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Major new rugby visitor centre being considered for Hawick

Plans that include a range of ideas for important rugby memorabilia in Hawick are being considered in a £12,500 feasibility study. A collection of some 20,000 historic rugby artefacts belonging to the Hawick Rugby Club and the Bill McLaren Foundation, many of which have been in storage for years, have been examined and catalogued over the last year.

Funding from SSE and Clyde Wind Farm Ltd has enabled Hawick Rugby Club to appoint award-winning consultants, Alan Jones Associates from Inverness, to conduct a feasibility study and options appraisal.

Hawick Rugby Club members Murray Watson and Ross Cameron have asked that five options to preserve, store and display this rich and unique collection of rugby memorabilia be studied by the consultants. The options to be assessed range from simply digitizing and archiving the material right up to the creation of a new visitor centre with modern facilities situated somewhere in the town.

John Thorburn, the Hawick Rugby Club President, said, “the prospect of securing and sharing Hawick’s rugby heritage and that of the Voice of Rugby is exciting for the club, the town and rugby supporters everywhere.” Linda Lawson, Bill McLaren’s daughter added, “Dad would have been very pleased and proud of these plans. He was an inveterate collector and rarely threw anything away. We have fantastic memories from his schooldays right up to the time he hung up his microphone.”

Lindsay Dougan, SSE Community Investment Manager said” SSE and Clyde Wind Farm Ltd are delighted to support this fantastic project. The Bill McLaren collection provides a unique insight into the heritage of rugby in both the Scottish Borders and across all of Scotland.”

Amongst the thousands of artefacts in the collection are international caps dating from 1896, international jerseys, souvenirs from British Lions tours, one of the largest collections in Scotland of club and international programmes, autographed balls, hundreds of rugby photographs, trophies, Bill McLaren’s extensive annotated research material, his big sheets, videos, commentaries and a lot more.

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