

Guy's Hospital (Penguins) v Old Beccehamians B XV Sat 25th October 2008

On a cold and grey October afternoon we gathered at Sparrow's Den, the home of the Old Beccehamians. The wind swirled and the familiar sloping bowl at one end cast our memories back to games played for the 1st XV on these very pitches. Evoking those images were not only the surroundings but the faces of Costello, Worth, Llewellyn and Ryan; past pairings that would cast fear into the minds of opposing back rows, midfielders and sheep in equal measure. The chilly breeze was tempered by the whisky breath emanating from the previous night's over indulgence; it was, after all, Wocca's Birthday Match! He was hoping to have celebrated at HOP but alas this was not to be. However, the opposition were celebrating a 50th Birthday and so it was a perfect match. The friendly nature and spirit flowed on the outside as well as being churned, for some, on the inside.

Guy's performed a Haka in honour of the Birthday 'boys', with tongues, hand gestures and singing... '*Haka Birthday to You*'...! Having probed and tested the defence in open play, it was fitting that Jez scored the first try. From a tap penalty, the forwards were a decoy as Worth came on an arching run from midfield. He took the pass and continued the diagonal path to score in the corner. The Penguins continued to dominate and spent the first half in Beccehamians' 22. It was literally an uphill battle from that line! The scrummaging was excellent with Nick Tobin and Tony Rose combining beautifully to create front-5 dominance. From sustained pressure after a set piece, backs then forwards linked to send Llewellyn over for a try. The referee was poorly placed, apologised and gave us a 5-metre scrum instead! The pressure continued as we stole ball in the loose through Ryan and Tsolakides, and tested their defences with sniping runs from Gush, Costello and Wouter.

Shortly after Llewellyn had been denied, he found himself in a little space, close to the line, with support runners to his left. He sold an outrageous dummy and crossed the white-wash for deserved glory. With a newly acquired kicking-tee the conversion was duly scuffed! Wouter, at 10, distributed immaculately for the centres to attack and commit defenders while his tactical kicking kept Beccs turning and the Penguins 'flying'. Lee chased superbly all afternoon. Once more on their line, a solid scrum enabled Gush to pick and dart blind. With only one defender to beat Costello was on hand to receive the pass and score in the corner.

Having been up hill and against the wind we were happy to turn round 15-0 in the lead. Refreshing water and idle banter appeared instead of the expected port. Wocca was hoping to be pulled off at this point but it was explained that we only provide oranges at this club and in any case there were ladies present!

In typical Guy's fashion, we allowed the opposition to come straight back and score 2 tries while we contemplated the warm shower, toasting victory and eating the birthday cake. Beccehamians came out far stronger than us. Their first try came from a quick penalty and fast hands; we were outnumbered and slow to react. Their second came after a surging attack from the Penguins! Great rucking, slick handling between forwards and backs and super support play took us deep into their half. Suddenly from what should have been a penalty to Guy's, Beccs had broken from their awarded scrum and breached our line. Jez hunted down the runner and then a magnificent tackle, by Manson-Bahr, came to nought as they popped to the supporting winger. Fortunately that was our wake-up call: at 15-12!

Chewy and Davis provided strength and grit at key moments and Hill was like a terrier around the fringes. The forwards continued to present clean, quick ball for the half-backs. Plenty of opportunities were created as the midfield was held up and the ball went wide. Alas the finishing or the telling pass was not quite there. The final try came once more off quick ball. Howell and Gibson provided the platform then a neat scissors gave Costello a run up the middle. He showed great strength to beat his opposite number and hold off two tacklers. The conversion (with a different T)

was cheered by the sherry squad, who had boosted the number of regular Penguin supporters. The unbeaten run continues for the Penguins but more importantly this was a lovely way to celebrate the 40th Birthday of Jez Worth: ex 1st XV Captain, stalwart, and Guy's Man, through and through. Happy Birthday Wocca!

Team: George Tsolakides, Terry Gibson, Chris Howell, Nick Tobin, Tony Rose, Paul Chew, Greg Ryan, Wayne Llewellyn, Pat Gush (Captain), Kielblock Wouter, Pat Davis, Jeremy Worth, John Costello, Richard Lee, David Manson-Bahr, Graham Hill.

Result: W 22-12

T: J Worth, W Llewellyn, J Costello x 2

C: Gush

