



MELROSE









S

HORNETS



PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

...THE SEVENS WILL SOON **BE UPON US. IT'S GREAT** TO SEE THAT TWO LOCALS WILL BE INDUCTED INTOTHE **MELROSE SEVEN'S HALL OF** FAME. CONGRATULATIONS **TO OUR OWN CARL HOGG** AND GALA'S ARTHUR **'HOVIS' BROWN..."**



In December we had good wins, against Highland at the Greenyards and away at Dundee, and then in January a great win at Netherdale in the rearranged league match against Gala. Talking of Gala, the Boxing Day game for the Waverley Cup was a brilliant afternoon – and night. The Storm led the way with a win in the early kick off and that was followed up with the 1XV reclaiming the silverware in the main event What was just as pleasing was that over 2,000 supporters turned

up to watch the rugby. Thank you all and I hope you had a great day.

Thanks to Storm Isha, our away game at Glasgow Accies was postponed and will be rearranged for a later date.

The Sevens will soon be upon us. It's great to see that two locals will be inducted intothe Melrose Seven's Hall of fame. Congratulations to our own Carl Hogg and Gala's Arthur 'Hovis' Brown. As a ball boy in the late 60's Hovis is one of the first players I remember. He played in a great Gala team but was the one that made the seven really click.

Away from the rugby, congratulations to Lachlan Gaddie on his appointment as left-hand man for this year's Melrose Festival. All the best for the summer and good luck with the riding lessons.

Sadly, on behalf of the club, I'd like to extend our deepest condolences to the families of past players lan Gribben, Bert Blacklock, Marshall Fairbairn, and Robbie Bubba Robinson, who sadly passed away over the past two months.

Hopefully I'll see you all soon down at the clubhouse.

GRANT HOGG PRESIDENT, MELROSE RUGBY

JANUARY 2024



WELCOME to the first Rose of 2024, belated Season's Greetings and best wishes for the New Year.







Q&A - ROB & BRENDAN

AFTER A RECENT Storm match at the Greenyards, I sat down in a local drinking establishment with Director of Rugby and Club Stalwart Rob Moffat to compare whiskies and share some rugby stories and thoughts on Melrose Rugby.

We started the ball rolling by talking about our earliest rugby memories.

ROB: I started playing rugby for Darnick in the Crichton cup in the U8's. My Dad (he was blind at the time) ran the Youth Club in the village and made sure Darnick had teams in the Crichton Cup, at U-8, U-11, U-14 and U-17 levels. I was fortunate to play for the Colts at Melrose Rugby and then 256 games for the senior side. I had a few caps for the South, Jordanhill College in Glasgow (where I studied), Scottish Colleges, British Colleges. I was selected twice for Scotland B and I have one retrospective full Scotland cap. DIRECTOR OF RUGBY, ROB MOFFAT IN CONVERSATION WITH THE MAN BEHIND THE ROSE, BRENDAN MOLLOY...

BRENDAN: I grew up in the West of Ireland. A small town called Ballina in County Mayo. Famous now because it's where Joe Biden's ancestors hail from. I played Gaelic football in Summer, and Rugby in Winter. When I went to work in Dublin in the 80s I played in the second row for Blackrock Rugby Club. I played around the same time as Willie Duggan and Hugo McNeil, but at a much lower level. I loved rugby... I loved that there was a role for all shapes and sizes...the fatties in the front row, the speedsters on the wing, and the big lanky ones (me!) in the second row.

And can you remember the first international that you attended?

ROB: Not sure if it was my first but Scotland v Wales at Murrayfield in 1975. The official attendance was 104,000 but many thousands more couldn't get in! We were some of them. It was in my final year at school - one of my mates drove us up in his car but we ended up driving back and watched the second half in his house at Stow!!

BRENDAN: My first international was as a 13 year old at the old Lansdowne Road in 1975... Ireland v Scotland. We were no good at rugby back then, but that year Scotland weren't any better. We won the match, and it was the first time I saw a (very inebriated) Scotsman in a kilt.

Right Rob, onto the serious stuff! Why do you do what you do at Melrose Rugby?

ROB: I feel very privileged to have been brought up in Darnick and Melrose and now to live in the centre of town. For me the rugby club is a huge part of the town and community and I want to see it thrive and be a better place in the future. We have many youngsters playing the game for real enjoyment and they are supported by many super volunteers - for me the future is bright.

BRENDAN: My wife and I moved to the Borders in 2017 having lived in Edinburgh for 30 years, 25 of those working with Standard Life. I retired in 2019 (the commute wrecked me!) and so I needed to look for something to do, to keep the 'grey matter' active as it were. For me my involvement at the Club is about 'giving something back'. I have 4 children

and 6 grandchildren, spread across Scotland, England and Dubai. I have seen how vital an active involvement in sport is for their physical and mental wellbeing. Rugby has helped them grow and mature, and I see that too with the young lads at Melrose. The players, especially the kids, get a huge amount from their participation, and it's not just rugby skills. It helps to shape them as young men and prepares them for 'real life' after school. It's very rewarding.

involved in the club. Was it by accident

ROB: After playing, I had a few years

away when I concentrated solely on

teaching. Then the late Mike Bleasdale

asked me if I'd come down and help

with the Thirds. I did that briefly and

then helped Jim Telfer with the Firsts

before taking over as coach when

he became SRU Director of Rugby.

(I coached Borders, Glasgow,

I then was a Pro Coach with the SRU

Edinburgh, Scotland Sevens & Scotland

Let's talk about how we first got

or design?

... THE RUGBY CLUB IS A HUGE PART OF THE TOWN AND COMMUNITY AND I WANT TO SEE IT THRIVE AND BE A BETTER PLACE IN THE FUTURE. WE HAVE MANY YOUNGSTERS PLAYING THE GAME FOR REAL ENJOYMENT AND THEY ARE SUPPORTED BY MANY SUPER VOLUNTEERS - FOR ME THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT...."

A) for 14 years so then was away from the club. I then helped and supported the coaches for a couple of years before becoming Director of Rugby. That involves trying to support all teams at the club and any other job that I can help with.

BRENDAN: Mine was totally by accident: Jerry Brett was helping me with my retirement. At my first meeting with him, we spent 10 minutes talking about retirement funds, and 50 minutes talking about the U18 Wasps!! I was recruited as Wasps Team Manager the next week and so far I haven't looked back. Right now, as well as Wasps Team Manager, I'm secretary to The Board, I work with Phil and the team on the Sevens, each month I produce *The Rose*, I'm hoping to launch a new club website this month, I do 'Events' and 'Membership'. My rule is 'As long as I'm enjoying it, and it's not impacting my home life, then I'll keep doing it'.



Right, for the really serious stuff, what's your favourite whisky / whiskey?

ROB: Whisky – Caol Ila

BRENDAN: I know you're a whisky nut Rob, and I could never compete with a great Scotch Malt, but my favourite is a simple Jamesons Irish Whiskey with a splash of water.

Let's finish on our ambitions for the club.

ROB: We have a proud history and respect all that the club stands for, but I want to see an even better future for the club. This would involve the whole community - Lauder, Earlston (whilst also supporting their club), Newtown, St Boswells and Melrose. It would see the club as a modern facility, not solely a rugby club. We are situated in the middle of the town – ideal for people to socialise and enjoy themselves. The club to be a thriving centre of sporting and social activity built on real positive energy involving everyone.

BRENDAN: I'm with you on that Rob. But in order to create this legacy, we need to get the membership and the community behind us and then secure serious funding. And, with the best will in the world, I don't think we're talking about selling raffle tickets. Some clubs have secured their long-term financial security, and we need to look at

what is best for Melrose Rugby. This could be by seeking Charitable Status, but we need to investigate properly, and set ourselves up for our players, our members, and the community that we are at the heart of.

And with that, we wished each other good health and made serious inroads into the Caol IIa and Jamesons.

SLÁINTE!



MELROSE SEVENS

EXCITEMENT BUILDSFOR

WITH JUST over two months remaining, anticipation is mounting for the upcoming Melrose Sevens, set to unfold from the 11th to the 13th of April. This year's three-day tournament promises a thrilling celebration of rugby, community and sportsmanship.

The festivities commence on Thursday 11th with the prestigious Jackson Distillers Hall of Fame Dinner. Melrose's own Carl Hogg and Gala Rugby's Arthur Hovis Brown will be honoured, taking their rightful places in the Melrose Sevens Hall of Fame, commemorating their outstanding contributions to the sport.

Friday 12th is dedicated to nurturing the future stars of rugby. The Merchiston Castle School Junior Rugby Clinic in the morning will provide young talents with expert guidance, setting the stage for an afternoon of intense competition, with Under-13, Under-14 and Under-15 exhibition matches and the



Under-16 Drummond Cup. As evening descends, the Melrose Wasps Under-18s Sevens Tournament will take place, with the eight Border sides ying for the coveted Jim Telfer Cup. This tournament will mark a special collaboration with the Hong Kong Sevens. The winners of the Melrose Wasps Under-18s Shield

competition will clinch the inaugural Hong Kong Shield. Meanwhile, the winners of the men's and women's competition at this year's Hong Kong Sevens will be presented with the 'Melrose Shield', adding a new dimension to both tournament's international allure. We would like to thank Hong Kong Sevens for their support.

Friday night will see the debut of the Celebration of Women in Sport – an awards ceremony celebrating the accomplishments of female sporting stars in the Scottish Borders. There are over thirty shortlisted nominees across five categories, including 'Team of the Year' and 'Coach of the Year'. This event promises an evening of inspiration and celebration. A special mention must go to our very own Elise Ross, Holly Leach, Bryony Hawthorne and the Earlston Girls Under 15s Rugby team who have been shortlisted in their respective categories.

All eyes turn to the hallowed grounds of the Greenyards on Saturday 13th, where the 1883 Centenary Cup Tournament will captivate spectators with twenty-four teams battling fiercely for championship glory. Defending champions Monaco Impi's, Samurai, Durham University and Lion Rugby 7s are among the powerhouses competing for the 1883 Centenary Cup. The Melrose Sevens crowd will be treated to the likes of Zimbabwe Internationalist Arun Watkins representing Lion Rugby 7s and ex Worcester Warriors and Bristol Bears star, Augustin Slowik who will pull on the shirt for defending champions, Monaco Impi's. The Women's Tournament, returning after an impressive debut last year, will feature six teams vying for the Mike Bleasdale Cup. The competition boasts the return of reigning champions, the Lionesses, facing formidable opponents like South African side, DeltaDrone Tuks and the Scottish side, Hearts + Balls,

Saturday will conclude with a vibrant party in the Fanzone, headlined by local DJ Callum Gallacher, providing the perfect ending to a weekend filled with rugby excellence and community celebration.

TICKETS: www.melrose7s.co.uk





SPONSORSHIP INCLUDES

MELROSE RUGBY is delighted to announce the launch of its new club website. Designed by local website designer Amy Miskelly of elliott + miskelly, the new site has a clean and fresh feel, and will make it easy for you to navigate, and to find the things that are most commonly looked for, information such as fixtures, player updates, newsletters and match reports. The site is easy to update so we can be confident that our 'shop window' to the world is accurate, and something that we can be proud of.

Many of the new site design features were used in the new Southern Knights website which was launched last Summer.

Amy explained the main differences with the old club website, and why we needed to change. "We learned from talking to members, advertisers and the general public that we needed a simple website that was fast to load, easy to use, performed as well on mobile devices as desktops. Our new Homepage is laid out like a quick guide to easily access everything you'd want on a weekly basis, like fixtures, results, news and player profiles. We also provide links to our partners' and advertisers' websites."

"You can drill down into more detail if you like. For instance, we have created a timeline of the club's history a comprehensive guide to our facilities and venue hire. We have details for parents on each of our Youth Groups, and information on hospitality events at the Greenyards."

What do you think of it? We would love to hear back from you - send your feedback, the good, the bad and the ugly, to office@melroserugby.org

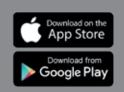
THE BRAND NEW Melrose Sevens app has officially launched. The official app is your go to for all information needed - stay on top of news, access programmes and fixtures lists, receive vendor information, see event maps and purchase tickets

JANUARY 2024





... WE LEARNED **FROM TALKING** TO MEMBERS, **ADVERTISERS AND THE PUBLIC** THAT WE NEEDED **A SIMPLE** WEBSITE "









SENIOR RUGBY UPDATE

BY HEAD COACH RUGBY IS A IAIN 'CHEG" CHISHOLM ROLLERCOASTER

...WE'RE TARGETING A SECOND PLACE FINISH IN NATIONAL LEAGUE 1..."

RUGBY is a rollercoaster and it certainly has been a season of ups and downs. Brilliant highs and gut-wrenching lows. We've seen some outstanding team performances with a scattering of inconsistencies along the way but overall, I'm excited about the future of this team and club as a whole.

I wish I was writing this with our 1XV sitting comfortably in second place in National League 1, but instead, we dropped points to bottom side Dundee at home at the weekend after five really positive performances, including two derbies against Gala. Before the Dundee game, the coaching group really felt we'd achieved an element of tactical clarity with our players and are really working towards embedding our playing identity which I'm sure you'll agree, is amazing to watch when we get it right. That needs to start happening more often than not if we're going to push on next season.

Were we complacent against Dundee? Did we just expect it to happen because they were sitting at the bottom of the table? Did we get the game plan right? Was our messaging as coaches suitable? Was our preparation right? Did I get selection wrong? Have we been driving standards? Have we

been behaving in a way that models the behaviour we want to see from our players? Whatever the answer to these questions, it's clear that we went away from the plan and our own understanding of what making high percentage plays are. It's our systems and processes that give us our strength. When the players understand what it looks like and what it feels like, we're so difficult to defend against, but we went away from that against Dundee.

We want to be known for how fast we play and our ability to use the ball to beat defences. But we can't undervalue the physical side of the game that unlocks our speed and ball movement. We've battled with set-piece issues this season which has become a positive part to our game thanks to Robbie Brown and Nick Beavon. We've some young lads coming through in the front row that could be Melrose centurions and I'm really excited to see them pull on the Melrose jersey in the future but they've got to go and grab the opportunity themselves.

Against Gala at Netherdale, we offloaded successfully over 30 times. That doesn't happen when we're forcing offloads, but making calculated decisions based on what's gone before and the understanding/ feel we have for the moment we're in. We're finding that when our forwards pass the

ball, we score more points. When we don't kick the ball out, we create fatigue and dominance or parity when playing a pack that we give away weight to.

We're targeting a second place finish in National League 1. We made that goal harder for ourselves last weekend, and with Ayr taking their foot off the gas and losing to teams around us, we've got to take control of our own story and finish the league campaign on a positive. Following the finish of the league, we get an opportunity to compete for the Border League. We know what to expect from opposition teams and understand where they'll go after us. But we're up for the challenge.

Since the big Boxing Day derby win, the Storm have struggled to pick up fixtures as the opposition have been unable to field a side. As with the 1XV, availability of players and injuries have played their part in where we are. What is the future for 2XV rugby? That's a conversation that a lot of people have some great opinions on but here at home, we're very lucky that we have really loyal and dedicated players who keep turning up week in and out.





KIERAN COONEY

FAREWELL KIERAN MELROSE

BY CLUB DIRECTOR ROBIN WOOD



THE CLUB'S General Manager, Kieran Cooney, has taken up a new, exciting role as Business **Development Manager with** Edinburgh Rugby.

When Kieran became Southern Knights General Manager in late August 2022, his was a familiar face around the Greenyards, stepping into a new role with

the club he had been closely associated with both as player and latterly as a coach, and as a member of the Junior Section.

The position was new and so Kieran had no road map to follow on day one. He took on this challenge with relish and quickly identified the key deliverable as growing sponsorship opportunities to help fund the Southern Knights.

His initial focus was to find sponsorship opportunities focussed on the whole match day experience. Here are examples:

- Ball Crew sponsorship
- Training Bag sponsorship
- Match Ball Sponsorship
- Photography Sponsorship

Next, he looked to differentiate the sponsorship of Knights and Club players by engaging with the

Knights players and getting them to identify a commercial sponsor wherever possible.

He also identified that in the difficult economic climate, sponsorship associated with Youth and Social Inclusion were most likely to grow support.

In parallel with his commercial activities, he also took responsibility for recruiting a match day team to support the preparation and care of all rugby matters, freeing him up to deliver social media output.

In the Summer of 2023, after a Board Review of the cub's operational model, Kieran took on the wider remit of Club General Manager. He immediately assisted in the transition to this new model and identified a number of ways to empower members of the support team to step up into wider match day roles.

With his background in the SRU he has also been at the centre of two capital funding proposals which will deal with a serious roof issue and allow the redesign of the entrance hall and Ned Haig Bar.

There is no doubt that Kieran will be a huge success in his new role with Edinburgh Rugby. He will by every measure leave a big space to fill, and so we are delighted that Doug Crawford is going to take up this challenge when he starts as the new Knights General Manager on the 12th February.

NEWS

TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY

A WEE UPDATE following Malcolm Changleng's article in the November Rose on Syrian Brothers Omar and Ahmad of Gala Rugby.

Following on from last month's Rose article about Deaf rugby playing Syrian refugee Omar Darwish, we are delighted to update you that the Syrian rugby union picked up on the article and have selected Omar to play for the Syrian National Sevens team! He attends a training camp and then plays in an International Sevens Tournament in Saudi Arabia.

Our heartiest congratulations Omar from all at Melrose Rugby!



02 SEP	GHA RFC (A)	42-26
09 SEP	GHK RFC (H)	68-7
16 SEP	BIGGAR RFC (A)	0-36
23 SEP	AYR RFC (H)	13-35
30 SEP	GALA RFC (H)	53-31
07 OCT	HIGHLAND (A)	17-10
14 OCT	GLASGOW A. (H)	28-62
28 OCT	WATSONIAN (H)	18-11
04 NOV	GHA RFC (H)	40-10
11 NOV	GHK RFC (A)	17-32
18 NOV	BIGGAR RFC (H)	29-45
25 NOV	AYR RFC (A)	69-34
09 DEC	HIGHLAND (H)	34-22
16 DEC	DUNDEE R. (A)	13-53
13 JAN	GALA RFC (A)	21-34
20 JAN	GLASGOW ACCI	ES P-P
27 JAN	DUNDEE R. (H)	26-38
03 FEB	WATSONIAN FC	Α



MINIS & YOUTH RUGBY

UPDATE

A BUSY 2023...

BY FRASER RANKINE & CHARLOTTE MIDFORD

HAPPY NEW YEAR to all our readers from everyone at the Youth Section! To kick off the year, this month, we're taking a bit of a look back at the last year or so, since the Youth Committee group got back up and running again post COVID. Currently chaired by Fraser Rankine & Paul Wheatley, the Youth Committee is a parent-led working group of Melrose Rugby and is made up of Youth Coaches, Parent Reps for each age group, as well as other key members of the wider Club, including our Director of Rugby, Rob Moffat, and Head of Youth Rugby, Iain Chisholm.

The committee meets monthly and its main mission is to help deliver change and improvements for the Youth Section and the wider club, as well as giving coaches and parents a forum to ask questions and disseminate thoughts and ideas for improvements. The committee helps organise Youth Events (such as the Hornets Festival, Ball Crew for the Melrose Sevens and the Crichton Cup) and fundraising activities (like the Christmas Hampers, Christmas Market and Six Nations' Prediction Cards). The group is also actively involved with coach development, first aid, safeguarding, sponsorship and events / fundraising. The Committee work closely with Hilary in the office and also the Melrose Rugby Board (with board members regularly attending Youth meetings) to support the Youth Coaches in the background and to make the Melrose Rugby experience a positive one for every child taking part.

A lot has been achieved since the COVID hiatus, but this I am sure will be just the start - every time you talk with any of the committee, you hear of new ambitious ideas of how we can make further



improvements. Just like rugby itself, it is a team effort and the Youth Section rely on volunteers without whom we'd not have the great trips, festivals, and events we enjoy.

> Here are a few highlights from the past 12 months:

Check out with sponsorship the kit launch video (approx. £23,000) on the club Facebook page from just before oraanised by Fraser, Xmas if you haven't Paul, Suzan Bell and already Kieran Cooney in a matter of days!



up at over 290 at the last count in December.



THE HORNETS FESTIVAL back in September was a great day of rugby in the sunshine.

was another great day, and this season is already looking like it will be even bigger and better - a great community event!

LINKS WITH THE SENIOR CLUB XV

including Youth matchday takeovers (mascots and guards of honour) have been areat (no small thanks to Jain, Kieran and Tristan Neate), and the senior players have been helping out at the youth training and events. A big 'thank you' to all the lads for coming along to these events (especially if you've had a good win the day before) – the kids love having you there.

HE S2 BOY'S AND GIRL' and the

like the Christmas Market, Christmas Parties and Comedy Night

Christmas Market. Hampers and 6 Nations Prediction Cards

NCREASED COMMUNITY ICACEMENT including

primary school coaching for the Crichton Cup to supporting teenagers with their Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

...and the list just goes on!

... IF YOU'D LIKE TO HELP THE YOUTH SECTION (OR THE WIDER CLUB IN ANY WAY) TO MAKE SIMILAR THINGS HAPPEN, WE'D LOVE YOUR HELP ... JUST GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR COACH, OR ONE OF THE PARENT REPS – ALL HELP HOWEVER BIG OR SMALL IS WELCOME. NEXT MONTH. THERE WILL BE A BIT MORE **INFORMATION ON SOME SPECIFIC WAYS YOU** CAN GET INVOLVED "

Lastly, despite quite a few calls offs with the freezing weather and a festive pause, there are still a few pics to share with you from the \$1 victory away to Dunbarton on 13 January and \$1 & \$2 Musselburgh at home after which they enjoyed followed by Christmas Jersey lunch...



Just a reminder to try and sell your prediction cards and return them (along with the entry fees) by no later than 8pm this coming Friday 2 February. Please make every effort to sell your allocation or think about making an equivalent donation to the same value as any unsold cards (if you are able). Unsold cards should be offered to your age group / other age groups / members or returned to the office so they can be redistributed and sold. Spares are available from lead coaches, or at the Greenyards entrance foyer, Ned Haig and 1877 bars, and online versions are available on request from the Office.

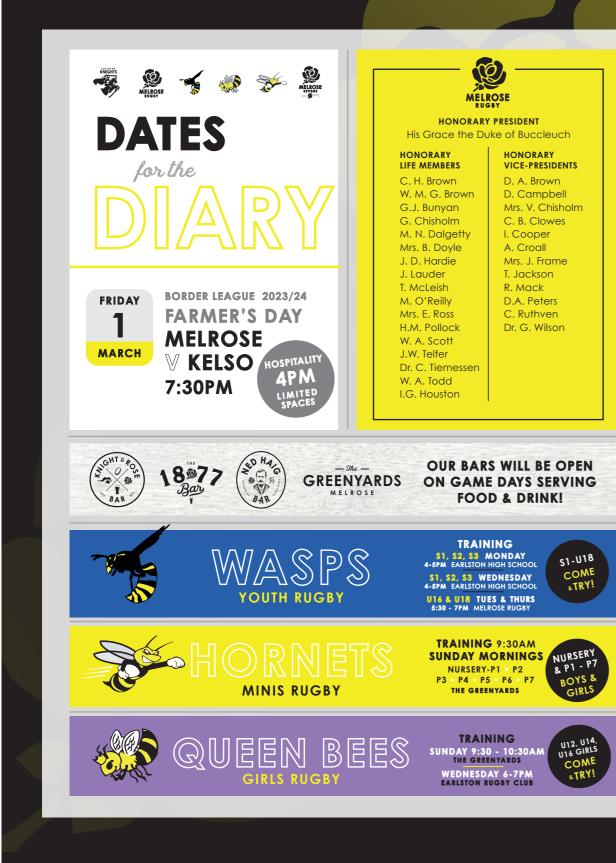
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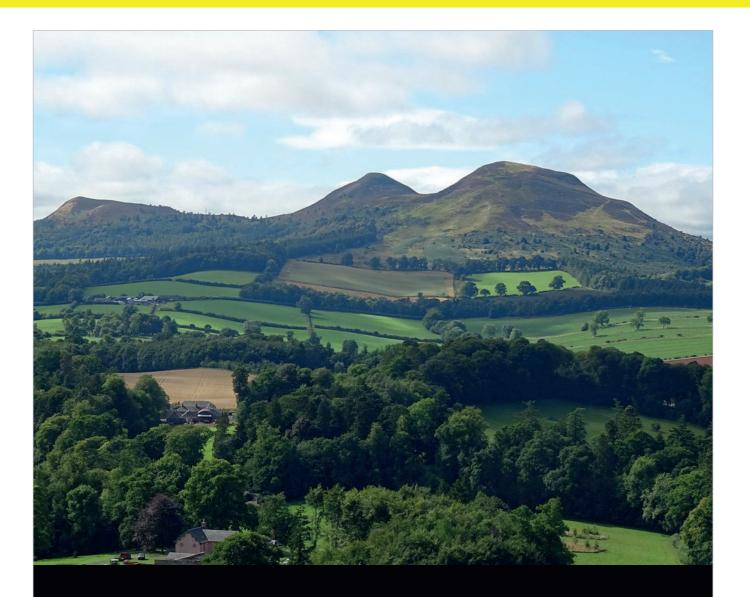
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The Greenyards 3G pitch is used by Melrose Rugby's 1XV, Storm and age grade teams as well as the club's part-time pro FOSROC Super6 side, Southern Knights. The community pitch is also used by football and other clubs/groups via Live Borders.

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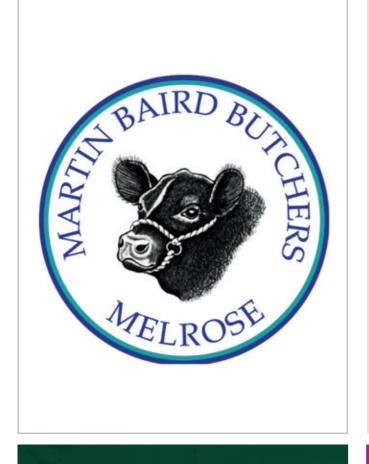
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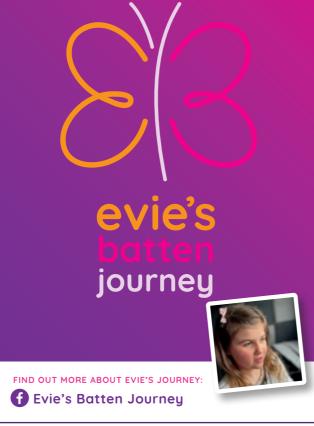
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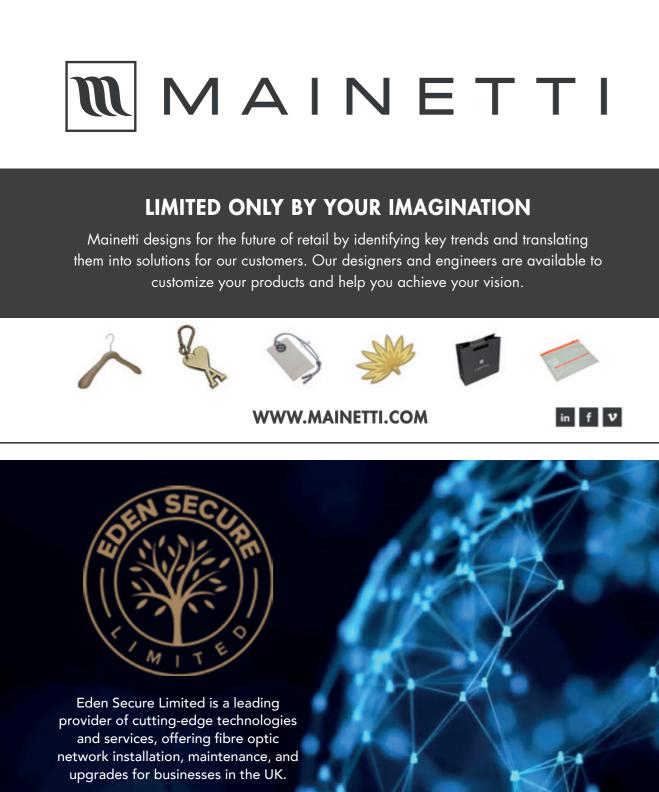
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