

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Marie Davies

ROGER TUSHINGHAM

Fly-half/Full back

1991-94



AT THE 2014 LONDON LUNCH

Roger joined the club in 1991, played several times for the 1st team in seasons 1992-93 and 1993-94 and also played for the Wanderers and the Rovers during his time at Bedford. He was also in the club's touring side to Canada in 1994. Although he lives in the USA Roger has made great efforts to attend Former Players' reunions. He joined them for the London Lunch in 2014 and his latest visit was for the Canada 25 years' reunion at the Spring Lunch earlier this year.

Roger writes:

'I was born on the Wirral and grew up just outside Chester.

My family has always been involved with rugby. My dad was a hard tackling centre for Birkenhead Park before returning to our local club, Wirral RUFC, where he would become Chairman. My mum was always involved and became the First Lady Vice President of the club.

My brother and I started playing mini rugby at Wirral under the watchful eye of our dad when I was 6. When I was 15 I was selected for Cheshire Schools and in order to help me progress I moved to Wirral Grammar School and played for the North of England U18s alongside Tony Underwood. Those two years at Wirral GS had a huge impact on me, both improving my rugby and introducing me to a great group of boys who are still my great friends.

After school I played for Wirral RUFC and I continued representing Cheshire at Colts and U21 level. However, rugby ambitions took a backward step when I fractured my neck playing for the university team when I was 19. It took me a year to get cleared to play again and I returned to Wirral RUFC and was selected

for the senior Cheshire side the following season.

After graduating from Salford University with a degree in electronics, I took a job with Texas Instruments in Bedford, and that's how I ended up turning up for pre-season training at Goldington Road in 1991. My first game was for the Rovers, and we had a pretty decent team with Mark Sharp and Peter Garrett ensuring we won plenty of front foot ball!

I progressed quickly to the Wanderers, but with Albert Finnie in residence at fly half my appearances for the 1st team were limited. Amazingly Albert only seemed to get injured when we had an away game at Orrell or West Hartlepool!

My best memories on the field included my debut for the Blues - away at Harlequins alongside another debutant - Bedford Ben Whetstone. Jimmy Chandler scored the winning try for us and we had a great bus ride back from London (I think).

I also remember the Boxing Day games against Old Paulines and the tours up to Scotland for 7s' tournaments or for pre-season. Another highlight was playing alongside All Black Craig Innes for the Wanderers in between the World Cup and him signing for Leeds Rugby League.



ROGER AND ANDY FINNIE AT GOLDINGTON ROAD IN 2019

As much as I remember the rugby, my most lasting memories are of the friendships that were developed and thankfully still last to this day. We had a group of lads that spent a lot of time together and had a lot of fun on and off the field. Cameron Glanvill, Eddie Rennell, Robo, Skings, Tim Taylor, Cools, Taps, Vince, Deansy, Moony and Leigh Mansell can be added to the names already listed - and I am sure I've missed a few. My house was the Saturday night hotel for the 'out of town' boys. Mike Rafter even spent a few nights there - but it did not help me in selection! It was fitting that my Bedford career ended during a great end of season tour to Canada in 1994.

I left that tour and flew straight to Phoenix, Arizona for a two week work assignment - and I am still living there. I now run the marketing and R&D team for a technology company based in Phoenix. My wife, Kathy, and I have three children. Ben is the youngest at 18, Megan is 20 and Scott is 27. (Our fourth child, Brian sadly passed away in 2018 aged 23).

I have stayed engaged with the growing rugby community in the USA. When I first arrived I played for Camelback RFC, and am still affiliated to them - recently being inducted into their Hall of Fame. I also played for the Arizona select side a few times. I still play for Old Southwest - a collection of guys from all over the Phoenix area who play touch rugby every Sunday morning and travel to Old Boys' tournaments two or three times a year.

My wife and I started a rugby team at the local high school which I coached, and I am currently assistant coach at Arizona State University. It is great to be able to introduce this great game and culture to a group of people who totally embrace everything about it.

Outside of work and rugby, I try to stay fit by doing Triathlons. Kathy and I completed our first Ironman 70.3 in September 2018 and we had so much "fun" we are going to be doing more.

I keep up to date on all things Bedford through the FPA and Gareth - and thoroughly enjoy returning to Goldington Road every once in a while to raise a glass with the boys!

ROGER AND KATHY



25TH ANNIVERSARY OF 1994 CANADA TOUR

