

Auctions, Rugby, Signatures and Mother's Day



Words by Chris Evans
Photos by Nick Watson

"6000 Riyals, 6500, 7000, 7500," can't let a Scotsman take home a rugby shirt signed by Lawrence Dallaglio and Jason Leonard.."8000 SR...any more bids....SOLD."

The initial thought was what have I done? Or as one friend put it "nutter!" Had I known what was to come the grin would have been wider than the Ambassador's garden.

Fast forward a few days with the shirt hanging in pride of place on the living room wall and suddenly a desperate flurry of messages that I need to call Rob Lickley at BMI urgently. The next few moments will live with me for a long time.

"Are you able to fly to the UK tomorrow night and come back next Monday?"
"I'm sure I can arrange it."
"Excellent as we'd like you to come to the Calcutta Cup game at Twickenham on Saturday, by the way bring your dinner jacket as we'll be going to the players dinner afterwards too!"

Wow. Let's face it there isn't really any other word to use – well, not that can be printed anyway!

With so little time for it to settle in the next day flew by and I was soon on a very busy BMI flight to Blighty courtesy of the England rugby team's official airline.

I arrived at Heathrow Terminal 1 and spent the Riyadh weekend catching up with the family before rendezvousing with Rob at Twickenham, via a swift half with Andrew Mead and Graham Deane, and we wandered up to the BMI hospitality suite for

lunch before the game. The selection of food was excellent ranging from steak and kidney pies to some very attractive looking deserts. We also had a plan to fulfil, so when fed and watered, we wandered down to the Rugby store and purchased several rugby shirts including one which has now been auctioned at the ICING Summer Charity Fundraiser.

We returned to corporate hospitality for what proved another treat, after all it's not everyday you get to meet one of your rugby heroes. Richard Hill the England and Saracens legend walked in to give a question and answer session and one day I will find the photo taken of myself with England's greatest ever backrower.

It was time to take our seats overlooking the half-way line. I've been to Twickenham many times during the course of the rebuilding work but the sight that now greets you when you see the finished article is truly magnificent. Twickenham is finally the great theatre for rugby it was designed to be.

I could at this point describe the game, but I rather enjoy being able to attend functions at the British Embassy. Suffice to say Scotland didn't win (26-12 wasn't too bad though).

At the final whistle the Calcutta Cup was presented and thoughts turned to the other match about to kick-off. Would Ireland finally, after all these years, win a grand slam?

Back up to the lounge and the big screens, possibly a couple of light refreshments too, and the final game of the 2009 Six Nations. It proved to be

