

Official magazine of Weybridge Vandals RFC

The Vandal



September 2020

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Dear reader,

Welcome to the first edition of our brand new bi-annual The Vandal Magazine and, after the enforced lockdown, welcome back to rugby.

Labours of love sometimes prove to be fruitless, however, three months of hard graft by a small group of individuals have made this dream a reality, so thank you to them – you know who you are.

Inside you will find head coach Damian Porter's thoughts on his first season in charge at Brownacres (page 9) and we unveil the details of some new sponsorship opportunities at the club (page 49).

Chairman Pete Wellden extends his thanks to the membership for their financial support during the coronavirus pandemic (page 7).

First team captain Harry Reed talks about his path from the minis to lifting the Surrey Cup (page 26) and, for the nature lovers among you, we take a stroll around Desborough Island and uncover some of its less well-known secrets (page 14).

There's an update from ex-Academy Rugby Director Mark Josse (page 39) and veteran 'Alicadoo' Terry Berry discusses the pros and cons of touring as the club's vets consider heading to foreign fields again (page 35).

The Vandal is also pleased to unveil the Sam Beare Hospice as Weybridge Vandals' official charity partner (page 19) and we have a word with chairman Ken Sewell's wife Linda about celebrancy (page 42).

Finally, take a look to see if your face appears in our Rogues Gallery (pages six and eight).

I'd like to think there is a little something for everyone to take in, so sit down with a coffee, put your feet up and have a look.

Thanks for your support.

Stuart Amos



**Sing when you're winning: Editor
Stuart Amos**

Keep in touch with all the latest from Weybridge Vandals RFC via our website

www.weybridgevandals.co.uk

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What is in the book

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Rogues Gallery



The old normal: (clockwise from top)
Former England captain Chris
Robshaw, back left, gets up close and
personal with Luke Goggin's U9s
squad; the U16s jump highest at a
lineout during a home clash with
Teddington; the U13s enjoy a home
fixture under the lights on the south
downs at Brownacres; and, the colts
get ready to depart for their tour of
Holland just prior to lockdown



If you have a picture you want to share with Rogues Gallery, please send it – with brief details – to...
weybridgevandalsrfcmagazine@gmail.com.

Plenty of work still to be done post- Covid

Weybridge Vandals chairman Peter Wellden has thanked members for their response to the Covid GoFundMe campaign, but has warned there is more to be done.

Vandals was forced to close in March due to the coronavirus pandemic that has swept the world and been directly connected to more than 40,000 deaths in the UK.

The RFU officially ended the London Division Three South West season on March 20, while the ECB suspended the start of the amateur cricket season until July 11.

The social and economic hit the nation has taken has been replicated at Brownacres, with the crisis resulting in the loss of bar takings and the cancellation of a host of fundraising events.

A reduction in significant revenue streams prompted the launch of the club's Covid GoFundMe webpage with a target of raising £20,000 to plug the hole blown in the Vandals' finances.

More than £8,000 was donated in the first month of the initiative after it launched on April 17, with a total of £9,220 being raised by the time the GoFundMe page closed on June 5.

And while he recognised members had dug deep for the cause, Wellden has warned the

effects of lock down could be long lasting despite the club reopening on July 4 and welcoming touch rugby back in August.

"The lock down and gradual return to the 'new normal' will bring unforeseen challenges and hurdles," he said in a message to members.

"To ensure the club is in the best possible place to react to whatever the future brings, the board took decisive action.

"The club was effectively mothballed, all staff furloughed, discretionary spend stopped and available government grants obtained.

He added: "For all those members and friends that have already given generously to the GoFundMe campaign, we would like to sincerely thank you.

For all those members and friends that have already given generously to the GoFundMe campaign, we'd like to sincerely thank you.

Weybridge Vandals chairman Peter Wellden

"The campaign is ongoing and is needed to help the club meet its ongoing fixed cost obligations as well as ensuring the facilities and pitches are fit for purpose for when sport recommences."

All funds donated have been allocated across all sections of the club to the benefit of rugby, cricket and netball.

Donations can still be made via weybridgevandals.co.uk or by emailing clubtreasurer@weybridgevandals.co.uk.

Rogues Gallery



Remember when: (clockwise from left)
Weybridge Vandals U10s get to grips
with unfamiliar surroundings at
Twickenham stadium; the U10s line up
for a team photo under the posts at the
home of English rugby; Vandals U15s
celebrate claiming silverware last
season as they lifted the Waterfall Cup;
the U9s take a time out on a Sunday;
and ex-England full back Mike Brown
shows his face at a Vandals festival



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with Rogues Gallery, please send it – with
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Hard graft: Vandals head coach Damian Porter got his men working hard when he first took charge and little has changed this time around



A fresh start

A new head coach might not typically label the team he inherits as 'misfits', but then again a new head coach might not typically expect to take charge of a promotion and cup double winning squad, writes Stuart Amos.

Damian Porter, a level three RFU coach with London Irish's Academy, was appointed to the post at London Division Three South West Weybridge Vandals in July last year, filling the hotseat vacated by Merlin O'Donnell.

O'Donnell had moved to pastures new despite having masterminded the club's return to the London leagues following a 22-18 promotion play-off success at Hampshire outfit Sandown & Shanklin in April.

He had also overseen a blockbuster end to the campaign less than a fortnight later with a thrilling 31-25 Surrey Cup win over Old Mid-Whitgiftians to add some much-needed silverware to the club's trophy cabinet.

However, by the start of pre-season many familiar faces in the playing staff had moved on with experienced campaigners Jon Cottam and Cassian Bramham-Law announcing their retirement from first team commitments.

While second rower Adam Bullet had been persuaded back to National Division One Esher and Luke Dones had made a permanent switch to Ealing Trailfinders.

Instead of approaching the season full of confidence, Porter admitted he found the exact opposite when he took his first training session at Brownacres – but the desire remained.

"From the first day of pre-season training there was something unique about both this club and this group of players," he said.

"There were definitely some challenges.

"We had seen the departure of a chunk of the squad

Gearing up: Porter is preparing for his second season in charge at Brownacres



"We had a group of 'misfits' told they were not good enough, not big enough, not fit enough and not physical enough as a group."

– Damian Porter, head coach

through retirement and those looking for higher level rugby.

"We were highlighted by many as potential relegation prospects and low on confidence due to the end of season departures, but the spirit and desire to play for Vandals was undeniable.

"We had a group of 'misfits' told they were not good enough, not big enough, not fit enough and not physical enough as a group.

"Fringe players, second team regulars, colts and a few newbies were alongside the remnants of the 2018/19 squad.

"However, from session one they gave everything during some very tough and hot training sessions. They returned week after week with no audible complaints."

Porter's first season in charge resulted in a fifth placed finish after the RFU ended the season on March 20 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

An opening day 46-7 humbling at near neighbours Old Georgians on paper belied much of the positive shoots of progress seen by the new coaching team during pre-season.

But five wins and four loses prior to a spirited defeat to derby rivals Reeds Weybridge in late December, convinced Porter his men could convert their collective promise into performances on the pitch and beyond.

"Our focus - although never verbally shared as we never had a team meeting all season - was defence, fitness and building the collective desire," he explained.

"All three were tested on day one of the season, but the squad took the downs as well as the ups, drank themselves silly in Hawaiian shirts in Richmond, trained to breaking point in the rain, mud and cold and constantly abused each other on WhatsApp.

"They played with some unbelievable skill, huge physical courage and always with an air of enjoyment.



**Right hand man:
Porter's assistant
coach David
Hoade**

"Every week produced an improvement in some area or another, from having a dominant scrum, to rapid line breaks, to bone crunching defence, every week took us forward and applied another collective layer of positivity to the squad.

"The most memorable highlight of the season, for me, was when we produced the three focus areas to a level I never expected to see this season.

"In that fantastic first 35 minutes versus Reeds pre-Christmas, the 'Weybridge Defensive Wall' was awesome. To a man we defended wave after wave of attack and still had energy for more, the tackle count was ridiculous and we got up for more."

Vandals won four of their final six games prior to lockdown – including a 55-0 demolition of Effingham & Leatherhead and a 27-17 win at Gosport & Fareham – suggesting there is more to come from the 'misfits' this term.

And Porter says he is looking forward to the ride when hostilities resume at Brownacres after the enforced break.

"To finish fifth this season, having overcome so many challenges, was a fantastic testament to the commitment, effort and togetherness of this group of players." he added.

"It is a pleasure to be associated with them and to hopefully take them forward this season.

"Our goal will be to produce the level of intensity shown against Reeds every Saturday and for 80 minutes. Who knows where that level of commitment and desire will take this group?

"I am looking forward to more hard training sessions ahead, and more great memories, but for this group, season 2019/20 should be one to be very proud of."

Meanwhile, rugby returned to Brownacres on September 12 as the club played host to an interclub touch rugby tournament as the RFU seeks to bring meaningful rugby back at grassroots levels.



Ball skills: Vandals forward Simon Boffee, left, gets to grips with some pre-season training

The 'Pitch Up to Rugby' event saw members from all sections of the club mixed 'touch' games under the RFU's new Ready4Rugby format.

A photograph featuring two bottles of Gulliver's 47 Single Malt English Whisky and a promotional poster for the brand. The bottles are positioned in the foreground, showing the product packaging. The poster is in the background, displaying the brand's logo, 'SINCE 1747', the name 'GULLIVER'S 47', 'SINGLE MALT ENGLISH WHISKY', and descriptive text about the product. The poster also includes a website address, 'SAMUELGULLIVER.COM', and the brand's name, 'SAMUEL GULLIVER & Co ADVENTUROUS SPIRITS'. The overall theme is a blend of traditional craftsmanship and modern branding.

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Desborough delights



Great escape: Point Meadow on Desborough Island, is a haven for sunseekers, dog walkers and wildlife

Step onto Desborough Island and you are taking a step into history and popular culture.

Not only is there more than 75 years of history in the form of Weybridge Vandals, but the island – created by the construction of ‘Desborough Cut’ in 1930s – has other foibles too.

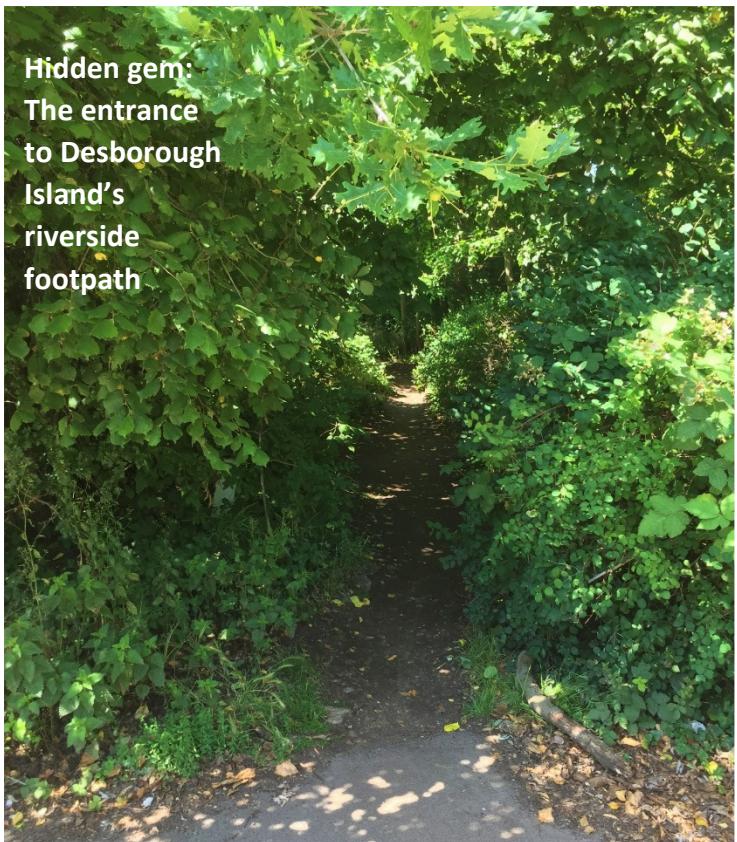
Its beauty attracts dog walkers a plenty and even the odd celebrity, with Titanic star Kate Winslet rumoured to have once made the old

pump house - close to the entrance to Brownacres - her home for a spell with then husband Jim Threapleton.

As the Friends of Desborough Island website notes: “The island is a wonderful asset for the communities of Weybridge and Walton-on-Thames.

“It has acres of tranquil meadow and miles of beautiful riverside, with easy public access from Walton Lane.

**Hidden gem:
The entrance
to Desborough
Island's
riverside
footpath**



It's hidden entrance, to the right of the club car park, is a popular starting point for afternoon strolls and provides picturesque views across the river towards Shepperton.

Skirting around the perimeter of Vandals, a child's imagination can run riot as you navigate your way along the river bank, which harbours many secret 'coves' for them to explore.

The expanse of Point Meadow on a summer's day is something to behold with a variety of wildlife and wildflowers on view, accompanied by the deafening sound of grasshoppers.

Revellers use the top corner of the island, opposite Desborough Sailing Club, to sunbathe and paddle as the Thames slips slowly through the Wey Navigations towards Weybridge and beyond.

**Country house: A stunning property,
right, overlooking the Thames, as
seen from Desborough Island**

"It is a beauty spot which deserves to be cherished."

The stretch of Thames, known as the Wey Navigations and protected by the National Trust, is also home to - among others - Elmbridge Canoe Club, Weybridge Paddle Club, Weybridge Lawn Tennis Club and Hersham Football Club, a veritable sporting hotbed.

And the 112-acre island, on which Vandals stands, was created by the Thames Conservancy and named after its chairman Lord Desborough.

The rugby club is sited close to one of two bridges that connect the island to the 'mainland' on Walton Lane and it is here that a public footpath around the island – owned by the Environment Agency - begins.



Beautiful sight: A view from Desborough Island looking towards Shepperton.



D'Oyly Carte Island is just visible as you arrive at the second of the bridges – closest to Weybridge – at the top of the island's one-way road.

It is named after former owner Richard D'Oyly Carte, who produced the Gilbert & Sullivan comic operas of the late 1800's and built the imposing thirteen-bedroom Eyt House in its 1.9 acres of land – which is currently on the market for £3.2million.

The walk is complete as you join Desborough Island's only road taking you past the football club and along the banks of the Thames that are unwittingly familiar the world over.

Why?

The stretch of river deputised for the Mississippi River in the video for 1983 pop smash hit Karma Chameleon by Culture Club.

The song won the Best British Single gong at the 1984 Brit Awards and reached number one in the UK, US, Switzerland, Finland, Holland, New Zealand, Sweden, Spain and South Africa.

A stroll through history and popular culture around Weybridge Vandals Rugby Club – who'd have thought it



**Familiar territory:
Weybridge Vandals'
Brownacres home, left,
and a secluded entrance to
Point Meadow, right**



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Here to help: Senior nursing team members, from left, Laura, Naomi and Shelagh bring the personal touch to Woking & Sam Beare Hospice and Wellbeing Care



Chosen charity

Woking & Sam Beare Hospice and Wellbeing Care is delighted to be chosen as Charity of the Year by the Weybridge Vandals.

We thank everyone at the club so much for your wonderful support and we are looking forward to being part of the Vandals 'team'.

Your support during this year will help our charity to care for more than 2,000 adults with life-limiting conditions, and their families and carers, both at home and in our hospice.

We care for more than 70% of our patients in their own homes across North West Surrey. This means that our community nurses can be providing free end-of-life care in your immediate community, directly helping people you may know.

We cannot do any of our vital work without your support. At Weybridge Vandals you are all champions to Woking & Sam Beare Hospice, even before you touch a rugby ball this season.

Woking & Sam Beare Hospice and Wellbeing Care

The involvement of the Vandals will have a positive impact on families just like yours at a most vital time in their lives.

At our hospice in Goldsworth Park we offer both respite and end-of-life care in our ensuite rooms. Our nurses and doctors work with each patient to make them comfortable based on their individual needs, while delivering high-quality nursing care.

It's important to us to get to know each patient's preferences and how we can help them.

Each member of our team plays an important part in this personal approach – for example, our cleaners and hostesses are always ready with a smile and to chat while they are in our patients' rooms. Our hospice is a place where laughter is often heard.

Woking & Sam Beare Hospice also supports each patient's carers to reassure them and to help them understand what to expect from their loved one's illness.

We aim to reduce the uncertainty and relieve the pressure of caring that many people can naturally feel, to enable them to enjoy simply spending time together as a family or friends.

As a local charity, we are committed to continuing to care for our community despite any challenges the year may bring.

Our dedicated team of staff and volunteers have responded flexibly to meet the ever-changing needs posed by the pandemic during

The involvement of the Vandals will have a positive impact on families just like yours at a most vital time in their lives.

Woking & Sam Beare Hospice and Wellbeing Care

2020, and funds raised by the Weybridge Vandals will help us to continue to do so.

We are finding different ways to communicate and to reassure, engaging with patients at home through phone and video calls if it is difficult to visit in person.

Counselling and day care services are being planned differently for the future as many of our hospice users rely on the companionship, relaxation and support they find in those services.

It costs more than £9 million each year to deliver our care.

We cannot do any of our vital work without your support. Hospice care is important and relevant to all of us, so thank you for helping us to care for our community. At Weybridge Vandals you are all champions to Woking & Sam Beare Hospice, even before you touch a rugby ball this season.



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Desborough Island Discs: Kevin Keaney

Former Weybridge Vandals Owls captain Kevin Keaney is the former CEO of The Works and has been a member at Brownacres since the 1980s, enjoying a long and distinguished first team career with the club in that time.

He succeeded Gareth Owen as president in August and The Vandal asked him to select the eight songs, one book and one luxury item he would want with him if he was stranded on Desborough Island.

The Fields of Athenry - The Dubliners.

Unlike Wales or France, the Irish don't have a spine-tingling national anthem, but "The Fields" is the song that unites Irish rugby fans. The loudest I ever heard it was when Ireland finally beat the All Blacks in Dublin in November 2018. My mum is also from Athenry.

No Surrender - Bruce Springsteen. Almost impossible to pick one Bruce track, but the line "we learnt more from a three-minute record baby, than we ever learned in school" definitely spoke to a 17-year-old me. I have been lucky to see many of the world's greatest performers live, but no one comes close to Bruce and his E-street band.

The Green Fields of France - The Fury's. Probably the greatest anti-war song ever written (apart from Two little boys) and my Dad's favourite. With enough Guinness inside me I can usually be persuaded to sing this.

Drive - The cars. We were the "Live aid" generation who really believed that we could



Irish eyes: Vandals president Kevin Keaney, left, with legendary Ireland & British Lions second row Paul O'Connell

end poverty and "Feed the world". David Bowie's insistence to Bob Geldof they play the harrowing CBC video of the famine in Ethiopia with this song as a soundtrack lifted this historic event to another level that anyone lucky enough to be there or watching on TV will never forget.

Going Underground - The Jam. Local boys who were the sound of my teenage years. I was ready to run through walls or smash rucks and make big tackles after listening to this.

If I Can Dream - Elvis. One of my happiest Vandals tour memories is a wonderful couple of hours in Vegas where the whole tour party stayed together in an Elvis-themed bar with different individual tourists dressed as "The King" performing his greatest hits with over 40

tourists acting as backup singers. The Vandals has an incredible touring tradition which we must keep alive for future generations.

Sloop John B - The Beach boys. A song you can sing in any rugby clubhouse in the world and people will join in. This was also the tour song of the 1971 Lions still the only Lions team to win a test series in NZ. I love the concept of the Lions and hope it always has a place in the rugby calendar.

Glory - Common/John Legend. Tribute to Dr Martin Luther King one of my heroes and a song Molly (my daughter) and I both love. With Trump in the White House the words are more relevant today than ever.

Book: "The Miracle of the Andes" which tells the story of the Old Christians rugby team from Uruguay, who's plane crashed in the Andes. The book is written by Nando Parrado who, with one of his teammates, climbed 17,000 feet high mountains in jeans, rugby boots and a few t-shirts on a journey leading to the



Family:
Keaney
with his
brother,
left, and
his
Vandals
family,
below



eventual rescue of the survivors 72 days after the crash.

Luxury item: The best photo album of family and friends I could put together.

An advertisement for LUSH Landscape Design Construction. The top half shows a modern garden with a paved area, a wooden trellis, and lush greenery. The bottom half features a dark overlay with white text: "LANDSCAPE • DESIGN • CONSTRUCTION" and "We make the outdoors more beautiful". The LUSH logo is centered in the middle of the overlay. At the very bottom, the website "WWW.LUSHLANDSCAPES.CO.UK" is displayed in green text.

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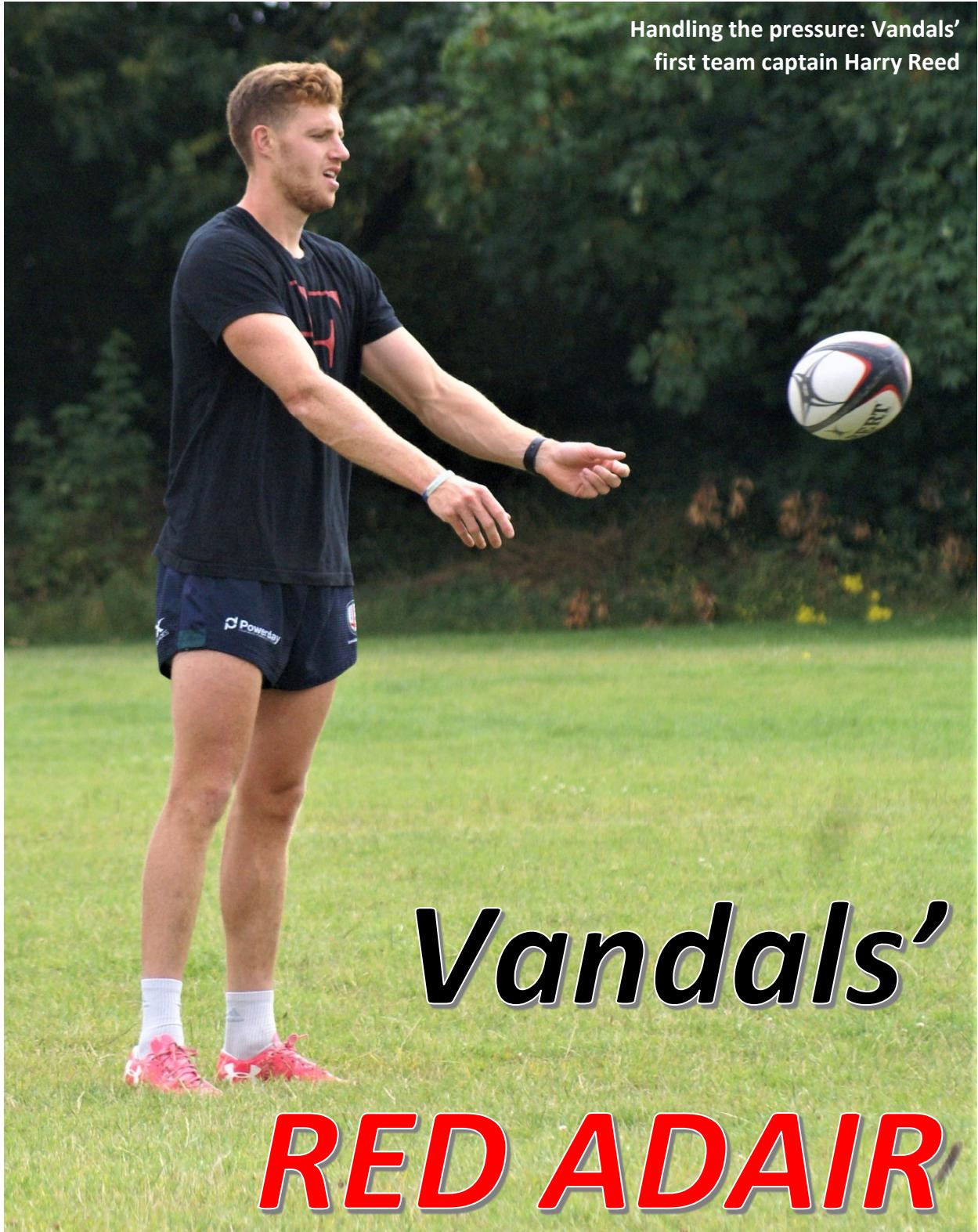
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Handling the pressure: Vandals' first team captain Harry Reed

Vandals' **RED ADAIR**

Scoring a 'try' under his own posts might not have been the best way to announced himself as a player at Weybridge Vandals, but skipper Harry Reed has done a lot of growing up since then, writes Stuart Amos.

The flamed-haired centre is more than just the club's first team captain, he is simply part of the furniture at Brownacres and has been for more than two decades – despite being only in his 20s.



Get in there: Reed celebrates scoring a try against local rivals
Reeds Weybridge

With his dad Steve - former first team player of yesteryear and current club captain - needing no excuse to 'get down the club' it was inevitable Harry would follow in his footsteps.

Even so, few who witnessed his Vandals bow, will have envisaged his journey from the minis to the first team.

"My first training session was for the minis section in the U4s," he said.

"I remember catching the ball for the first time, fending one, stepping another and running back to my own line for perhaps the greatest 'own try' the U4s had ever seen."

"Back then, we started playing really young because a), the old man loved any reason to get down the club."

"And b), it was usually an excuse for both parents to get down and have a drink with their friends on a Sunday. It was not because they wanted me to be the next Jonny Wilkinson, contrary to popular belief."

"Since then, I have played every single season of my rugby playing career at Vandals."

"Even during my college and university days, I still managed to squeeze it in, playing up to three games a week."

After a more than satisfactory first season as skipper, the 26-year-old remains surrounded by team-mates who have shared his journey through the junior ranks.

Established first team players, such as Luke Phairs, Joe Spencer, Alistair Davidson and George Bolster were all part of Reed's successful age group team.

And that remains a big reason why he has continued to play for the club for so long and why Vandals are beginning to flourish in the London & South East Leagues once more.

"Growing up, all my friends continued to play for the same Vandals side from when we were four-years-old up to 17-years-old – bar a few individuals anyway."

"The vast majority of my Vandals age group, played all the way through," said Reed, who describes Vandals as a 1,000-member extension of his family.

"The values I play the game for were built primarily upon friendship and enjoyment, which made it very easy for me to remain at the club for as long as I have.

"We had the added benefit of being a very successful side coming up through the club. The temptation to leave wasn't really there, when I was having so much fun playing winning rugby, with friends I'd had for years.

"From playing with these lads, some of whom I've played with for the last 15-20 years, means we know each other's playing style inside out.

"I think that experience and camaraderie, carries over hugely into our success as a senior side, and the way we play as a team now."

Reed, who was named player of the season in August, has suffered the disappointment of relegation to the Surrey Leagues, but has also enjoyed the highs of winning promotion and lifting the Surrey Cup for the first time in the club's history.



In the running: Harry Reed has high hopes for Vandals this term

And while last season, under new head coach Damian Porter, was curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic, he believes there is plenty to be positive about next term.

With at least a top three finish high on the agenda.



Chasing the dream: Weybridge Vandals' seniors have been training hard this summer, while observing social distancing guidelines in light of the coronavirus pandemic

"This year we hope to come out the blocks fast and be better, as we continue to build our side upon the very talented pool of players we have," added Reed, who will miss the local derbies with fierce rivals Reeds Weybridge after their promotion to London Division Two South West

"It's a tough league and with the uncertainty of coronavirus beginning to be left behind us, we hope to be, and there's no reason we shouldn't be, a top side in the league this coming season.

"Our game plan last year was built upon defence and it proved to be one of the better in the league, most notably defending for 40 minutes against a great Reeds side at home last year.

"With a completely new team at the start of last season, another year together will only make us better as players and a team.

"Some work on the breakdown area and a very dangerous back line will put us in good stead for where we need to be."

And with his dad – alongside rugby chairman Ken Sewell - helping spearhead a new sponsorship and marketing drive, he believes the health of the club post-Covid and beyond, is in safe hands.

"Vandals is ultimately run by volunteers, and the effort put in by these people is unparalleled to any other club I have seen," he said.

"We are not a rich club. We are able to run through fundraisers, dinners, membership fees and donations.

"It's these types of things and events, and of course the people running them, that makes Vandals such a great place to be, whether it's for rugby, netball, cricket or just for the social aspect.

"It's been a huge part of my life and given me some of my closest friends and memories to last a lifetime."



Claiming the spoils: Reed, bottom right, enjoys the moment with his teammates as Vandals celebrate winning some silverware at the Middlesex Sevens

*The Vandal also asked Harry Reed pick the best Vandals XV from players he has played with at Brownacres... and here it is.

1. Matt Dukoff-Gordon, 2. Dylan Johnson, 3. Craig Decateau, 4. Daryl Bryant, 5. Adam Bullet, 6. Darren Lockyer, 7. Jon Cottom, 8. Darren Livett, 9. Luke Carter, 10. James Wellden, 11. George Bolster, 12. Gregg Cushing, 13. Cassian Bramham Law, 14. Gregg Lynch, 15. Harry Weatherhall.



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Working up a sweat: Elliot Awin, left, takes the strain during a CrossFit session at Newwave

Making waves

If you ever wanted to illustrate the legacy the 2012 Olympics has left behind in Britain, then look no further than former international rower Frazer Brent.

The towering 31-year-old, founder of NewWave Crossfit in Cobham, signed up to UK Sport's 'Sporting Giants' scheme in 2007 – a programme designed to identify individuals with the potential to compete at the London Games in handball, volleyball and rowing.

Brent went on to win selection from more than 5,000 applicants to join the Great Britain rowing squad, going on to represent Team GB at the 2010 U23 World Championships in Belarus, where he collected a bronze medal in the men's eight boat.

Other members of the crew in Brest that day included 2016 Rio Olympics gold medallist Will

Satch and 2015 men's coxed pairs world champion Matt Tarrant.

Fast-forward 10 years and Brent's experience of elite level training is being passed on to Elmbridge and the surrounding areas in the unlikely surroundings of Bramley Edge Farm in Redhill Road.

But if you thought CrossFit – a physical exercise philosophy incorporating elements from high-intensity interval training, Olympic weightlifting, powerlifting, plyometrics and gymnastics - and NewWave was only for Olympic level athletes, then think again.

"My experience during elite training gave me a real insight into the effort, commitment and personal motivation needed to obtain sustainable benefits from fitness training," he says.

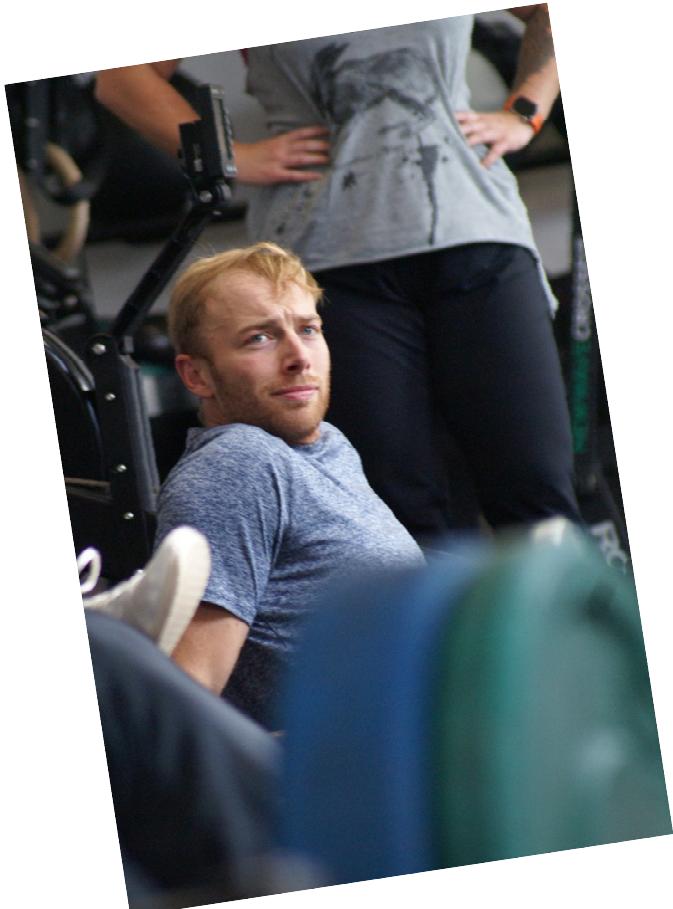
"I discovered CrossFit and its innovative and unique approach to training a few years ago. CrossFit has a competitive edge and I love the variety of skills and movements involved."

"As a personal trainer, I trained people out of my garage gym so opening NewWave was a natural next step to expose more people to the benefits of CrossFit."

"I enjoy watching people progress in all areas of their fitness, strength, speed and mobility and seeing the impact on an individual's mental health and overall wellbeing."

"And I am proud to see our amazing community of all ages, from all walks of life coming together to support each other to work hard, have fun and get better."

NewWave has blossomed in the years since first opening in 2014 and hosts more than 50 sessions a week, including remote workouts, pilates, weightlifting and classes for children and teenagers.



Mr Motivator: Newwave CrossFit founder Frazer Brent, and, left, a member takes a breather

And Brent admits maintaining the personal touch has been his biggest obstacle to overcome as the gym has developed.

"Knowing how good CrossFit and the coaching is, we are not surprised at how we have grown," he explains.

"Once people start training with us, they often bring friends and family and many of our members stay with us for years."

"Expanding the gym while making sure we retain the close-knit community that has always made NewWave special, has been the biggest challenge."

"This sense of community has been something I was particularly humbled by during lockdown."

And Vandals could benefit too if they were to take a stroll to Redhill Road.

"There is no doubt the improvements in strength and fitness from CrossFit will improve performance on the rugby pitch," he added.

"Like with all good Strength & Conditioning programmes, it helps protect against injuries and improves overall health and longevity that isn't sport specific."

For a free taster session at Newwave CrossFit in Cobham visit newwavecrossfit.com or contact Frazer Brent on 07769 277703.



In it together: Newwave prides itself in delivering the attention to detail of personal training in a high energy class environment.



The image shows the website for Sanctuary Kitchens & Bathrooms. At the top is the company logo featuring a stylized figure in a circle above the word "SANCTUARY" in a serif font, with "KITCHENS & BATHROOMS" in a smaller sans-serif font below it. Below the logo are three photographs of modern kitchen and bathroom designs. The first photo shows a kitchen with white cabinets and a dark backsplash. The second shows a kitchen island with two pendant lights and a built-in oven. The third shows a bathroom with a dark vanity and a walk-in shower. Below these images is the tagline "Kitchens & Bathrooms Designed Around You". At the bottom are three circular buttons labeled "DESIGN", "SUPPLY", and "INSTALL". The footer contains the address "128 High Street Shepperton TW17 9BG", the phone number "01932 255465", the email "sales@sanctuarydesign.co.uk", and the website "sanctuarydesign.co.uk".

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The days of



our lives

**Happy days:
Weybridge Vandals
U9s enjoying their
trip to Selsey shortly
before the
coronavirus
lockdown hit the UK**

There is no doubt that Weybridge Vandals have a rich reputation as a touring team, writes Stuart Amos.

A host of former club legends – and regular Owls tourists - developed the wanderlust so much they now live in the far reaches of the planet.

Canada, the Caribbean, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand and the United States are all

destinations where – if you look hard enough – you can find a connection to Brownacres.

Former first team winger Steve Leheup, forward Rob Minskip, number eight Ollie Hankey and ex-head coach Richard Talbot, to name just a few, have all settled overseas.

Vandals' vets team – the Owls – are perhaps the most noted of tourists at the club with legendary trips to California, San Diego,

Vietnam, Cuba, South Africa, Argentina and Barbados living long in the memory.

Owls tours, first established by a group of former first team players in 1979, are based on British Lions Tours with part of the required attire being blue blazers and grey trousers.

Extensive fundraising efforts prior to the trip have always ensured the tourists are well fed and watered while on duty overseas.

Summer balls, silent auctions and race nights have all contributed to the 'kitty' that has fuelled many of the more colourful stories to return to these shores.

Veteran tourist and long-standing club stalwart Terry Berry organised three such tours, starting with the sojourn to Argentina and Uruguay in 1994 – where they played the 'Los Christians' club, a team from which famously had to resort to cannibalism to survive a plane crash in the Andes in 1972.

And his last was the legendary romp in Cuba in 2014, with Vancouver and San Diego & Las Vegas sandwiched in between.

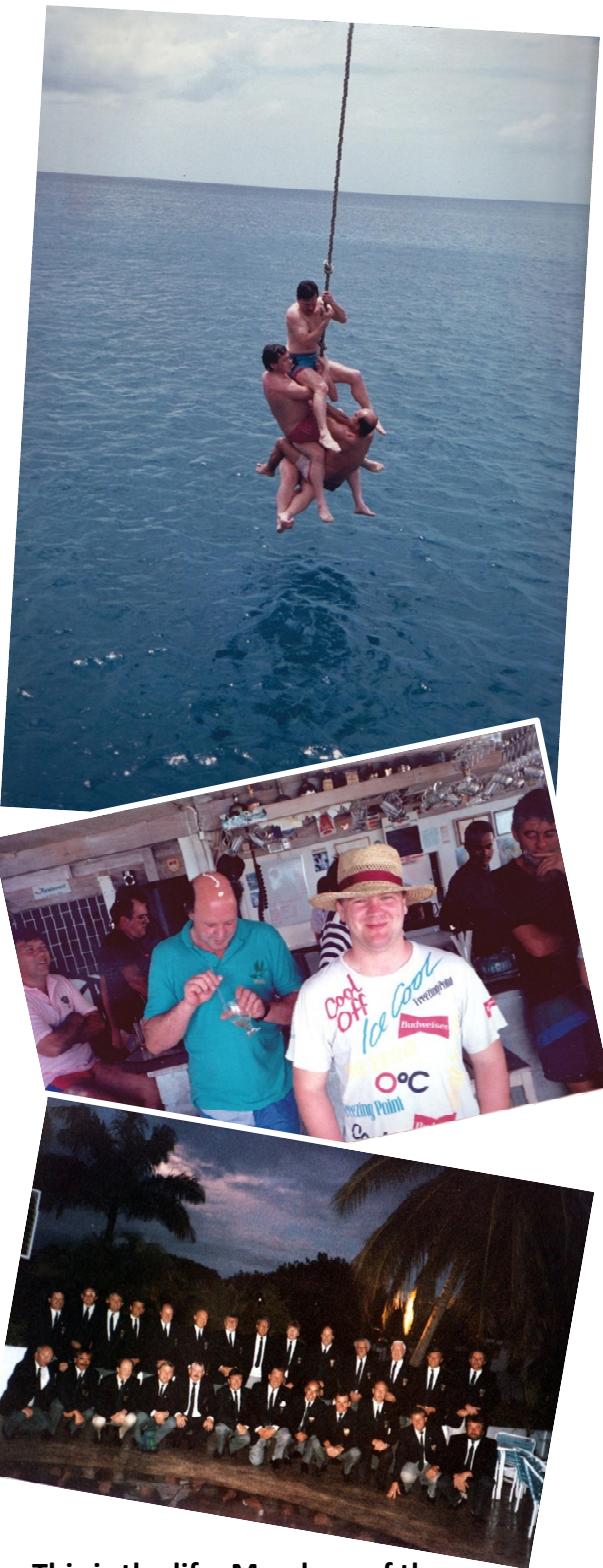
"Cuba stands out as my favourite, as we went at the right time. The country opened up as a tourist destination after that and I doubt it is the same now," he said.

"The happy people, the culture and entertainment were particularly memorable and the country was very welcoming considering it was so poor at the time.

"We had the British Ambassador to Cuba come and watch our first match and also each tourist took shoe boxes filled with educational equipment for the kids at a school we visited.

"They struggled with the cost of such items at the time and to see their faces light up when we handed them out, was really cool."

He added: "Touring is the best for team bonding and making lifelong friends, my motto has always been '**take one week out of your**



This is the life: Members of the Barbados 1997 touring party, top, get to grips with a rope swing, former Vandals president Gareth Owen, middle, soaks up the Caribbean atmosphere, and, bottom, a squad photo in Barbados



Hi ho silver: Members of the Vandals minis coaching team, including Matt Grist, bottom left, and John Clarke, bottom right, get into the spirit of a Wild West squad night out

life, which you will remember for rest of your life'.

Touring at a senior level has sadly become less prolific in recent times, however, rumours of a potential trip to Laos in 2021 are circulating.

Despite the downturn in the senior section – who have also made trips to Newcastle, York and Jersey in recent times – the minis still carry the Vandals torch.

Former chairman Alan Krikorian and fellow committee members Nick Hardy, Matt Dukoff-Gordon and Matt Grist led a trip to Selsey on the final weekend prior to the start of the coronavirus lockdown earlier this year.

Touring has always been a highlight of life in the junior section for parents and players.

And with the youngsters leading the way, Berry believes it might be time for a revival of the senior section's touring tradition – although on a smaller scale.

"Unfortunately, I don't think Laos in 2021 will happen as you need a minimum of 22 players - starting with front row - for two games," he said.

"Coupled with the pandemic and future job uncertainty, costs and time away from family, I think it's at the back of everybody's agenda.

"The world has changed when it comes to this sort of thing.

"The club should first consider maybe a four-day tour in the UK to start with and it should be a regular thing between each season, as it was up to a few years ago."



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Glory days: There are high hopes the Weybridge Vandals' academy can bring more trophy success to Brownacres

The generation game

When Weybridge Vandals launched their academy last term, few would have expected the season to have been such a rousing success.

Under Academy Rugby Director Mark Josse, who stepped down over the summer, the U18 side won 14 of their 19 matches, losing just three along the way.

Among the clubs they faced were teams from Richmond, London Scottish, Esher and London Irish making their record even more impressive.

Reaching the third round of the National Colts Cup and winning through to Waterfall Cup and Harlequins Cup finals were the highlights of a successful first term.

But it is not just the here and now that Josse and the rest of the club is excited about.

"The launch of the WVRFC Academy provides a pathway for our young players to make the transition into senior rugby," he said.

"There were 52 registered players in the squad with 35 playing a regular part in the campaign.

"Training started way back in June and the boys were hard at it every week, with 25 plus regularly training on a Thursday night.

"There is much to look forward to, as in the years ahead these young players will be finding their way into the senior club teams.

"At the time of writing 27 players are now available to play senior rugby at the club next season."

The building blocks may have been put on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic, but measures are in place so the Academy can hit

the ground running upon rugby's return to Brownacres.

Ensuring players are encouraged to take up the chance of playing senior rugby is uppermost in Josse's mind, with the academy transition programme already pencilled in for March 2021.

The biggest problem is retaining players once they head off to university and beyond – tempting them back to the Vandals fold is key.

"The Academy has been working hard to build strong links with the senior club to ensure the boys are given the full Vandals welcome as they start their club careers," added Josse.

"We're in a fantastic position with over 100 players between the ages of 16-19 - that is the fruition of a decade of hard work growing our own talent to push the club forward.

"Plans are being worked on to ensure that the Academy players are given the best experience possible, with the club hoping to run some Saturday Under 21/Development games to tempt back the lads that will go to University."

And with Vandals' men's first team now rising through the London & South East League ranks, the bright future is closer than some might think.



Give youth a chance: Former head coach Merlin O'Donnell, above, was a firm believer in blooding the next generation, establishing an effective blend of youth and experience in his Surrey Cup winning squad, below



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Heart of the matter

One of the advantages of joining a rugby club is the melting pot of people you meet, and Weybridge Vandals is no different.

The club is populated by lawyers, tradesmen, marketing executive, estate agents and train engineers are a few of the more run-of-the-mill occupations to be found on the CVs of the club's members.

Linda Sewell, former Vandals netball coach and wife of rugby section chairman Ken, creates and conducts weddings, funerals and other family ceremonies as a qualified celebrant.

Here she talks about her important role.

The Vandal: What is your connection to Weybridge Vandals?

Linda Sewell: We came down to Vandals when our eldest boy Tom was four-years-old, and his younger brother Chris followed.

The pair of them played at every level coming up through the ranks, and we still have all their medals, certificates and colours.

Chris went on to play for Worthing Raiders while he was at university, and then turned out for Blackheath in National Division One, before injury forced him to retire from competitive rugby.



Here to help: Celebrant and long-standing Vandals member Linda Sewell

Many of you will have seen Tom's flag in the main bar at Vandals.

Tom died in 2008 while on his gap year in New Zealand, aged 19. Our family will always remember and be grateful for the huge support we received from our Vandals family.

He never got to go to university, but he did get his club colours at Vandals, which he was so very proud of.

TV: How did you become a celebrant and why?

LS: Four years ago, I trained as a celebrant through the Fellowship of Professional Celebrants.

I had often heard first hand through my bereavement support work how important a good funeral is for bereaved families, and how they suffered when their goodbye ceremony was not what they wanted.

I have brought all my personal experience into this sphere and try to ensure the families I work with feel supported and achieve the ceremony that is so important to them.

Ceremonies can be as individual as their loved one, and as spiritual or secular as the family wish. I strive to achieve a ceremony that is dignified, personal, appropriate and memorable for the right reasons.

TV: Why have a celebrant-led wedding ceremony?

LS: A celebrant-led ceremony means couples can be where they choose, inside or outdoors.

I have carried out ceremony on a Monet bridge by candle light under the stars, by the sea in Croatia and in chapels in the Surrey Hills. A ceremony is always bespoke, individual and personal, moving and beautiful as the situation deserves.

Each ceremony, whatever the reason for it, is underpinned by love. Love is the glue that holds everything together and is always there, forever.

Ceremony that comes from the heart is the most beautiful, the most meaningful and the most authentic.

TV: How have you adapted to the coronavirus crisis?

LS: We have had to re-think funeral practice and they have become increasingly personal with limited numbers, yet far reaching when services have been live streamed.

It still feels strange not to be able to give someone a reassuring touch, or shake their hand. My heart goes out to all couples who have had their wedding cancelled or postponed.

Your day will come, and can still be truly wonderful, even if some things have to change.

To discuss your celebrancy requirements with Linda visit lindasewellcelebrant.co.uk or call 07850 839472.

The advertisement features three images of outdoor fire pits. The top left shows a large, round, modern fire pit with a stone base and a small flame. The top right shows a man sitting at a dark wooden table with a fire pit in the center, smiling. The bottom left shows two smaller, round metal fire pits on a gravel surface. The bottom right contains text: "be outdoors", "OUTDOOR LIVING at CEDAR NURSERY", and "Browse in store or online to view a wide range of fire pits, fire bowls and fire tables for outdoor living in style." At the bottom, there is contact information: "Call 01932 862473", "Click www.landscaping.co.uk", and "Visit Horsley Road, Cobham, KT11 3JX". The Cedar Nursery logo is also present.



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Back our boys

Running back: Veteran Weybridge Vandals prop Wayne Mason, above, leads the charge during pre-season and the club's sponsorship team is working just as hard in the hunt for new backers to add more beef to the club's financial bone

Weybridge Vandals have launched an appeal to local businesses to back to the club's revival post-lockdown.

The club's finances have been hit hard by the corona crisis with rugby halted and two mini festivals cancelled – not to mention the annual beer festival falling by the way side.

And with the 'City Lunch' – which is responsible for 75% of the rugby section's budget – likely

to be affected, the rugby committee has stepped up measures to uncover new revenue streams.

Club captain Steve Reed, alongside chairman Ken Sewell and sponsorship consultant Joanna Brown, has been leading the effort to unlock new commercial sponsorship opportunities in Elmbridge, with the release of this magazine – and the subsequent advertising space in it – being a key part of the strategy.

Weybridge businesses, so long an untapped source of revenue, have been invited to back the club to the tune of up to £700 (plus VAT) for a pitch-side banner and a slot on a new media board to be positioned by the entrance to Brownacres.

Stand-alone pitch-side advertising is available for just £500 (plus VAT) per year as the men's senior first team prepare for the new London Division Three South West campaign after last term was curtailed.

While £300 (plus VAT) per year will secure a spot on the media board, which is also likely to be used as a backdrop to post-match award photographs and other media commitments.

And Vandals, Surrey Cup winners in 2019, is urging its members to dip into their contacts to encourage businesses to back the club as rugby makes a return.

"As a committee we are genuinely concerned the City Lunch will not be possible this year due to the restrictions," said Reed.

"Even if it does go ahead, we cannot see how it could be as successful as recent years in the current climate.

"We would be neglecting our responsibilities if we did not alert our members to the need for additional support from local businesses and members, particularly, if we are unable to run the City Lunch.



It could be you: Pitch-side banners, above, and media board spaces, below, are available to sponsors

"A huge amount of work has gone into our commercial sponsorship campaign since February and numerous local businesses are looking to build relationships with us once we are back at the club, and they themselves, are in a position to move forward."

He added: "If you have a business, work for a business, know of someone who has a business or you are an individual who would like to support the rugby section in what will be a very difficult season please contact us."

All money raised from this initiative will go directly to the rugby section.

Anyone interested in purchasing a slot on the media board or a pitch-side banner should email:

weybridgevandalsrfcsponsorship@gmail.com.

Two versions of a media board sponsorship template for Weybridge RFC. Both versions feature a dark blue header with the club's logo and the text "Vandals RFC". Below the header is a green banner with the text "Proud to be supported by local businesses". The main area consists of a grid of 12 yellow squares arranged in four rows and three columns. In the first version, all 12 squares are empty. In the second version, the bottom-left square is filled with a small blue dot, indicating a sponsored position.



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