



Black & Amber Alliance

Issue 8

www.fonr.co.uk

[Editor: tingeydavec@aol.com](mailto:tingeydavec@aol.com)

Friends of Newport Rugby (FoNR), give a big welcome to all readers of this our redesigned newsletter. We hope that you like the new design and format, we hope that you find the content both informative and enjoyable. As always we would welcome your comments and suggestions.

FoNR is a democratic, not-for-profit fund-raising organisation of supporters, committed to strengthening the voice of supporters in the decision making process at a club, and strengthening the links between the club and its supporters and the community it serves. **FoNR** have raised substantial sums over the past few years and have been able to use these funds to assist in upgrading some of the facilities provided for all visitors to the Rodney Parade ground. We have assisted with funding for upgrading the floodlighting at the ground, and the refurbishment of the club house bar and toilet facilities amongst many other meaningful projects. **FoNR** has also been instrumental in maintaining much of the history and memorabilia associated with Newport RFC. Also they were pleased to assist with the recent refurbishment and rededication of the “Memorial Gates,” Future projects to support the infrastructure at Rodney Parade will be carefully vetted before we undertake them. FoNR are well aware of the planned redevelopment and it would be unwise to spend considerable sums on projects that can not be taken into the new stadium.

Goal posts get “Spruced Up.”

Friends of Newport Rugby (FoNR) have arranged and funded the repainting of the Rodney Parade Goal Posts. The metalwork was beginning to rust and was in dire need of upgrading. The project was completed in time for the IRB Junior World Cup matches many of which were held at Rodney Parade.

The work was carried out with materials and labour supplied by **T A Roden Ltd** and the necessary “cherry picker” access platform was supplied by **Robert Price Builders Merchants**. We are extremely grateful to both companies for this generous support of this project.



As a side issue, doesn't the pitch look superb? This is all thanks to Mark Jones and his team, read an exclusive interview with Mark on page 6 of this edition!

Financial Services

For **no obligation** advice on Investment Planning, Estate Preservation, Mortgages, & all insurance needs, contact

Dugdale Taylor & Co,
7, Oak Tree Court.

Cardiff Gate Business Park,
Cardiff, CF23 8RS
Tel 02920 547067

Email davidtingey@dugdaletaylorandco.com

Quote FoNR we receive a payment

Community

The **mascot scheme** is now a regular happening and we want this to continue. The match-day mascot receives free entry to the match for her/himself along with some tickets for family and friends, an official polo shirt to keep and a photograph with a favourite player. This is a joint scheme, which we run with the Official Newport Supporters Club. The Trust Committee would like to thank them for their input.



We intend to re-launch the **junior art competition**. Full details will be sent to local schools by post and will also appear in Newport and Newport Gwent Dragons programmes early in the season. There are substantial prizes available for the winners so get your pencils sharpened.

We will also be arranging the **guards of honour** for each home match. All local schools welcome. The experience an Rodney Parade crowd We fulfil our community by



or sports teams are kids come in free and appearance on the turf in front of the

commitment to the encouraging more

rugby to be played locally. Last season we **sponsored** Newport High School Old Boys U10 to purchase training equipment. This season we have already decided to sponsor Bettws RFC U15. From early Trust days, there has been a close relationship with Bettws. We helped them host a youth sevens competition and have given them publicity for fundraising for their new pitch. Two seasons ago, the Bettws coaching team volunteered to help local schools raise teams and the U15 side which we are sponsoring are part of the result of this effort. The Trust are keen to promote the game to youngsters and if we can help local teams to get the kids on the park then we are pleased to do so. Bettws have agreed to assist us with the 'shirt off his back' fundraising campaign later in the season.

For further details or to participate in of any of the above contact a member of the Trust Committee.



Contact Details:

Website: www.newportrugbysupportersclub.com

E-Mail: admin@newportrugbysupportersclub.com

Post: c/o Newport RFC, Rodney Road, Newport19 0UU



Membership: We are pleased to confirm that membership costs for the 2008/09 season have once again been held at just £3.50 for adults and £2.00 for juniors and seniors and of course that includes our free 'only with membership' lapel badge! Application Forms can be downloaded from our website and returned by post or completed in person at the Supporters' Club table in the Rodney Hall at any home game. Your contribution is vital to us and will help us do even more in support of Newport RFC projects in the future.

End of Season Awards: At the end of last season, the Supporters' Club held the annual Newport RFC presentation evening in the clubhouse at Rodney Parade. During the course of the evening, the following awards were made:



Newport RFC Player of the Year 2007/08: This award is voted for by Supporters' Club members and the winner was Andrew Coombs.



Newport RFC Clubman of the Year 2007/08: This award is voted for by the Supporters' Club committee and the winner was Dan Griffiths.

Mascots Player of the Year 2007/08: Awarded jointly by FONR and the Supporters' Club, the winner was Craig Hill.



Special Achievement Award: Awarded to Dan Griffiths in recognition of becoming the club all time record points scorer.



Away Travel: The Supporters' Club will continue to offer coach travel to all Newport RFC away fixtures. However, we cannot continue to subsidise this service to the extent we did in the last season (over £700). Consequently we will of course arrange and advertise coaches to all away games but if the booking numbers are not economically viable, then we will not run the coach. To ensure that we can continue running the coaches, we would encourage supporters to book early. Travel on the coaches is for members only but non-members can always book their place and then join 'on the day'. Bookings can be made at the Supporters' Club table at any home game or by contacting the Newport Ticket Office in person or by telephoning Newport 670690.



Social Events: Last April, the Supporters' Club organised a fund-raising evening in aid of local Newport based charity, St Anne's Hospice in the Rodney Parade clubhouse. We are delighted to confirm that this event raised over £2,500 and we would like to thank everyone who attended as well as the sponsors of the evening – Rodney Parade Ltd, Tandies Disco, the Attic Band and Brian Bowen of the Print Shop. The evening was also supported by several players – Ashley Smith, Alex Walker, Jamie Corsie and Jimmy Norris who sportingly allowed themselves to be auctioned off as waiters for the evening.

Members Free Prize Draw: We are pleased to confirm that we will continue the Members Free Prize Draw for all Newport RFC home league matches for the 2008/09 season. All members will be automatically entered into a free prize draw for each game – Adult winners get a £25 club shop voucher and junior members receive £10.

Player Sponsorship: The Supporters' Club are currently discussing with FONR options for player sponsorship for the 2008/09 season. Over the last two seasons, we have sponsored three players each year. Player departures have meant that we will have to select new players to sponsor this season but we hope to finalise this by the start of the season. We view this sponsorship as an excellent method of using Supporters' Club funds to directly financially support Newport RFC.

Last seasons sponsored players were Matthew Veater, James Dixon and Mike Poole and this put almost £1,000 directly into club funds.



Player of the Month: The Supporters' Club will continue to sponsor the 'Player of the Month' awards for Newport RFC for the 2008/09 season. Any supporter is able to vote each month by completing a voting form and posting it in the ballot box at the Supporters' Club table in the Rodney Hall at any home game. Congratulations to all of last season's winners which was rounded off by Scott Williams winning the award for April 2008.



Match Day Mascots: In conjunction with FoNR, the Supporters Club jointly operates the match day mascot scheme for junior members to get a chance to meet the players before a game and run out onto the pitch with them. They also get a commemorative polo shirt embroidered with details of the match and a photo taken with their favourite player.



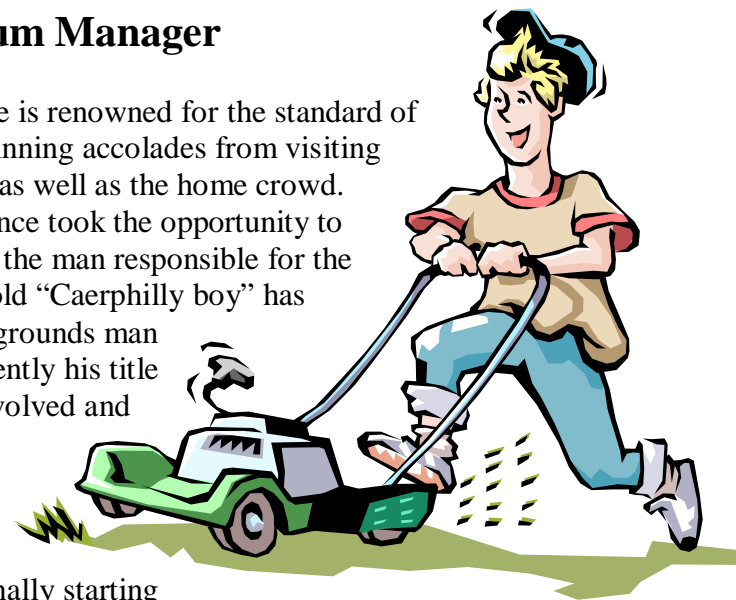
PLEASE HELP US TO SUPPORT OUR CLUB: Membership renewal forms were sent out to all members at the end of last season and will of course be available at the Supporters' Club table in the Rodney Hall at all home games. If you have not yet renewed your membership for the 2008/09 season, we would be very pleased to receive your application form at the earliest opportunity. Many thanks for your continued support!

Help Us: We currently have a number of vacancies on the Supporters' Club committee and we would welcome hearing from any member who feels that they can give the time and commitment to help run the Supporters' Club. If you are interested, please visit our match day table in the Rodney Hall or contact any committee member for more information or to discuss how you may be able to help.

www.newportrugbysupportersclub.com

Meet the Stadium Manager

Rodney Parade is renowned for the standard of its playing surface, winning accolades from visiting teams and supporters as well as the home crowd. Black & Amber Alliance took the opportunity to speak to **Mark Jones** the man responsible for the ground. The 43 year old "Caerphilly boy" has been at RP has Head grounds man for over 20 years, recently his title and responsibilities evolved and he became Stadium Manager and Safety Officer for the club. Mark is pretty keen on many sports, originally starting out as an apprentice at Sheffield United FC.



When things there didn't work out they released him, and he found himself in the big wide world with no formal qualifications. Mark knew that he wanted to do something connected with sport and that he was cut out for an indoor 9 to 5 job, luckily he found employment at Cardiff Athletic Club on the ground staff. 18 months later he applied for the role of Head grounds man here at Newport, this meant looking after not just the rugby pitch but the tennis, bowls, hockey and athletics grounds as well. Traditionally the head grounds man lived in the clubs house on site, Mark wanted to live at home with his family and travel daily, he did not get the job! A few weeks later the club approached him again saying that things weren't working and would he consider joining after all, so at 19 he became the youngest head grounds man in Britain. I was struck by the diversity of Marks duties, not just turning out the best playing surface in Wales, whilst I was talking to him he had demands ranging from supplying freshly pumped up balls for a training session to arranging an internet connection for one of the offices. What I quickly realised was that the stadium was everything inside the gates and not just the ground!

The pitch itself is a product of many hours of hard work, the season is getting longer and with 2 sides playing on the same surface the difficulties doubled, throw in the IRB Junior World Cup and then we begin to see the enormity of the challenge. Modern stadiums like the Liberty benefit from all sorts of technical help, apparently fibre is woven into the grass to support growth and prevent divots, costing an estimated £50K a year. The Rodney Parade pitch has no scientific help, it is the original grass laid on all sorts of rubble and poor quality soil, what it does have though is years of loving care, sand, seed and “good stuff.” The other thing it benefits from his the hours of dedicated effort put in by Marks, James and Kyle. No prewoven fibres for our divots, just hard work and a garden fork!

From the terraces I have heard tales of the drainage system that releases surplus water direct into the river, this was all news to Mark and is purely “terrace talk!”

At least these days much of the training is done away from the main pitch, in years gone by it was normal for the teams to train on a wild and wet Thursday night leaving the pitch as a quagmire prior to an important match on a Saturday afternoon. It appears that many a battle was fought and lost over this issue, however as Mark says “the rugby must come first!”

These days Mark is also often called upon by other local rugby clubs to advise on, and in some cases assist, with the preparation of their pitches. Straight after our interview he was off to fertilise the Cross Keys pitch!

The possible future arrival of Bristol RFC and the scheduled regeneration of the ground will both provide immense challenges to Mark, however rather than being daunted by this he was excited at the prospect. The ground regeneration will provide the logistical problem that currently the vast majority of every crowd arrives from the clubhouse end of the ground. Once work starts the area roughly from the dead ball line to the squash club will become a building site, around which several thousand people must travel in safety. Definitely a concern for the safety officer!

Another area that falls under Marks remit is that of stewarding, here he is trying to develop a proactive “can do” attitude, preferring to discuss any issues rather than act purely as an enforcement body.

PA announcer is a job that Mark has less fond memories of. Sometime ago a weekly meeting the subject of “who’s doing the PA this week” was discussed at length, then it was discussed again and again. Mark said “as a last resort I’ll do it, now can we move on?” Low and behold that weekend there was no tannoy announcer and Mark had to keep his word. With his customary enthusiasm he set about whipping the crowd into frenzy, as the teams entered the arena he came out with the immortal words, “let’s get ready to rumble!” Apparently the players “game faces” were replaced with fits of laughter and the pre match exhortations of the coach were duly forgotten! One fan appraising Marks efforts as a disgrace, another later wrote “flogging would be too good for him!” This is not an area that Mark intends entering again!

A final and perhaps little known fact is that Mark has represented Newport RFC in a competitive match, as a fearless winger he holds the unequalled distinction of having scored in every game he’s played for us! Before you start searching the history books I can tell you that due to severe man power shortages Mark made his try scoring debut for Newport United against Pontypridd Athletic, the following week he was on the replacements bench for the first team, apparently declining to take the field for fear of losing his 100% record! Unsurprisingly he has not been called upon again!



Friends of Newport Rugby would like to thank Mark for this insight into his life as Stadium Manager, frankly it barely does it justice. For the best playing surface in Wales and much more we are truly grateful.

Some New Faces (and some not so new!)

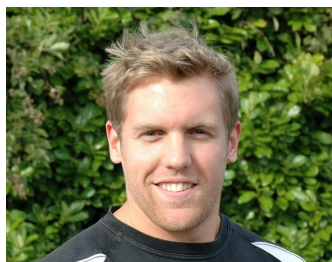
Sven Cronk (Head Coach) Last years Forwards Coach steps up this season to become Head Coach. Sven was born in Usk, 27 June 1969. He played for Machen, Cardiff and Glam Wanderers before joining Newport in 1994/5. Sven was Captain of Newport 1998/9 before joining Pontypridd in 1999/0. Rejoined Newport RFC in 2003/4 and made Player-coach 2004/5. 182 appearances and 8 tries. Sven has also represented Wales at Judo.



Jon Bryant (Backs Coach) Aberdare born Jon joined Newport Gwent Dragons from Warriors in 2004/5. He had previously played for Pontypridd. He made his Newport RFC debut at Ebbw Vale on Nov 17th 2004 when Newport lost 17-15. Jon joined Cardiff Blues in Dec 2004 before rejoining Ngd's, he then moved to Sale

Sharks 2006/7. Jon has made 3 Appearances for Newport RFC and scored 1 try. Last season Jon was head coach at Merthyr RFC.

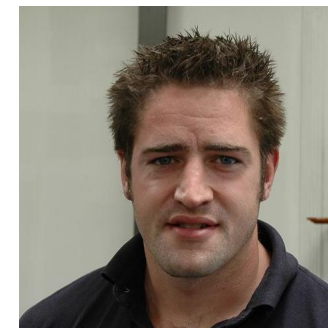
Dai Gray (Forwards Coach) Dai attended West Mon School and played for Pontypool Youth. He joined Newport from Pontypool Utd in 1993/94 where he was the youngest ever captain and he played against Newport RFC in the 92/93 Welsh cup, Newport winning 10 – 0 at Pontypool! He became Newport U21 coach, later Pontypool forwards coach, eventually succeeding Steve “Junna” Jones as head coach.



Matthew Amos (Second Row) Newport born, played for Cardiff Uni, Pill Harriers, Pontypool and has made 54 appearances for Cardiff CFC



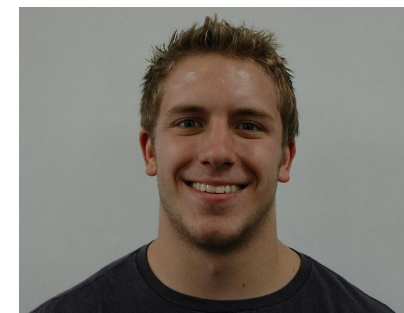
Alex Murphy (Prop) 23 years old from Glamorgan Wanderers with the additional experience of international age grade honours at Wales U16, U18 and U19, also played for Cardiff RFC



Dan McShane (No 8) 28 years old Cardiff born, played for Crawshay's and Cardiff Blues as well as Cardiff, Aberavon and Neath.



Matthew Pizey (Winger) Caerphilly-born joins from Bedwas.



Tom Issacs (Scrum Half) Played for Glamorgan Wanderers & Cardiff RFC. Represented Wales & Cardiff blues at U20



Tom Riley (Centre) Joins from Pontypridd with international honours at Wales Youth, U18, FIRA U19 and a the Grand Slam winning Wales U21 alongside a contract with the Blues Academy, making his senior regional debut in 2006.



Paul Jones (Wing or Full Back) Paul has previously played for Bridgend, Cardiff, Pertemp Bees, Coventry & Cornish Pirates.

Newport Former Players Association

Thought it would be good to share this fascinating insight from Dennis Perrott, Secretary of the NFPA. We are very grateful to Dennis for this contribution.

As a person representing former players predominantly of the 50 & 60's era it is perhaps difficult to put anything together that was classed as news as I am sure that the youngest supporter would have, out of sheer pride, of Newport RFC already researched in great depth the magnificence of the clubs history. Many if not most of the present Former Players played their rugby in the halcyon days of the 1950's & 60's. It was during these decades that the name of Newport RFC became synonymous with greatness and their name reverberated around the rugby world. Newport RFC, along with Cardiff RFC, according to journalists, were the greatest club sides in the world. This claim could be well justified, for where else could 15 players be teamed together to take on touring sides from South Africa, New Zealand and Australia? Most Newport players of this period experienced at least one victory, some two, Keith Poole played three touring sides never losing! I myself played three touring sides and lost only once, 3-0 against SA 60/61.

Why do I write so glowingly and with so much pride about Newport Rugby? Well it was while most of us were watching the great Newport team of the 50's, that we, aspiring young schoolboy rugby players were inspired to set our ambitions so high, to one day play for Newport RFC. There after our pride was to be the best we could and never let the colours and wonderful name of Newport RFC down. Once in the team the weekly challenge was to stay in as there were many wonderful players waiting to replace you.

Now were does this short but simple scenario fit into and contribute to the formation of the Newport Former Players Association? Well the answer is simple, as a player you had achieved so much by being part of a great Newport team it played a massive part in your life. A group of former players decided that this greatness and the nostalgia of being part of it and its history should be preserved and perpetuated. In 1985 the FPA was formed and it continues to flourish, organising regular reunions, sometimes with other clubs, just to share a drink and reminisce rugby experiences of wonderful years gone by.

Dennis played 207 times for Newport RFC between 1961/2 & 1970/1, in that period he scored 78 tries. He also played for Abertillery, London Welsh, Newbridge, Oakdale, & Represented Crawshays. Dennis was a PE teacher at Cross Keys College.

You may have heard of Utility Warehouse, but not know much about it or how it can benefit householders and FoNR. I caught up with **Andrew Hopkins, Corporate Officer for the Trust**, to find out more...



So, why have FoNR gone into partnership with Utility Warehouse?

All Fund raising organisations, need a number of initiatives that will provide revenue streams to sustain their activities, FoNR is no different. It is important that we look for ideas which provide regular income to the Trust, while offering real benefits to our members and supporters. A great example of this is Black & Amber Bullion, which, for a very low monthly contribution, offers a good chance of a large cash prize.

Simply stated, Utility Warehouse offers great deals on utility and telecommunications prices and provides an ongoing residual income to the Trust, the more that our customers spend, the more that the Trust benefits. Imagine, every time that you turn on a light switch or make a call, not only will you be making savings, but you will be benefiting FoNR.

How are things going so far?

We have been working with Utility Warehouse for about a year now and things are progressing well. We have signed up a number of FoNR members and also a number of "distributors" which is great news, because they get to grow their own UW business and FoNR get paid a percentage of their income too!

Fund raising is always difficult, particularly so in current economic climate – Why should people now consider joining up with Utility Warehouse?

Great question Dave, one that I am happy to answer, I do believe that there is a win-win situation. Times are hard, we all know that, but at the same time we all have continue using gas and electric and many of us would be lost with out our telephones and broadband etc. By signing up with Utility Warehouse, individuals are able to make savings on all their utilities and therefore help ease the burden of rising prices.

Utility Warehouse guarantees to be cheaper than British Gas, British Telecom and the local Regional Electricity supplier.

It is a fact that traditionally, people like to stick with what they know and a majority of customers do not “shop around” for these services – As I said earlier, Utility Warehouse offer a great chance to save people money and at the same time, help the Trust with its own fund-raising efforts.

I hadn't heard of Utility Warehouse, can I trust them?

Absolutely, however, many people have not heard of them as they do not utilise national advertising. They rely on satisfied customers telling their friends and family about the great savings and services they offer. They are however, a major British Company, with over 200,000 customers and a British based call centre, where 90% of all calls are answered within 15 seconds. They are listed on the London Stock Exchange (under their parent company Telecom plus plc.) Another major benefit of UW is that you get one bill for all of the services you take, so if you go for gas, electricity, home phone and broadband, it will all be on one easy to understand bill!

OK, this sounds like a sensible move to make, so how do I switch to Utility Warehouse?

Very easily! Seriously, it couldn't be simpler, I will personally oversee the whole process for any one who is interested and do all of the paperwork. All I need to get things started is a copy of your existing bill or bills. Email me at andrew@fonr.co.uk and I will get back to you and get the ball rolling. Additionally, Utility Warehouse are so confident in the savings that they offer that there is no minimum contract term on most services..

And finally, you referred earlier to “Distributors,” could this offer a business opportunity for anyone?

Definitely, there is a real business opportunity here for anyone who wants to generate additional income for themselves or as an “add-on” for an existing business. Please drop me a line, you've absolutely nothing to lose, but you and Newport Rugby could have a lot to gain.

Shirt off His Back

Friends of Newport Rugby are pleased to announce a new fundraising initiative "Shirt off His Back".

This is an opportunity to win the actual match shirt of the Newport Gwent dragon player of your choice.

Initially there will be 4 separate opportunities to win, exact dates and timings will follow as soon as the fixture lists are available, however they will probably coincide with

the 3 home Heineken Cup matches and 1 other major fixture.

Winning tickets will be drawn on the day, the lucky winner will then be invited back to Rodney Parade to meet with their chosen player who will then present the signed shirt.



We are grateful to Gethin Jenkins, for his support in this venture and for providing the prizes and access to the players.

It is hoped that all proceeds of this venture will go directly into FoNR's funds as we have provisionally managed to obtain sponsorship of this draw, this will cover advertising and running expenses. Those proceeds once in FoNR's hands will be used to continue with the work we do for the benefit of Rugby in Newport.

Basically we need your support to make this successful, not just in buying tickets on the day but we also need about 20 helpers for less than 2 hours prior to kick off on the day. Please, please if you feel that you will be able to help us at one, some or all of these matches will you let us know. To make a real success of this and to help FoNR give even more to the local rugby community please give us your support.



If you are able to help please either contact a member of the FoNR committee at our stall at any of the home games, alternatively please drop an email to tingeydavec@aol.com

We really would appreciate your support.

Make Your Mark in the 'Wall of Fame'!

Provide a permanent part of the new Newport Stadium.

In early 2009, work will begin on the construction of a new rugby stadium at Rodney Parade, Newport, home to Newport RFC and the Newport Gwent

Dragons. The Friends of Newport Rugby Supporters Trust would like to offer an opportunity for people to provide a permanent part of the fabric of the new buildings, whilst raising much needed funds for Newport RFC.

This will take the form of engraved bricks which will be built into walls in or around the stadium which can carry a message of up to three lines of text. You can have any message (within the realms of decency) that you wish. This could be your name, a reminder of a special date, a memorial, or best wishes to somebody special. The opportunities are endless.

The cost of each brick is going to be set at around £40 and we are hoping to start selling them soon after the start of the 2008/2009 season so as to have

plenty of bricks ready for construction in early 2009. We will keep customers informed of progress in match-day programs and will notify everyone of the

location of the Wall of Fame within the development as soon as the details are firmed up.



Black & Amber Bullion

BLACK & AMBER BULLION is a monthly jackpot draw with major cash prizes on offer.

Monthly payments are automatically collected from your bank via standing order they start from as little as £5 per month. 50% of the income raised is returned in prize money, the remainder is used by Friends of Newport Rugby, to the benefit of Rugby in Newport. This may take the form of sponsorship of local community youth rugby, providing equipment to Newport RFC, or capital expenditure to benefit all users of Rodney Parade. **Please join now, for just the price of a half of Lager a week or one cigarette a day you can make a difference!**

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Thank you

We have pleasure in printing a message from Mary Bennett as a result of her fund raising efforts last season. Mary raised a total of £1010 last season for the Newport Players' Fund.

*"£530 came from raffles, with **Roly Mason** donating the bottles of whisky for prizes. A big thank-you to Roly and all the people who bought raffle tickets at the Newport home games. This was a good amount to raise as I could only hold a raffle on the days that the Supporters' Club or FoNR weren't planning one*

£480 was raised by the 'Fashion Show'. Again a big thank-you to the people who donated prizes for the raffle. The Fashion Show was a great success and turned out to be a good social evening as well as a fund-raising event. I hope to hold another one some time during next season as everyone said they really enjoyed it."

Best Wishes, Mary.

Thank you (2)

We held a raffle at the Wales versus NZ semi final of the IRB Junior World Cup, thanks to all who purchased tickets enabling FoNR's coffers to be swelled by £125.

Newport RFC player Mike Burke draws the winning ticket from our quality "Hat," every expense was spared! Apologies for the appearance of the editor in the picture!

