the previous season, we put in place the following initiatives:

- Rationalised the existing kit between the Minis year groups.
- Ensured sufficient first aid cover between groups to be able to train.
- Empowered the Team Managers to work collectively & share best practice.
- Standardised set of club documents for key tasks e.g. new player & new coach guides
- Facilitated internal training from older year group/experienced coaches in the absence of RFU courses e.g. Simon Reid (U12)undertaking 'introduction to contact' skill zones with the U9s.
- Took on 6 x U15 and 2 x U15G as Minis Coaches for their Duke of Edinburgh volunteering awards.

Second half of the season

Festivals - exceptional team spirit and support shown by all our players and some fine rugby played.

Surrey U11 festival - back after a two year absence. Great feedback from visiting clubs for the organisation, ease of parking and timekeeping.

### **2.2 Juniors (Laurie Kerr)**

Awaiting Report

### **2.3. Women and Girls (David McGuigan)**

So I write this end of season report with a lot of joy but also a touch of sadness - sadness because after nine years I am stepping down as Girls Chair but joy because I know I leave it in incredibly safe hands and also because 2021/2022 was an amazing season for our girls section.

And oh what an amazing season - our Under 16's won the National Championship and the Surrey Waterfall Cup, we had three girls play touch rugby for England, we

had our first Premier 15's signing (well done Lauryn), we have three girls going to Gloucester-Hartpury college and six girls going to Brunel University, with whom we also have a new Partnership Agreement giving our girls incredible options for the future and our coaches access to brilliant development opportunities. We must also remember that we spent the season continuing to navigate our way out of Covid which makes these achievements even more incredible.

Each age-group has written a report below so I will not go into much detail here, but I do want to make a special mention of the three girls that played in the U18 European Junior Touch Championships. Chloe Hill played in the mixed team that narrowly lost in the Gold Medal Final, and Tilly Palmer-Denning and Olivia Rawlinson who played in the girls team and won the Gold Final – brilliant achievements and there were a lot of girls section parents watching live on YouTube whilst they played eight games in searing heat in France.

I have one short note on the structure of the section for your information, the girls age-bands change this coming season (country wide) and so the age-bands will henceforth be U18, U16, U14, U12 & U11 (although we will be combining U12 & U11 for the moment).

And finally .... When I founded the Girls Section in March 2013 I of course had huge ambitions for what we might be able to achieve, but these have been surpassed by such a huge margin. However, none of this would ever have been achievable without the fantastic group of Coaches, Managers and volunteers in the section and I owe them all a massive thank-you. Their constant drive and enthusiasm has been inspiring and they are the reason why I know that I leave the girls section in talented and incredibly safe hands. Iain Woodhams is taking the lead for the Older Girls and Fhamid Malik for the younger ones and I hope that you will all give them fantastic help and support that you have all given me. Reaching 120 Girls and 30 coaches (half with RFU Coaching Qualifications) continues to amaze me but the growing list of achievements that I mentioned above show what a fantastic job they have all done.

I will still be around the club as my daughter Caitie is still playing in the Under 16's and I will continue to try and grow our Women's section, so I look forward to seeing you all during the coming seasons.

Have a wonderful 2022/23 season

#### U18 Girls

We had a great start to the season after having time out due to covid. The girls came back with a strong year starting with six U18s playing Touch for The South East of England (SETA) in August 2021. The SETA team played in the National Tournament in Oxford, winning the competition to become England champions. This was a first for ORRFC and a tremendous achievement.

Once the season started, the U18 team won the Guildfordians Festival and then took part in the National Cup for the first time and did very well in the Waterfall Cup as well, having a successful series of fixtures both home and away. By working as a

team they have become an amazing group of strong, independent young women and we are proud of each and every one of them. The season ended with wins in 7s competitions.

### England Touch

Two U18s were selected to play for England in the European Touch Championships in France in August coming home with a gold in the U18 girls and a silver from the Mixed U18 competition. A massive achievement for the club.

### Wasps & Harlequins Women<sup>[SEP]</sup>

One of our girls signed to Wasps, one is training with Wasps and one training with Harlequins. Congratulations to them. This is a first for our girls section at ORRFC.

Four girls trained with Harlequins Centre of Excellence over the year and there were county selections for Surrey.

### Gloucester-Hartpury<sup>[SEP]</sup>

Three of our younger U18 players have been offered places at Gloucester-Hartpury College where they will play rugby and study for their A levels. A tremendous accolade. Congratulations to them.

Good luck to all the girls staying at the club and those off to university. Six of these girls have been offered Rugby scholarships at Brunel University as a result of new links between ORRC and Brunel, which provides a fantastic opportunity for the players to study for a degree and train for rugby at the same time.

Thank you to head coach Carl for his enthusiasm, time and commitment as well as team manager Mandy for her fantastic organisation and support for the team.

Jenny Rawlinson & Mandy Kirsten-Foster

### U15 Girls

September 2021 saw the coming together of an amazing group of girls that, due to Covid, had last played proper 'full contact' rugby well over a year before. With a formidable squad of 34 girls to choose from, the coaches have been able to rotate players 'week on week', choosing teams that will represent Old Reigatian RFC in the only way they know how: to play hard, to play fair and play to win.

There were memorable moments in the early part of the season including winning the Guildfordians 10-a-side tournament, winning the 7-a-side Streatham & Croydon Tournament; as well as the 102-0 victory over the Kent Cup Semi-Finalists 'Medway RFC'. However, versus what was to come these were just appetisers!

### Waterfall Cup Final

Having negotiated our way to top spot in the group stages thru skilfully rotating our talented squad we then faced old friends Guildfordians. Having knocked Guildfordians out of the Nationals, and playing away on their own turf, ORs knew that they were going to be in for a battle. Winning the toss, ORs opted to play up the

hill in the first half, hoping that their speed combined with a downwards slope in the second half would play to their advantage in the latter stages of the match.

Receiving the ball from kick off, ORs wanted to take the game to the home team and after winning the first couple of exchanges, Daisy, in the usual fashion, ran hard and straight at her opposite number and gained some valuable yards. However, the referee stopped play, issued a red card and sent Daisy from the pitch for dangerous play. ORs were therefore forced to play all but 3 minutes of the game with only 14 players. With some hurried substitutions and swapping of positions, the game was back underway and ORs would have to find a way to overcome the huge obstacle that was now in their way.

For the first time this season, the team were not looking fluid, dropping balls, missing tackles and not competing at the breakdown. It was clear that the red card was already having an impact on the team's performance, and it wasn't long before Guildfordians scored a converted try, having run half the length of the pitch to touch down. Before ORs could compose themselves properly, Guildfordians continued to apply the pressure and with the advantage of space brought about by playing with an extra player, scored again, stretching their lead to 12-0.

Finding themselves in an unfamiliar position of being on the wrong end of the score board, ORs began to gain some much-needed possession of the ball and made their way up the pitch. However, no matter what they tried, with a player down, it was proving particularly challenging to get momentum and string several consecutive phases together. Guildfordians one-player advantage proved to be ORs downfall once again as having battled to win the ball at the ruck, Guildfordians had extra players outside and some well-placed, simple passing saw them score a third (converted) try. ORs now found themselves 19-0 down with only 20 minutes having been played!

With decisions from the side line that Eddie Jones would've been pleased with, Iain and Ray began to rotate some of the substitutes to bring on fresh legs and stabilise a rocked Old Reigatian's team. The substitutes, who had not expected to have a run out so early on in the match had a positive impact on the squad and the presence of new girls seemed to galvanise the rest of the team. Looking more like ORs of old, the girls began to contest, and win, the ball at the breakdown and looked more confident with ball in hand. Working the ball through the middle of the park, some good handling and rucking presented Ella with a chance to run hard from 5 meters out. Dragging a number of girls with her, she scored near the posts. Although ORs were clearly tired, the try helped to lift spirits and they threw all they had at Guildfordians. Dividends paid off as not long afterwards, Abi found herself in some room and stepping off her right foot, wrong footed her opposite number scoring ORs second. With the conversion from Jocelyn, ORs were now only 19-12 behind. Could this be the beginning of the come back? With half time drawing in, ORs clung on and got to the interval conceding no further points.

With a few more substitutions made, ORs ran back onto the pitch ready to pick up where they left off from. However, once again, the player advantage proved too hard to defend at times, and with constant overlaps against them, ORs conceded their

fourth try. 24-12 to the home team. Cheered on by their large home crowd, Guildfordians were buoyant and were playing some good rugby. However, the sign of a great team is that no matter what they are up against, no matter if the odds look bleak, they will never give up and always do what they can do win the game. Being a great team, this is exactly how ORs U15 girls approached the last 25 minutes of the Waterfall cup final.

With fire in their bellies, ORs picked up the gauntlet and took the game to Guildfordians. Handling looked slick, rucks were cleared out and balls were stolen. ORs heaped on the pressure and despite a player down were finding space that previously had not been there. Using the slope to their advantage, the OR speed was obvious and despite determined defence from Guildfordians the inevitable happened and ORs scored two quick tries in succession from none other than Tilly and Lily W. The conversion from Elsie took the score to 24-24. With little more than 7 minutes to play, the game was now on a knife edge and the tension was electric. Running on fumes, ORs dug deep and in the dying minutes managed to force a knock on in Guildfordians 22. Under pressure, the scrum was solid and provided a base to launch one final play. The ball was spun wide and beating the last defender, Lily W scored her second of the day and the try that sealed victory for Old Reigatian's. Despite exhaustion, the team, celebrated and cheered in style.

To come back from 19-0 down, playing with only 14 players for the majority of the match showed the strength of character of our unbelievably talented squad of girls. What a game!

### National Cup

32 Counties were allowed two entries each 64 in this year's U15 Girls National Cup and the teams were selected on merit by their county RFUs. Having dominated the Waterfall Cup in recent years, Old Reigatian's were given the honour, along with Guildfordians, to represent Surrey.

In the pool stages, ORs were drawn alongside two of the finest from West Sussex, Horsham and Worthing. Both were tough games but ORs ran out victorious beating them 17-5 and 44-7 respectively. Progressing to the last 16, ORs had another tough fixture, in the form of Kent's strongest U15 girls side, Tunbridge Wells RFC. Up against a team that was 'pound for pound' bigger than them, the girls from ORs fronted up, took the game to the T-Wells and dominated every aspect of play, winning comfortably 43-5.

In the Quarter-Final the battle for London & Southeast Champions was against old Surrey friends and rivals Guildfordians. They were a formidable opponent and certainly one of the toughest teams that ORs had faced all season but through wonderful rucking up front and silky speed out wide ORs came off the better, winning 41-12.

Semi-Final against Winscombe. What better way to spend Mothering Sunday than standing on the side of a rugby pitch cheering on your daughter in the U15 Girls National Cup semi-final, the winner of which would go on to compete for the chance to be crowned the best team in the country.

Cheered on from the side-line by a large crowd that included the Mayor of Reigate & Banstead, from kick off it was clear that the two teams competing today were equally balanced and it would have to take an individual piece of skill or a forced error in order for one team to get the advantage. The first 15 minutes of the game saw the vast amount of pressure and possession going in favour of ORs but no matter what they tried or where the attack came from there was no chink in the Winscombe defence that could be exposed. Despite heavy, dominant runs from the ORs forwards and jinking runs from the backs, for the first time in a very long time, ORs would have to try something different to unlock this Winscombe defence. ORs managed to keep up the pressure and having been camped in Winscombe's 22 for some time, the breakthrough finally came from a cheeky interception from Tilly directly in front of the posts to score one of her easiest tries of the season. The try was duly converted by Rose to take the score 7-0.

The Winscombe girls regained their composure and for the remainder of the first half threw everything they had at ORs. However, just like the Winscombe defence, ORs was just as resolute and some fierce tackling from every single player prevented any of the visitors from scoring. ORs managed to cling on for the remaining minutes to keep the score 7-0 at half time.

Now, if ORs thought the first half was hard, there was certainly no let-up in the second. The commitment, the skills and the ferocity in contact from both sides was incredible and much of the second half was spent with both teams competing for the ball on the halfway line with neither team prepared to give an inch. It is fair to say that Winscombe began to get their hand on the ball more and more and ORs had to absorb a sustained period of pressure. Just like the first half, the girls stood firm, putting their bodies on the line and would not budge. The breakthrough moment then came! Getting their hands on the ball, it was spun out wide and with her first real chance of space, Lily W broke the first tackle, side stepped the second and then sprinted half the pitch to score under the posts. The home crowd went wild in celebration. With Rose kicking 2 from 2, the score took the home team to a 14-0 lead.

With only minutes left, Winscombe came right back and piled wave after wave of crash ball but no matter what they did, there was no let-up in the relentless defence and despite being bruised and battered ORs girls would not let anyone pass. The final whistle blew and the joy and relief was clear to see. ORs had come through their toughest ever game and now look forward to the final. What a game!!!

### The Final

21 girls had the absolute honour of representing their club by running out onto the pitch and I hope this report does them the justice they deserve. However, what we can't ignore is the other girls that did not play today but are still, nevertheless, an integral part of the squad. If it wasn't for all 34 girls that had played this season, whether this be in the National Cup, the Surrey Waterfall Cup, or friendlies, each has supported each other and it was the squad, not today's team, that got us to the final. I would therefore like to say a massive well done and a thank you to the following girls, many of whom had travelled to watch and cheer on the girls today, who did not

play but have helped get us to where we are. Abi, Ava, Belle, Eleni, Ellen, Emily, Erica, Honey, Imogen, Izzie, Iris, Robyn, and Tess.

So, here we are, the final game of the season, competing to be crowned the best team in the country and broadcast live on YouTube. Playing at 'Sixways' Stadium, home of premiership rugby side Worcester Warriors, the girls ran onto the pitch in front of what must have been well over 1000 spectators and braced themselves for what was to come.

With Cheltenham North kicking to ORs, the ball was caught cleanly by captain Daisy, who in typical fashion ran straight and hard at the opposing players setting up good early ruck ball. The way that ORs took the ball into contact and rucked / counter rucked during the game would prove to be one of their real strengths. When you have strong ball carriers in the shape of Holly and Elspeth who drive low and hard it provides the platform for the rest of the team to play quick ball.

However, early nerves saw a number of balls dropped and this stopped ORs getting any real momentum and when the first scrum of the game was given to Cheltenham North after one such dropped ball, it allowed ORs to show what they were made of up front. The shove from the second-row combination of Pip and Zoe and the counter hook from Mia saw ORs win the first scrum against the head. As the commentator would later go on to say, 'the monster scrum' and 'monster pack' of ORs had put down an early marker of what they could do and there was no doubt that despite their smaller stature, Cheltenham weren't going to have things all their own way.

Ealy hits on ORs disrupted play and the team were unable to string consecutive phases together and any quick ball was denied. However, strong running from Bethany and Ella allowed ORs to make slow progress up the pitch. Cheltenham were beginning to feel the pressure and began to give away a number of penalties. The forwards, marshalled by Catie maintained the pressure on Cheltenham but were unable to make significant gains up the pitch.

The game was being played at a ferocious tempo and the ball was exchanging between the two teams as they both continued to size each other up. With neither team giving an inch, ORs eventually began to make way up the pitch as both Elsa and Lily made a couple of line breaks.

10 minutes into the game, the Cheltenham ball runner was stopped in her tracks by Mia and Pip, the ball was ripped by Ella and a quick pass to Laura on the wing saw her sprint 70 meters to score the opening, try only for it to be immediately ruled out due to having placed her foot briefly in touch.

The ball kept going from end to end with neither team really being able to exert their dominance on the other, but it was now Cheltenham that were beginning to get the upper hand. Pinned in the own 22, Rose, playing at full back, used her foot well to clear the lines but Cheltenham kept running the ball back. A resolute defence from ORs prevented any points from being conceded and despite Cheltenham securing more and more of the ball, hard hitting low tackles, forced errors and ORs were able to get the ball back.

With ball back in ORs possession, they began to make some ground and a number of high tackles from Cheltenham, was the only way they could stop ORs from breaking the line. After one such illegal tackle a well place kicked from Tilly finally got ORs into Cheltenham's 22.

When another forced error was made from Cheltenham in front of their own posts, a solid scrum from ORs, saw the ball passed right to Ruby, who, despite being held by three defenders, had the leg drive to force her over the line to touch down and score a well-deserved try. It had been hard fought but persistence paid off and ORs had the first points on the board.

With just over 5 minutes left of the half, Cheltenham made another high tackle and having already been given a warning, the referee had no choice but to issue a yellow card. Cheltenham would have to play the next 10 minutes with 14 players.

In what had been a well contested first half, which could have gone either way, ORs held on and went into the break with a slender lead. ORs made only one change at half time, bringing on Jesse to replace Caitie at scrum half. Jesse would go on to have an excellent 15 minutes, producing quick ball from the base of the scrum and rucks, but unfortunately her game was cut short with an injury to her arm and Caitie would need to return.

If ORs had thought they had been in a fight in the first half, the second would be a war! It was one way traffic against ORs for the majority of the second half and much of the play was conducted in their own half with ORs finding it difficult to escape the Cheltenham stranglehold. To bring on some fresh legs, Misty replaced Pip in the second row who provided excellent support play in the ruck and helped to bolster the defence with her tackles. Elsie stepped into full back position instead of Rose and her strong running gave ORs some much needed breathing space when they were up against it. Lilly B and Olivia came in at the scrum to add strength where needed and Jocelyn had the unenviable position of replacing Laura out on the wing and who had had a storming game. It was almost immediately that Jocelyn was called into action though as ORs, who had fended off multiple attacks, it looked as though the defences may be breached and it would have been if it hadn't had been for Jocelyn's superb covering tackle.

When ORs did have the ball, no matter what they tried, they could not clear their lines. Tilly was under immense pressure and the rush defence from Cheltenham were in her face time and again and she was taking hit after hit but still she stood and kept pushing the team forward. It was Ella's display in defence though that was a real highlight. Like a player possessed, wherever the ball was, there Ella was, hunting it down and taking out which ever player was unfortunate enough to be holding it at the time.

However, eventually, despite their best efforts and having sustained heavy pressure, the defence could not stop the Cheltenham no.8 picking the ball up at the base of the scrum and she proved, on this occasion, to be too strong to be stopped from short distance.

With the scores now tied at 5-5 and only 10 minutes or so to play, ORs were desperate to get their hands on the ball and put Cheltenham under some of their own pressure. This however was not to be the case and an uncharacteristically misplaced clearance kick saw the ball fall in the hands once again of Cheltenham's No. 8 who ran in from the 22 to score her second of the day and taking her team into the lead.

There were now only 4 minutes left on the board and time was quickly running away from ORs. Surely the season wasn't going to end this way. At the restart, the ball was kicked long and excellent running from the girls saw them secure possession and drive on. A couple of crash balls saw ORs nudge closer to the try line and a final throw of the dice saw the ball passed out to Lily W who stepped past two players to touch down with the final touch of the game! The crowd went wild, and a roar ripped through the stadium. The score was 10-10 with the conversion attempt left. The kick sailed just wide of the posts and the game was done. Or so we thought!

Now only those who had read the competition rules prior to kick knew that if the scores were tied at the end of the game, the result would be dictated by the team that had scored the most tries, followed by most conversions and, because these were identical for both teams, it meant that the team that had scored first would be deemed the winner. The referee called over both captains and once she announced the result, the joy was clear to see on Daisy's face and once all girls in the team knew what was happening, the celebrations began!

So, that was it. Old Reigatian's U15 girls are the 2022 RFU National Champions. Yes, that's right. We are officially the best team in the country! What a long season it has been and to crown it off by winning the final is an absolute dream come true.

### U13 Girls

The season began with around 20 players, some brand new to rugby, some old hands, some returning after the covid disruptions, but all of them raring to go. The early season festivals were played with enthusiasm and skill with every player learning, making new friends and enjoying themselves.

As the season progressed we were delighted to welcome a number of new players who were made to feel welcome by this very sociable group. The new year saw the girls unleashed into their first ever rounds of competitive Waterfall Cup action and the girls responded to the step up in intensity superbly. They played against some very well drilled sides and more often than not were able to finish with the win. The girls finished second in their pool and gained some very valuable experience on the way. Finals days didn't go how we wanted it to but we were beaten by excellent opposition.

In April more than thirty brave souls ventured to Gloucestershire for what was this groups first ever tour together. Fine food, luxury lakeside cabins and world class water sports facilities. Well, not exactly, but a great time had by all, finished off with two fine performances against Cheltenham North and our kind hosts Worcester RFC.

The coaching team have been delighted to see the girls increase in confidence, develop new friendships, and just get out on the pitch and get stuck in. Thanks to all the parents and carers for your support and roll on September 23.

Mark Bennett, Mike Smith & Laura Turney

#### U11 Girls

Well, what a year we have had. Following a summer relatively uninterrupted by Covid, we approached September 21 with high hopes. Starting with around 28 girls, we came together with bags of enthusiasm and ready to kick the season off with a bang.

First date in the dairy was the Old Reigatian's U11 Festival. With 8 clubs attending and over 100 girls, it was a glorious day of rugby in the autumn sun, and we witnessed some excellent rugby across the board. We wanted to get the girls as much exposure to 'live' rugby as possible, so following on, we had sessions with Dorking, Guildford, Horsham and Reeds Weybridge. All clubs have slightly differing styles of play, and it was great to see our girls adapt.

Excellent festivals at Dorking and Farnham (where ORRFC were the dominant teams) led us into the tail of the season and the Wimbledon U11 Festival. This was the first year that girls were included, and we fielded two teams against a number of Surrey, Kent, and London teams. A full on, competitive festival, and our girls rightly cemented their position and reputation as the leading girls in the U11 age category.

As the new season approaches, and with the new U12 age band coming into effect, as a collective squad we are looking forward to more fixtures, more festivals, and especially, the Waterfall Cup!!!

Fhamid Malik & Aslan Byrne

#### **2.4. Seniors (Alex Forsyth)**

The 1<sup>st</sup> gained promotion for the first time in over ten years finishing third place in London 2 South West.

The squad was boosted by the return of Max Coyle and Ben Holder joining the Club. We were also very fortunate that Cadan Murley joined the Coaching staff as Attack Coach.

Cadan is good friends at Quins with Ex OR age group player George Head who also joined Cadan to help out. The energy these two young coaches bring to the training sessions is appreciated by the players and no doubt the boys enjoy the success Cadan is having in the Premiership as he pushes for International honours.

We started the season with an unconvincing win over Hove then consecutive loses to Totts by a single point and then a poor performance against Chiswick. This seemed to be a turning point and six wins followed this with the lads finding their form and playing some free flowing Rugby that not only suits the team with a light mobile pack and plenty of pace in the back line. This included an impressive win at home to end Reeds' 4 season unbeaten run. We then travelled to Totts at the start of

2022 in the hope of revenging the home loss only to lose by 2 points at the death. Bouncing back from this disappointment, we then put right the wrong against Chiswick from earlier in the season and put 30 points over Chobham before travelling to Reeds for a top of the table clash against Reeds, who were looking to repay the 42-21 home victory.

This game was played with a great intensity and showed the form both teams will need to display in the league above this coming season. Our second victory seemed secured with five minutes left, only for some poor defence to allow Reeds to two score two tries including a touchline conversion to earn a draw, 20-20. Unfortunately as winter set in our ability to play in muddy conditions was found out away at Eastleigh (despite awful conditions with standing water on the pitch) but the game was played and we struggled to play to those conditions. This meant we finished third which was enough for promotion. But with Totts and Reeds finishing first and second our record against these two teams showed we fully deserve to be in the higher league next season (lost twice to Totts by aggregate of 3 points, and beat and drew with Reeds).

Stand out players were Tom Woodford making it into the 1<sup>st</sup> XV showing great pace and a balanced runner and on a dry pitch he can be a game changing 15. Finn Coyle came of age and looked comfortable in the 1<sup>st</sup> XV. Ben Holder provided great distribution from 10 and we easily had the best back row in the league with Sam Foreman, Ryan Travers and Jack Baart regularly filling those positions.

Player of the Season was Sam Foreman

Most Improved Player was Toby Collister

P18 W12 D1 L5

2<sup>nd</sup> XV

The 2<sup>nd</sup> XV was captained and led by Harry Smith for the 2021-22 season and overall this mixture of young and experienced OR's had a season that promised much but didn't quite deliver with the team narrowly missing out on a top 4 playoff position. In what was a very disruptive season due to cancellations and postponements it was difficult to field a side game to game that resembled the previous. However whichever team took to the field they gave it their all and often performed well above the expectation. The other real positive was that we were able to field a side for every league match and did not concede a walkover all season, something not many other teams in the league could say.

The season started slowly with encouraging defeats against KCS, Chobham and Guildford. Momentum was starting to build however and with a core of players in key positions with Dan Westley and Kern Bush-Nelson as regular half-backs and some fierce backrow competition between the likes of Oli Brooks, Will Godwin, Olly Guy and Mike Blackshaw, a result wasn't far away. After a couple of walkover wins, we were denied an on field victory only by a last ditch score from the hosts away at Rosslyn Park in November to earn a 22-22 draw. However next up was the return fixture from the opening weekend of the season, KCS this time at Park Lane. Against

a strong KCS side that ended up the season top of the table, OR's ran in 7 tries with some brilliant running rugby and solid defence. The final score of 43-17 was fully deserved and the biggest cheer was saved for last as Kev Sheldrick pounced on a loose ball and dive over the line to round off a thoroughly satisfying day for the men in Green and Blue.

There were further impressive wins against Warlingham, Battersea Ironsides (who won the playoff knockout after the regular season) in a friendly and Cobham in the league 40-19 as well as valiant performances in defeat against Chobham and Battersea this time in the league. Some of these results really showed the potential of the team when there is good availability of players, but unfortunately on too many occasions we took to the field without much in the way of replacements. Hopefully this is something that we will be able to build on in the coming season as people continue to get back into rugby following the enforced break throughout 2020-2021. The other positive was that we were able to bring through a number of really talented Colts through to Senior rugby After Christmas, Dom Flynn's performances for the 2nds were rewarded with a call up to the 1<sup>st</sup> XV and George Duff punched well above his weight turning in strong performances week after week. Some more of this young talent was showcased in the final game of the season with the likes of Conor Woods, Callum Hutchinson and Ethan Monk all getting their first experience of senior rugby and they all showed that the future of the club is in good hands if we can continue bringing players like this through to the senior section.

So a mixed season ended up with OR's finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in the league and showing that on our day we can more than compete with the top four sides. The coming season will see a lot of similar opposition and be a good test of progress as we move forward. The objective this season should be to continue to build on the successes of last season and to bring more players through to hopefully once again be able to field a 3<sup>rd</sup> XV. Having a strong and competitive 2<sup>nd</sup> XV is key to the success of the 1<sup>st</sup> XV to help breed positive healthy competition and we are encouraged also by the appointment of Steve Pilgrim as 2<sup>nd</sup> XV Coach for the 2022/23 season.

Player of the season was Kern Bush-Nelson

Most Improved Player was Dan Westley

## **2.5. Touch (Lee Hodges)**

Touch & non-contact rugby continues to flourish at ORs. From a small group established 3 years ago we now have a regular playing membership of circa 180 with 40-80 players attending mixed touch rugby on a Monday night, all year round. Summers bring in large numbers when all other forms of rugby have their off-season. This is the only form of rugby available that is truly inclusive, players of any gender and ages from early teens through to some approaching retirement playing together on a level playing field. This mixed and inclusive dynamic is not only huge fun, but it enables fast development of our younger players, which is very complimentary to the age grade contact skills. The evidence is in the recent successes at the very highest level. . six U18 girls compete as part of the regional

(SE) team in the national championships, winning the trophy, with all six scoring in the finals.

In August three girls selected to play for England, took part in the European Championships in France. The girls were awesome, two of them playing in the U18 girls team are now European champions, and the other was a stand-out player in the silver medal winning mixed team. And in the last few weeks we had three more girls and three boys selected to represent the region at the next national U15/18 championships. Its not just the younger players doing well, in July we had a mens team bring home the Esher Cup, our mixed team were runners up in their competition. We can say with confidence that the touch rugby successes have contributed to successes for players in the contact groups; those who attend touch regularly over the previous year or so have been offered sixth form, university scholarships and/or playing contracts with top womens sides. Having the experienced and successful girls coach Carl Hassan also coaching Touch has also been pivotal in our success. My thanks to Carl.

We also see Touch Rugby as an essential offering to those who through choice or circumstance will not play contact rugby but can be kept an active part of the ORs environment. In the past those who don't want to or can't play contact may be lost to the club, but now we have a viable alternative. With this in mind this summer we trialled Junior Touch Rugby which we believe has a place alongside the aged grade contact game. Thanks to Drew Gibson for leading the effort with the juniors and his linking with the South East Touch Association teams. We aim for more of the same, to keep building upon recent success to bring even greater successes for our touch, non-contract and contact groups

### **.3. Operations (Tim Bostel)**

Coming out of the back of lock down and getting back to a fully functioning club and venue, we have managed to hit the ground running. With the bar staff helping with numerous tasks around the club to enable us to be at the top of our game and with Cathey Haughton doing an outstanding job in re-arranging events that had been cancelled and adding more and more to the diary than the club has ever had.

Resulting in the period of June 2021 – Beginning of September 2022, the bar has seen £255,764.21 in revenue. (Before staffing and product costs)

#### **Club / Bar**

The bar has been praised for its professionalism in the way that it functions and runs through events and the season. We have had our standard turnaround of staff, but we have never really struggled, which is always the way. Sabrina trains them well and there is always a pre-event briefing, all of which has resulted in some amazing feedback from event attendees. Off the back of which it has resulted in new bookings for the future.

The bar staff salary was reviewed which has led to a higher outgoing in wages but at the same time prices have gone up slightly and Sabrina keeps us at very strong GP in the region of 65%.

Although we did open on Wednesday evenings for a period, it really wasn't cost effective and more often than not it didn't cover the cost of staffing.

Volunteers night really has struggled in numbers over the last few months, but maybe this will change once we get back into the rugby season.

Jelly Fest returned. Which is a big revenue earner for the club, and a lot of hard work went into making it successful.

We have begun regular comedy nights as Reigate Comedy Club, which, on the whole have been successful.

During the last 12 months there has been a lot of general work done around the club:

- Plumbing maintenance that was required for blocked or poorly draining sinks and toilets
- New dishwasher for the kitchen.
- AV – New projector and wall plate upgrade to ensure compatibility for laptops to projector.
- New balcony decking. Replacing old wooden decking with new composite.
- New spotlights and light racking in the clubhouse.
- New fairy lights in the ceiling.
- Clubroom floor has been rewaxed, having not been done for at least 6 years.
- Brickwork outside the gym has been fixed
- Gutters and down pipe by the main entrance cleared and now not overflowing.
- Slates replaced / fixed on the roof
- New lock indicators on the upstairs toilets
- 1XV pitch fence has been fixed but will require more work.
- Changing rooms 5, 6 and Referee 1 (gender neutral toilet), have all been cleared, having been used as storage whilst the extension was completed, and now functional
- Ceiling tiles have been replaced
- Full PAT testing of electrics at the club.
- Honour boards updated (which will need updating again after the AGM)
- Full insurance risk management survey completed
- Bays 1 & 2 now being utilised (especially as there is now racking in both bays courtesy of PB)
- Clearance for the Up & Down floodlights to be upgraded)

### **Catering**

Event Catering have been very good for our events. TGE who have taken over the general club catering, are still be monitored.

### **Extension**

Now fully functional and finally have sign off from the Building Inspector. All bays are in use or at least available to be used. Peter Bakker has fitted racking into all bays.

### **Additional Comments**

Fixtures are out for 1XV and AXV, and flyers created. Up in the clubhouse. Intending to do the same with Supporters Lunches.

Ashworth & Bird are keen to have prizes on each table for the lunches, but realistically if we have a minimum of 4 tables.

I have also re-instated a fixtures book, which will be ready by the end of next week.

#### 4. Membership (Ben Hamps)

Membership of the club continues to grow, especially in relatively new sections such as 'Touch' and 'Walking Rugby' and also in well-established ones such as the 'Womens & Girls'. The lifeblood of any club is it's membership and the club are extremely grateful to their members for their continued support.

	2021	2022
<b>Social</b>	620	<b>604</b>
<b>Senior</b> (Men, Women, Touch, Vets, Walking)	29	<b>128</b>
<b>Student</b>	25	<b>19</b>
<b>Youth</b> (Mini's Juniors, Girls)	588	<b>650</b>
<b>Total</b>	1262	<b>1401</b>

At the forthcoming AGM, Membership Secretary will become vacant as I take up another position at the club. Therefore it is very much hoped that a member will volunteer for this important role. The membership secretary currently sits on the main committee along with the Officers of the club and other section leads. If this would be of interest to you please email me [benhamps@oldreigatianrfc.com](mailto:benhamps@oldreigatianrfc.com)

#### 5. Financial (Peter Duff, Treasurer)

The financial year to 30 April 2022 saw playing and operations at the club continue to return to a more usual basis although there was still a level of interruption and additional safety measures that impacted business as usual. For the year under review we are reporting a consolidated profit after tax of £70,559 (2021 : 113,539).

Given that in the prior year the level of rugby played and watched was hugely reduced, footfall from members, visitors and external customers was limited, staff and operations in the clubhouse were minimalised and costs were tightly controlled to protect our cash reserves, the results for the year under review show a sound recovery in terms of income and a decent generation of profit. The recovery can be seen clearly from the ORRFC Trading Limited accounts where trading turnover rose from £128,580 to £396,575. Costs, as one would expect, also rose from £99,431 to £246,474. The like for like increases are similar given the scale of multiples but it is pleasing that the revenue increase of 208% outweighs the cost increase of 148%.

For the year under review we were still indebted to Sir Peter Harrison and his family, even after his passing in June 2021. Sir Peter, his foundation and the Harrison family have been immense supporters and benefactors to the club for many years and our superb facilities and grounds owe much to them. It is a lasting regret that Sir Peter did not live to see the completion of the clubhouse extension that he personally provided all funds towards. Sir Peter's executors continued to supply funding for the extension which is now finally complete and signed off by building regulations and we thank them and our new President Nick Harrison for yet another generous bequest.

In terms of trading the best understanding of our performance comes from the consolidated schedule within the annual report. For obvious reasons year on year comparisons are not informative but we saw good bar trading, improving catering numbers and reasonable external hire income. We have benefitted this year from additional income relating to an easement granted by the club to the property development on Park Lane but clearly did not enjoy the benefits of COVID grant and furlough related assistance. Subscriptions are increasing in a pleasing fashion. Overall members' funds now stand at £3,915,767 (an increase of £70,559) and the retained surplus now stands at £401,923 (2021 - £331,364).

From a balance sheet perspective net assets and cash remain strong. The increase in cash comes despite the full repayment to Nick Harrison of his loan meaning that the only loan debt owed by the club is the remainder of the ten year RFU interest free loan. Our cash reserves will be needed to complete essential pitch and clubhouse maintenance, fund our new floodlights and will provide resilience in a time of cost escalation globally. Without any exceptional income, and given the dramatic rise in utility prices, the Committee will be focused on driving trading revenue to hold the profit and loss account in surplus for the year to 30 April 2023 but a large surplus is unlikely given the challenges that electricity prices will present to us.

Thanks, as always, go to all those members at every level of the club who have volunteered their time during the year. The last nine years have been eventful and challenging for the club in so many ways but our membership and our committee continue to support great progress and resilience. We are very proud to act on your behalf.

## 6. Thanks

We are extremely lucky as a club to have a host of people willing to volunteer their time to help run the club. We could not operate without their ability to “step up” and do a job.

To our age group managers and coaches, thank you for your efforts in maintaining our membership’s support of our Club and enabling them to enjoy the benefits of our facilities

Our special thanks must go to those who are stepping down from their roles this year.

- Laurie Kerr, who has been both minis and juniors chair
- David McGuigan, who founded and chaired the girls section
- Alex Forsyth, our club captain

Finally it would be remiss not to give special thanks to David Forsyth who, after years of loyal service, first as club secretary and then as club chair, is handing over the reins. His loyalty and support of the club has been immense. He hands over the reins knowing that he has left the ship in a solid state and in good hands. We can not thank him enough for all that he has done for the club. His words to the members are below.

## 7. Chairman’s Message

The end of an era?

In the 1970’s businessman and chartered accountant Peter Harrison and his wife Joy moved from Cheshire to Reigate. A chance meeting at The Skimmington Castle led to his having a run out for the Nondescripts side on the wing. Peter, a fervent soccer enthusiast, received at least 2 scoring passes and immediately developed a strong affection for the oval ball and for the club itself.

50 years later having seen the dream of a new clubhouse facility for Old Reigatian’s fulfilled along with his vision of a legacy for Reigate he died in August 2021.

President of ORRFC he was awarded the CBE in 2010 and Knighted in Antigua and Barbuda in 2013. Following the sale of internet company Chernikeef he established the Peter Harrison Foundation which has made donations in excess of £50,000,000 to countless charities and good causes. As a club and as a community we will be forever grateful to Peter for his perspicacity and his unsurpassed generosity.

Sadly, we also lost 2 other iconic clubmen with the death of Don Jinks who fulfilled many roles in the club and featured in the successful John Player Cup run in the 1980’s and of the irrepressible and talented Richard Woodford former 1<sup>st</sup> XV captain.

Our thoughts and condolences are with their friends and families. Without doubt the club will be poorer without them.

Following a decade in London South West 2 the 1<sup>st</sup> XV enjoyed a very successful season and secured promotion to Regional 2 South East where we will renew acquaintances with the likes of Farnham, Guildford, Reeds Weybridge, Battersea Ironsides and KCS Old Boys. Highlights of the season included ending the 53 game unbeaten run of Reeds Weybridge and then a very competitive and enthralling draw in the return fixture at Whiteley Village. We scored more points away from home than any other side in the league and the second most points at home.

The success of the 1<sup>st</sup> XV relied significantly upon a gifted group of players and the efforts of coaches Richie Andrews and Doug Cooper who were more than ably supported by George Head and Kadan Murley. The under 21 side that won the John Douglas Cup in 2020 retained the Cup on Finals Day at Esher.

Another highlight of the season was the achievement of our under 15 girls team who won the National Cup in a highly competitive final against Cheltenham North at Sixways Stadium the home of Worcester Warriors. The performance of the entire squad owed much to the enthusiastic coaching of Iain Woodhams and Ray Smith.

The exponential growth of the girls section has been recognized by Ealing Trailfinders with whom we have formed a partnership which promises to provide regular top class coaching sessions together with opportunities for placements at Brunel University.

The Minis and Juniors section under the chairmanship of Tom Brading and Laurie Kerr respectively continue to flourish with increasing numbers. Their success makes a considerable financial contribution towards the club besides bringing on the players of the future. But all this would not be possible without the amazing contribution of the army of volunteers who contribute their time and efforts to such positive effect.

We continue to improve the club and grounds. Thanks are due to Peter Harrison and the Trustees of his estate for funding the extension and to Peter Bakker for his management of the grounds. We will shortly have new improved floodlights for the training pitch. Sabrina Belaidi and Tim Bostel are to be congratulated for the performance of the bar and the operation of the club respectively.

The club maintains its generous charitable efforts and has raised £10,000 for SportinMS and Wooden Spoon and also raised funds to support Ukraine by the acquisition of 2 equipped ambulances which have been sent to Ukraine.

On a personal level having had the honour of Chairing the club for the past 10 years it is time to hand over the reins. It has been a challenging decade including 2 arson attacks, reinstatement of the club and a national pandemic. Not only has the club survived but we are in good financial health.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many talented and committed volunteers that it has been my pleasure to work with on the committee and without whose efforts we would not be the amazing club that we are.

David Forsyth