

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Marie Davies

NEIL BEYTELL

Scrum Half.

Neil joined Bedford Blues in 1993 and spent several years at the club as a player and coach.

Neil was born in Harare, Zimbabwe and his first introduction to rugby was at Prince Edward School, Harare, when he was twelve years old.

He always felt very privileged to attend such a wonderful sporting school. The family moved to England in 1979 and Neil continued his education and rugby at BETHS Grammar School in Kent. His first rugby club was Dartfordians.

Early rugby honours

England Schools U16, England Colleges, England Students, County Rugby with Kent and Hertfordshire and playing at King Country, New Zealand.

Neil writes:

'After leaving school I went on to study Physical Education and Mathematics at the College of St. Paul's and St. Mary's. My first teaching post was in Kenya where I played rugby for Nondescripts RFC before moving to New Zealand where I taught Maths in Hamilton and played for Kio Kio United RFC. I returned to England to teach at BETHS Grammar School, my old school in Kent and played rugby at Blackheath.

In 1993 I relocated to Cambridge, taking up a post as Director of Sport at St. John's College School. I wanted to carry on playing first class rugby so that was my reason for joining Bedford. My good friend from college and work Rob Subbiani joined Bedford too. At Bedford, I met so many good coaches and teammates - Paul Turner, Richard Greed, Rob, of course and Cameron Glanville, Ian Skingsley, Ashley Tapper, John Egan and many more.

After about seven years I joined Bedford Athletic as a player/coach for three years, before retiring. The highlights of my time at the Ath were coaching the team to two successive League Championships as well as winning the East Midlands and Bedfordshire Cups and, of course, winning the Intermediate Cup Final at Twickenham, beating teams in the league above us in the process. The Cup Final at Twickenham is an outstanding memory and the occasion was one that will never be forgotten. The final score was Bedford Athletic 29 Stroud 24. That season we won all sixteen League games and also scored the club's highest ever season's points - 1,503 points.

ENGLAND COLLEGES AFTER THEIR VICTORY OVER SCOTLAND



THE BEYTELL FAMILY



1994-95. NEIL, FRONT ROW, 1ST ON RIGHT

Other 'stand out' rugby memories were tours to Ireland, France, Netherlands, South Africa, Bahamas, New Zealand and Hawaii. The tours were always great fun with many pranks and memories (what goes on tour...). Sadly, tours are not arranged as often by clubs nowadays. I am lucky to have made so many friends through rugby and life all over the world-in Zimbabwe, England, Texas, Kenya, New Zealand and South Africa.

I feel privileged to have played in some great stadiums in the UK and abroad-like Goldington Road, Kingsholm, Twickenham, Ellis Park, Loftus Versfeld, Newlands and Kings Park.

After the 'Ath' I retired as both a player and coach and relocated to Umhlanga Rocks, South Africa

THE 'ATH' AT TWICKENHAM



with my family for twelve years, before returning to England three months before the COVID pandemic!

(Umhlanga Rocks, of course, was where Rudi Straeuli lived when he was playing for and working at the then Natal Sharks. Neil met him once in the Durban Country Club where no doubt their respective connection with Goldington Road was the main subject of discussion).

I left teaching to go into the business world and have been recruiting teachers for over twenty years. We now live in Cambridge again and I'm back teaching Maths - for my sins!

Sport continues for us as a family. My wife Colleen who, I must add, is an outstanding distance runner and our two wonderful daughters love sporting activities.

We are all very delighted and happy to be back in Cambridge and within easy travelling distance of Bedford Blues! I am enjoying teaching mathematics again and love watching my two teenage daughters, Kate who is 17 and Claire who is 14, playing a high standard of hockey and netball with Colleen, who currently works as a physiotherapist at Cambridge University.

I am so grateful for the opportunities that rugby has brought to us all and Bedford has been an integral part of these wonderful experiences.'

It was great to see Neil at Goldington Road again when he attended the Former Players' Lunch in October.