

Rugby rivals rekindle comradeship of auld alliance after French pitch

Marc Horne

It was an ancient military and political accord trumpeted by national leaders from Robert the Bruce to Charles de Gaulle. Now the special relationship between Scotland and France is to be officially rekindled on the rugby field.

The Auld Alliance trophy will be presented for the first time after the two countries meet at Murrayfield on Sunday. It will honour the internationals from both nations who made the ultimate sacrifice in the First World War.

Twenty-one French players and 31 Scots died in the conflict, including Marcel Burgun and Eric Milroy, who captained their countries in the final pre-war match at Inverleith, Edinburgh, in 1913. Relatives of both will gather in the Scottish capital today for the unveiling of the trophy, on which the names of the pair will be engraved.

It will be a poignant moment for Douglas Kinloch Anderson, great-nephew of Milroy, a mild-mannered Edinburgh accountant who became known as the prince of scrum-halves. He was killed on July 18, 1916, aged 29, in Delville Wood during the Battle of the Somme.

Mr Kinloch Anderson said that the number of Scotland internationals killed in the Great War was "quite astonishing". He added: "The new trophy will commemorate the auld alliance, as well as the two captains and all the other players who fell during the war. I was brought up hearing about Eric and knew his brother and sister. We never expected this to happen, but it is wonderful that his name will now be remembered in perpetuity."

Mr Kinloch Anderson, a kiltmaker based in Edinburgh, travelled to France with his younger brother, Sir Eric Anderson, last year to see the spot where their great-uncle made his last stand. He said: "My brother, who was named in his honour, had in his hand a letter that was written by Eric. 'When he played rugby his mother used to always say to him, 'keep well back Eric'. The letter finished up with Eric saying, 'We are in for some slight trouble. So I am just warning you that there is to be no keeping well back.' Those were his last written words."

Mr Kinloch Anderson will relish the opportunity to meet relatives of Burgun. He said: "It is wonderful that new friendships are going to be formed."

The trophy was the idea of Patrick Caublot, of Amiens Rugby Club, who has travelled to Edinburgh for the un-



The Scots take the field against France at Inverleith in 1913. Eric Milroy, below left, and Marcel Burgun, were the captains



veiling. He said: "Eric was a legendary player and his clashes with Marcel were notorious."

Burgun, a "dashing and courageous" rugby centre, became a pilot to avenge his elder brother's death. He was posthumously awarded the Croix de Guerre after he was shot down and killed, aged 26, on September 2, 1916.

A spokesman for the Scottish Rugby Union said: "The sacrifice made by the rugby communities of France and Scotland during the First World War will never be forgotten. When we heard the individual stories around Eric Milroy



and Marcel Burgun it made that loss so tangible and it underlined how compelling it was to commission the trophy with our colleagues from the French Rugby Federation."

The auld alliance was formed in 1296 when both nations made a pact of mutual assistance in the event of either being invaded by England. It led to Scottish forces coming to the aid of Joan of Arc during the relief of Orléans in 1429, and came to an end in 1560.

In Edinburgh in 1942, Charles de Gaulle said: "In every combat where for five centuries the destiny of France was

A terrible toll

Rugby internationals who lost their lives during the First World War

- Scotland 31
- England 28
- France 21
- Wales 14
- Ireland 12
- New Zealand 12
- Australia 9
- South Africa 5

Source: BBC/Nigel McCrery

at stake, there were always men of Scotland to fight side by side with men of France. What Frenchmen feel is that no people has ever been more generous than yours with its friendship."

The new trophy is the latest prize at stake within the Six Nations championship. The Calcutta Cup has been contested by Scotland and England since 1879. The Millennium Trophy goes to the victor in the England-Ireland clash. The Centenary Quaich was introduced to the Scotland versus Ireland fixture in 1989, while France and Italy vie for the Giuseppe Garibaldi Trophy.

Son's second post-mortem was barbaric, says father

Hilary Duncanson

The father of a junior footballer killed in an attack on New Year's Day has criticised "barbaric" and "medieval" post-mortem examination rules.

Kevin Woodburn said that plans to hold a funeral for his son, Shaun, were delayed by more than two weeks last year when lawyers representing a teenager accused of his killing requested a second post-mortem examination.

Mr Woodburn said that it amounted to his son having to be "cut open again" and argued that the prosecution and defence should be represented at the same single examination.

Michael Matheson, the Scottish justice secretary, has said that "improvements can be made on current practice" and that law officers are looking into the rules.

Shaun, 30, a father of one, died after being attacked by a teenager outside Gladstones pub in Leith, Edinburgh, in the early hours of January 1 last year. The teenager was sentenced to four years' detention after being convicted of culpable homicide.

Mr Woodburn said: "Why can we not have a system where there is a representative from the prosecution and a representative from the defence at the same post mortem? The whole process comes across as barbaric, medieval. There is no need for it. There is another way to deal with it."

Mr Woodburn, supported by Kezia Dugdale, the Labour MSP, has called for wider changes to improve the rights of victims and their families during court procedures. He believes the present process lacks transparency, empathy and a "common touch".

On the examinations, he said: "It is a part of various parts of the system where I feel there is no real empathy with victims or victims' families."

Mr Woodburn was speaking after Ms Dugdale raised the case in the Scottish parliament.

In his response Mr Matheson said that the defence had a right in law to instruct a post-mortem examination on behalf of an accused. He added: "It is, however, possible that improvements can be made."

"The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service have advised that they are working with forensic pathologists on a revised post-mortem examination protocol that may help reduce the number of further post-mortem examinations instructed by the defence."

Dead man kept cash in biscuit tins

Jamie Beatson

yesterday that "tens of thousands of pounds" had been found

about his brother's death — if he had been surprised by the discovery

Plaque scheme seeks LGBT greats for commemoration