



## Inverleith Angle

We are delighted to extend a very warm welcome to the Aberdeen Grammar tour party who have made the long journey south from the Granite City for this National 1 fixture. We hope that Secretary Gordon Thomson, Chairman Mike Cox and their players, coaches, committee members and supporters enjoy their visit to Inverleith.

Grammar have made a solid start to the season, sitting ninth in National 1 after home wins against Kelso and GHA and losses to Gala (H), Selkirk (A) and Accies (A).

Grammar sit one point place and six points above Musselburgh in the table, the Stoneyhill men having picked up their first league win against us last Saturday.

As you'll read overleaf, we started to look more like ourselves as the Mussy match wore on, and could have snatched the victory at the death. I know that our players and coaches have been working hard at training to build on that late upsurge, with particular focus being placed on the way in which our forwards and backs interact to open up holes in defences. I look forward to seeing those drills put to good effect today!

My trip to Musselburgh was an interesting one. Having accepted a lift out to the Honest Toun with our esteemed president, Colin Rigby, I was rather dismayed to find he (and my daughter) had abandoned me at Stoneyhill after the game – shades of the time that we left Al Napier in Jedburgh after a game there! Black Al was *particularly* amused when I texted him to let him know I was marooned in Musselburgh – the presidential torch has been well and truly passed on!

It's an ill wind, though, as I was able to work off my customary post-defeat grump with a losing bonus pint at Staggs bar and a walk along the promenade to Fisherrow harbour before catching the bus home. The barman at Staggs was in my year at the school and current school rugby supremo Jimmy Moran jogged past me on the prom – Stew Mellies are everywhere!

I completed my post-Mussy calm down by attending the Lions' Home Tournament at Inverleith on Sunday. It was great to see Pitch 1 and most of the back pitches swarming with players of all ages from Edinburgh, Stirling and beyond – if our players can show half as much enthusiasm today as the 'wee yins' did on Sunday, we'll do just fine.

Looking ahead, our Annual Ball takes place exactly four weeks today. Tickets are still available for this key fundraiser, and we'd welcome auction and raffle prizes of any description. Please speak to Lindsey Geddes or any of the committee today if you are able to help on either front.

Bill McNie  
President



## Match Report vs Musselburgh, Saturday 30th September 2017

The opening ten minutes saw us dominating possession and very much on the front foot in the Musselburgh 22. Happy came close to scoring after he broke through the centre, but was ultimately held up near the line; a subsequent attack saw Cammy Taylor dropping the ball as he stretched towards the line to dot it down after a succession of pick-and-go's by our pack. In both cases, it could be argued, it would have been simpler – and, possibly, more productive – to recycle the ball and change the point of attack, rather than launching a solo attack on the Musselburgh line.

The men in blue started to claw their way back into the game after that opening flurry, asking questions of our defence through aggressive forward play, clever offloads and sensible tactical kicking. We defended pretty well, but, ultimately, were unable to keep Musselburgh out, with our former player John Coutts (playing 13 today) crossing for the try after the home backs had spun the ball from right to left. Our calls for a possible forward pass in the lead up to the try fell on deaf ears, and stand off Pritchard's tidy conversion from wide out made it 7-0 to our hosts.

We responded well, nearly scoring directly from the restart after Doc's deep drop out sent the ball over the entire Musselburgh team and rolling towards the try line. Jack Somerville, in hot pursuit, claimed the touch down, but the 'score' was unfortunately ruled out for crossing by ref Neil Muir.

Mistakes began to creep into our play at this stage, possibly due to the players trying to force their way back into the game rather than working through the phases and playing to their skills. We were also struggling to make much headway against the muscular Musselburgh pack in the set piece.

Musselburgh had a chance to increase their lead on the half hour mark when they were awarded a penalty in front of the posts near the half way line, but Pritchard's kick fell just short.

We conceded a second try just before half time after Musselburgh forced a series of scrums down by the clubhouse-side corner flag at the sea end of the ground. Our pack held firm but the ball eventually squirted out of the scrum on the blindside, allowing rookie 'Burgh scrum half Kennedy to burst in for the score. It initially looked like our back row should have been more alive to the threat of a blind side move, but, to be fair, they were rather busy preventing a pushover try at the time.

The missed conversion made the score 12-0 to Musselburgh at half time, although we'd had to defend smartly in the lead up to the break as the men in blue continued to attack our line.

Given that our play had been beset with handling errors and missed tackles during the opening 40, the rain that started to fall during the interval wasn't exactly ideal – the *last* thing we needed was a slippery ball and even more slippery Musselburgh attackers!



STEWART'S MELVILLE  
R.F.C.

Those attackers resumed where they had left off after the interval, taking the game into our 22 at the Esk end. We defended competently, but, as with the first try, simply ran out of chances to force a turnover or a handling error. Flanker Graham eventually crossed for the score, Pritchard's simple conversion making it 19-0 to our hosts after 50 minutes.

It was at this point that thoughts began to turn to the rather daunting prospect of us going two full matches without scoring a point, as those opening ten minutes when we were in the ascendancy now seemed a long time ago.

To our players' credit, though, they started to claw their way back into the game, making the most of some tactical changes by the Musselburgh coaches that, if anything, only served to unsettle the home team. We'd also made a number of changes, Gus Wallace replacing Craig Willis in the front row, Lewis Scott replacing the crooked Adam Howie in the back row and James Ferguson replacing Nathan Ross on the wing after Murray Hanning came into the centre.

While we were still making a fair number of errors, we gradually started to gain the lion's share of possession, with Murch and Jack Somerville putting pace on the ball and asking questions of the Musselburgh defence out wide. It was, however, through the centre that we eventually scored, with a quick tap penalty allowing Scott Docherty to waltz past the Musselburgh half backs as he'd done at Cartha a fortnight before. His easy conversion made the score 19-7 with 65 minutes gone.

We continued to push for points, another rapid attack down the left hand touchline a couple of minutes later seeing Jack coming very close to the try line before the defenders got hold of him.

We weren't to be repulsed 10 minutes after that, though, another fine midfield break by Murchie allowing us to spin the ball along the back line. Excellent communication and precise handling saw James Ferguson dot down in the same corner that Kennedy had scored in earlier. Doc's fine conversion made the score 19-14 with maybe ten minutes to play.

Euan Bowen replaced Doc shortly after the try, and duly pulled the strings as we attempted to sneak the game at the death. Musselburgh regrouped, however, and very sensibly ran down the clock by keeping the ball among their forwards. We desperately tried to force the turnover that would allow us to launch one last attack for the win, but, ultimately, had to settle for the losing bonus.

*Bill McNie*



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## Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2017: Kick off 3 pm

### Stewart's Melville RFC

15	Sean Murchie
14	Jack Somerville
13	Euan Morrison
12	Murray Hanning
11	James Ferguson
10	Euan Bowen
9	Gregor Porteous
1	Cameron Taylor
2	Ruaridh Mitchell
3	Angus Wallace
4	Gareth Henderson
5	Jamie Sword
6	David Stoddart
7	Lewis Scott
8	Duncan Wood (captain)

### Player Sponsored By

Graham + Sibbald
Haldane UK
Bill Johnstone
Craneware
Malcolm Henderson Joiner
DJ Alexander
Dreadnought Leith
Rob Mac
Breadalbane Finance

### Replacements

16	Craig Willis	Bill Johnstone
17	Tom Petiau	Exception
18	Ruaridh Stewart	
19	Tom Croy	
20	Cameron MacDonald	

**Head Coach** Gordon Henderson  
**Team Manager** Graham Inglis





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### **Aberdeen Grammar RFC**

- 15 Alex Ratcliffe (captain)
- 14 Matt Arnold
- 13 Nathan Clough
- 12 Nat Coe
- 11 Calum Ruxton
- 10 Bryn Perrott
- 9 Jake Gray
- 1 Matthias Schosser
- 2 Calum Reddish
- 3 Rob Ellinson
- 4 Drew Whitehead
- 5 Robin Cessford
- 6 Alec Dravitski
- 7 Chris Jollands
- 8 Greig Ryan

#### **Referee**

Manuel Bottino

#### **AR 1**

Colin George

#### **AR 2**

Alastair Kirk

#### **Match Sponsor**

Craneware

#### **Ball Sponsor**

Uwe Wildenberg

### **Replacements**

- 16 Colin Neilson
- 17 Ewan Stewart
- 18 Dominic Wallen
- 19 Bailey Walsh
- 20 Murray Mitchell

#### **Next Home Game**

**Sat 21st October  
vs Falkirk RFC  
Kickoff 3 pm**

### **Head Coach**

Ali O'Connor

### **Ball Boys:**

- James Healy
- Ciaran Geddes
- Calum Jessop

- Hugo Welsh
- Josh Penny
- Thomas Fallon





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## FIXTURES SEASON 2017 / 18

26/08/2017	v Gordonians (Cup)	3 pm	Inverleith	47-31 W
02/09/2017	v Edinburgh Accies	3 pm	Inverleith	26-38 L
09/09/2017	v GHA	3 pm	Braidholm	83-19 L
16/09/2017	v Cartha Queens Park	3 pm	Dumbreck Rd	24-22 L
23/09/2017	v Jed-Forest	3 pm	Inverleith	0-48 (L)
30/09/2017	v Musselburgh	3 pm	Stoneyhill	19-14 (L)
07/10/2017	v Aberdeen Grammar	3 pm	Inverleith	
14/10/2017	v Dundee HSFP	3 pm	Mayfield	
21/10/2017	v Falkirk	3 pm	Inverleith	
28/10/2017	v Gala	3 pm	Netherdale	
04/11/2017	v Selkirk	2 pm	Inverleith	
18/11/2017	v Preston Lodge (Cup)	2 pm	Inverleith	
02/12/2017	v Kelso	2 pm	Poynder Park	
09/12/2017	v Edinburgh Accies	2 pm	Raeburn Place	
16/12/2017	v GHA	2 pm	Inverleith	
06/01/2018	v Cartha Queens Park	2 pm	Inverleith	
13/01/2018	v Jed-Forest	2 pm	Riverside Park	
20/01/2018	v Musselburgh	2 pm	Inverleith	
27/01/2018	v Aberdeen Grammar	2 pm	Rubislaw	
17/02/2017	v Dundee HSFP	3 pm	Inverleith	
03/03/2018	v Falkirk	3 pm	Sunnyside	
24/03/2018	v Gala	3 pm	Inverleith	
31/03/2018	v Selkirk	3 pm	Philiphaugh	
07/04/2018	v Kelso	3 pm	Inverleith	



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# Pre Match Lunch



Only £20!



STEWART'S MELVILLE F.P.  
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Saturday 21 October 2017

v Falkirk RFC

Hosted by Scotland and Lions Legend

Finlay Calder OBE



Book your tickets

@ lindseygeddes@live.com

Photo: www.mel.com

## Dates for your diary

SM Annual Ball	4 November	£55 pp	Murrayfield
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## Keep in touch with your Club

For full information on the club  
visit our website\*

[www.stewmelrugby.com](http://www.stewmelrugby.com)

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Stewart's Melville RFC

For live match commentary and  
up to date



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#redblackandgold



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# Stewart's Melville Rugby Club

## Season 2017-18

### Memberships Due Now ....



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# Stewart's Melville Rugby Club

## Season 2017-18



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**ANNUAL BALL**  
**4 NOVEMBER 2017**

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Dancing  
Fantastic  
Prizes

**BT MURRAYFIELD**

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For tickets / Information contact : [lindseygeddes@live.com](mailto:lindseygeddes@live.com)