

FORMER BLUES PLAYERS

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Marie Davies

CANADA TOUR 1975

Today's Former Players' Lunch includes a '47 years on' reunion for the Club's first major overseas tourists. The plan was a '45 years on' reunion in 2020 but...

There were 23 players in the Canadian tour party of 1975 and at the planned reunion in 2020, 22 were due to attend. Sadly scrum half Guy Fletcher had passed away and we have since lost two more of the playing squad - Alistair Johnson and Norman Barker.

Playing squad

D.P. 'Budge' Rogers O.B.E.(capt.) - Back row
485 appearances - Club record. Hon.Life Member. East Midlands. Barbarian. England International (34 caps). Captained England 7 times. British Lion - South Africa 1962. President of the R.F.U. 2000-01. Budge lives in Bedford and his hobbies are driving his Tesla, playing golf and quaffing Pinot Noir.

Chris Bailward - Prop
Eastern Counties. Landowner. Chris lives in Somerset where he enjoys amateur dramatics. Reason for absence today - it's the last night of one of his productions. Chris has completed several mammoth cycling challenges.

Norman Barker - Hooker
Member of Bedford's 300 Club. Sadly deceased November 2020.

Richard Butt - Centre
Retired. Lives in Maulden, Bedfordshire. Richard attends most home games. Hobbies are gardening, golf and grandparentsing.

Richard Chadwick - Centre
Bedford coach 1987-89. East Midlands. Retired B.M.S. teacher. Watches most home games. Hobbies are golf, cycling, grandparentsing and travelling to exotic/strange places and climbing mountains.

John Cooley - Centre
East Midlands. Retired. Secretary of the FPA. John is present at all home games and the Cooley family are responsible for the excellent catering in the Former Players' Bar.

Chris Davies - Hooker
Hertfordshire. 7 days a week groundsman at Bishops Stortford R.F.C. Hobbies are watching rugby and looking after rescue dogs - four labradors at present.

Gareth Davies - Fly-half
East Midlands. Retired P.E. teacher. Former Club Team and Kit Manager. Club President 2003 - 2017. Hon. Life Member. Hobbies - watching the Blues, watching cricket, reading, social pursuits.

Foster Edwards - Back row
East Midlands. Welsh trialist. Retired Farm Manager. Lives near Melton Mowbray. Foster enjoys relaxing!

Guy Fletcher - Scrum half
(sadly deceased 2013)
Son of former player Murray Fletcher. Guy was a schoolmaster at Bedford School.

Mike Fitzgerald - Prop
Bedford coach 1983-87. Schoolmaster. Retired school inspector. Lives in Crick, near Chepstow. Now Mike enjoys grandparentsing duties, churchwarden duties, watching rugby, gardening.

Brian Keen - Prop
England caps(4) . Retired. Lives in Chipping Norton. Enjoys walking his dog.

Danny Hanson - Wing
East Midlands. Mostly retired. Lives in Sidmouth, Devon. Hobbies are cycling, skiing, gardening and travelling. Danny and Barbara recently sold their second home near Ballito in South Africa.

Andy Hollins - Back row
Eastern Counties. Retired Head of Mathematics at St. Martin's, Ampleforth. Andy lives in York. His main hobby is carpentry.

Clive Hooker - Second row
Berkshire. Retired. Lives near Newbury. His role as Chairman of the West Berkshire Council keeps him busy and he enjoys country pursuits and vintage car renovation.

Simon Ingram - Back row
Retired but works part time as a consultant in a law firm. Director at Northants CCC and actively involved at MK Dons. Lives in Weston Underwood.



Alistair Johnson - Prop
Sadly deceased November 2019 at the age of 71.

John Mawle - Second row
Oxfordshire. Bedford captain 1981-82. Dairy farm owner in Canterbury, New Zealand.

Brian Page - Full back
East Midlands. Retired. Brian lives in Northampton. His main hobbies are amateur photography and an occasional game of golf.

Roger 'Tod' Slaughter - Back row.
Captain 1967- 69. Bedford coach 1981-83. East Midlands. Member of the 300 Club. Hon.Life Member. Retired and lives in Riseley. Regular Blues supporter and committee member of the F.P.A. Enjoys playing golf.

Roger Smith - Scrum half
East Midlands. Retired market gardener. Roger and his wife Carolyn live in Perth, Australia. Roger's main hobby is golf.

Alan Towersey - Wing
Hertfordshire. Retired. Alan enjoys tennis and golf and is currently trying to complete the 1001 UK Walks Challenge. Lives in the Wirral.

John Thompson - Second row
'Baby' of the party. Southern Counties. Runs a finance consultancy business. Lives in Ivinghoe Aston, Bucks.

The Canada Story

Tour memories by Budge Rogers(1975) and Gareth Davies (1995) in BLUEPRINT.

'The party of 23 super fit sportsmen, left Bedford on the 3rd May and a debauched, happy band returned on the 18th. They had flown 10,000 miles and attended countless social events. A number of rugby games were played and won.

The outgoing flight was punctuated by a stop at Prestwick to replenish the drinks cabinet and an emergency landing at Winnipeg when the wings were about to fall off.

Billenting during our stay was random-some had beds, others weren't so lucky (ask Chads). Some shared beds - the first and only time Gareth slept with a hooker (hopefully)!



However, the hospitality was first rate and the reception on the pitch even warmer!

1st game v Ex. Britannia Won 33-7
Tries: Bailward, Towersey, Edwards and Hanson.
Cons: Page (4). Pen: Page. DG: G.Davies(2).

v. Capilano Won 9-3
Try: Smith. Con: Page. Pen: Page

This was despite the alarmingly late tackling of the 'Cowboys' and the referee, who was a poor advertisement for his profession-a judge!

v. Pocomo Won 27-6
Tries: Butt, Hollins, Thompson, Towersey.
Cons: Page (4). Pen: Page(1).

v. Oak Bay Wanderers Won 23-8
Tries: Bailward, Towersey, Hanson Cons. Page (1)
Pens: Page (2). DG: G. Davies

This was our best game and we deserved our win.

Also won the Vancouver 7s' where John Mawle broke his finger warming up.

Off the field!

'We managed to survive a battery of entertainment more stamina sapping than the games.

Social highlights were the ski lift up Whistler Mountain; the ferry crossing to Vancouver Island (don't ask); our visit to the spectacular Butchart Gardens and some players' position on the ladder (definitely don't ask)!

Low spots were Dodger's blisters; the ref. v Capilano and Brian Keen's position on the ladder (ask him)!

Discoveries - Harvey Wallbangers, porch climbers and clam chowder.

A very tired party in Vancouver Airport's departure lounge still managed a final rendition of 'The Sloop John B' which brought a standing ovation and the final curtain on a most memorable tour.

Tour Manager Ken Phillips and fifteen of the squad are present today - 'Once a Blue, Always a Blue!' and in Rudi Strauli's favourite words - 'Friends for Life'.