

Andy, some of this might help the history section on the website?

What do you think? J. Feeley

Dumfries RFC



The Dumfries line-up for the 1991 Octocentenary Invitation Cup match against Glasgow. Back Row (l to r): A. Graham, H. MacKay, L. Davidson, A. Craik, G. McKirdle, A. Sloan, R. Marchant, C. Barbour. Middle: G. Eckstein, J. Burnside, P. Nolan, D.L. Murray, B. MacGillivray, A. Donaldson, J.F. MacKenzie (president). Front: J. McKirdle, R. McDonald, M.W. Hunt (capt), D.B. Murray (vice-capt), J. Richardson, and A. Howat.

Ron Evans profiles last season's Division 4 winners, Dumfries, and finds consistency beginning to pay off.

TO those familiar with the commitment to the round rather than the oval ball in Dumfries, it will come as no surprise to learn that the first club from the town to be admitted to the SRU was Dumfries Rangers (perhaps it was, as has been suggested, a letter intended for Park Gardens which took a right turn at the Eaglesham road end). What will raise many eyebrows, however, is the season of Rangers' admission, 1876-77 - the season in which

membership of the SRU reached 21, in which the first fifteen a side internationals were played, and in which Scotland, for the match against Ireland, played a single full back for the first time.

No records appear to exist as to the development of Dumfries Rangers and the club re-emerged as Dumfries in 1901, then following a further lapse was admitted to the SRU as Dumfries RFC in 1923.

Playing at Downfield until 1939,

then at Marchfield and Summerhill, the pre and immediate post-war years were a constant struggle on both the financial and playing fronts despite, as is so often the case, the efforts of a dedicated hard core of members who contrived to keep the club afloat.

The turning point in the club's history was surely in 1953, the year in which the club negotiated an extremely generous lease with the Dumfries and Lockerbie Agricultural Society to play at Park Farm, and with the acquisition of a permanent home came an unprecedented expansion on the playing front.

It became necessary to appoint a formal selection committee, and the appearance, in 1955, of a second fifteen (with by 1959 some 47

players available), allowed the club to expand an already respectable fixture list.

Why mention such a seemingly mundane event as the formation of a 2nd XV? To clubs used to a regular influx of players from schools, universities, or, as in the case of the Borders, from a large junior club pool, second, third, and in many cases more XV's were the norm, but in rugby's outposts a second XV was a vital step forward.

Selections assumed greater validity with players playing for a place, and inevitably led to higher standards. Fixture lists grew, bringing the opportunity of a better quality of match - all of which went a long way to improving club spirit.

Although its location classifies it as a Border town, Dumfries lies