

# Gate Post

Harrogate Rugby Union Football Club  
Founded 1871



## Gate Post No. 153 March 2024

This newsletter is sent to all the supporters, current and past members of Harrogate Rugby Club for whom we have an email address. Please forward the newsletter to anyone else who may be interested. If you would like to be added to our database for future copies please send your email address to [brianforshaw4@virginmedia.com](mailto:brianforshaw4@virginmedia.com). Your contributions would be most welcome along with your feedback. If you would like copies of previous editions, please contact [brianforshaw4@virginmedia.com](mailto:brianforshaw4@virginmedia.com)

### HRUFC U16s Progress to Yorkshire Cup Final

Congratulations to the Harrogate U16's, who have progressed to the final of the Yorkshire Cup for the second year in a row. A hard fought 18-13 win 'home' at Wetherby against Sandal in a rematch of last years final, gives the team the chance to retain their cup. Well played to the whole squad and a complete team performance. Thanks not only to Wetherby RUFC for hosting, but also to the parents and supporters who came to cheer the lads on. We look forward to the final on Sunday March 10th, venue tbc.

### What Happened in March over the years?

#### Yorkshire Plate Final U15s Victory - Sunday 27th March 2011 Played at West Park, Leeds (below)



Gate U15s showed great character and team spirit to force four tries in the last quarter after being behind by 14 – 7 with 15 minutes to go, and overcame Bradford and Bingley by 31 points to 17.

Although Gate dominated possession and territory in the first half Bees scored twice from breakaway tries, and would have had a third were it not for an outstanding tap tackle from full back Finney who sprinted 50 metres to bring down the speedy Bees winger just short of the line.

Bees defended hard after the break and managed to 'hold up' Gate players over the line on three occasions. The pressure eventually told

and the try of the game came from Price-Gerrard who went over at speed after chasing a left wing break from half way via Hall and Ismail.

The other tries came from Hall (2), Cozens and Jamieson with three conversions from Finney.

#### A Special Rugby Day

A record number of 130 young people with special educational needs took part in a competitive rugby day at Harrogate Rugby Club on Thursday **24th March 2011**. The day saw three separate competitions taking place; a seven-a-side full contact competition for Netherside Hall, Breckenborough and Danesgate schools and a Tag Rugby competition for Mowbray, Forest, Woodlands, Welburn Hall, Applefields, Brompton Hall, and Springhill schools. There was also a coaching and mini tag festival for Brooklands, Hob Moor Oaks and The Dales schools.

All the schools were offered four weeks coaching through the RFU Community Coaching Scheme.

In the contact competition Mowbray and Forest topped their pools with Mowbray winning the final 6 - 4 to remain unbeaten throughout the tournament.



### **Callum Irvine selected for Scotland's U18s**

Harrogate fly half Callum Irvine was selected for Scotland's Under 18s squad to play Wales at Braidholm on Sunday **11th March 2012** and came on as replacement at fly half in the second half of the game which Scotland lost in the last minute 12 - 19.

Callum, who broke into Harrogate's first XV during the 2011/2012 season with great effect, was a product of Harrogate's Junior Section where he began as an Under 8s player and played for Harrogate Grammar School.

Callum was also selected to play for Scotland the following weekend against England and for the remaining match in Ireland that followed.

Callum chose the Scottish representative route through which he qualified through his father, Fraser, a former openside flanker at Harrogate.

Callum's mother, Angela, was a driving force of the club's junior section for many years together with uncle Dave Fotherby who worked for the RFU.

Uncle Gary, brother of Callum's father Fraser is a former Harrogate scrum half and captain who represented the Scottish exiles with distinction.

### **U15s - Yorkshire vs Lancashire**

Yorkshire U15 A and B squads entertained Lancashire U15 A and B squads at Claro Road on **Sunday 31st March 2013**.

Yorkshire RFU expressed their grateful thanks to Harrogate RUFC who arranged all the details from a standing start on Thursday morning due to Keighley's pitch being unplayable because of the snowy weather.

The weather for the game was cool but generally conditions were good for open rugby and the pitch was in remarkably good condition considering the recent atrocious weather. This was an extra reward for the snow clearing efforts of the previous Saturday.

Anne Mitchell the Club Steward and her band of many helpers prepared what could only be described as a top quality two course dinner for around 100 players and representatives from the Yorkshire and Lancashire coaching and



management staff. Although it was at very short notice and over a Bank Holiday weekend Anne very efficiently organised food and staff for the kitchen and bar and we had a very healthy take from food and drink sales in addition to revenue from the formal lunch so this has certainly helped our budget which has been hit by lost sales due to the January/February bad weather.

Two Harrogate U15's Players represented Yorkshire in this Battle of the Roses. Ben Bond, attends Ashville school and played outside centre scoring a well worked try which he duly converted and Sam Thomas who attends St John Fisher's school played an assured game at loose head prop. This was a great honour

and achievement by both of them to represent the county when the A team beat Lancashire 19-7. Both players play for Harrogate U15's. Harrogate coach Gerry Thomas said, "They can both be proud of what they have achieved today."

It was a clean sweep for Yorkshire on the day as Yorkshire "B" team beat Lancashire Presidents XV 39-0.

### **Phil Wickham 150 Games Milestone**

In **March 2019** scrum half Phil Wickham played his 150th game for Harrogate.

### **Annual Dinner 5th March 2020**



The club's annual dinner was held at The Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate on **Thursday 5th March 2020**. Former Ireland fly half, Mick Quinn was the guest speaker and well received with his brand of cheeky Irish humour. The photo shows Mick Quinn with left to right: Tim Heaton (player), David Doherty (Director of Rugby), Roger Shackleton, Dom Busby(MC), Mick Quinn, Terry Crystal (Former Harrogate player), Peter Squires, Brian Forshaw (former President and Captain of HRUFC)

During the evening a new award was presented to the club groundsman, Xeynu, who was voted 'Rising Star of the Season' for his outstanding work for the club keeping the grounds in good order. He regularly cycles to the ground and he was presented with a new bike sponsored by Stratstone.

### **Corona Virus**

The 2019/2020 season ended early due to the Corona Virus pandemic. The final game to be played was at Rudding Lane against Rossendale when Harrogate won 31 - 13 on **Saturday 14th March**.

### Corona Virus March 2020

On **March 11th, 2020**, the World Health Organization announced that the COVID-19 virus was officially a pandemic after spreading through 114 countries in three months and infecting over 118,000 people.

COVID-19 is caused by a novel coronavirus, the family of viruses that includes the common flu and SARS. Symptoms include respiratory problems, fever and cough, and can lead to pneumonia and death. Like SARS, it is spread through droplets from sneezes.

The first reported case in China appeared November 17th, 2019, in the Hubei Province, but went unrecognized. Eight more cases appeared in December with researchers pointing to an unknown virus.

Many learned about COVID-19 when ophthalmologist Dr. Li Wenliang defied government orders and released safety information to other doctors. The following day, China informed WHO and charged Li with a crime. Li died from COVID-19 just over a month later.

Without a vaccine available, the virus spread beyond Chinese borders and by **mid-March**, it had spread globally to more than 163 countries. On February 11th, 2020 the infection was officially christened COVID-19.

By mid **March 2020** the whole world was taking precautions to slow the spread of the disease and the 2019/2020 rugby season was ended early. Harrogate rugby club sent out the following notice:

Following last week's announcement by the RFU that all rugby is cancelled for the 2019/20 season and the government announcement that all restaurants, bars etc must close, we have been considering how that will impact the rugby club and how we plan for the immediate future. With the Prime Minister's announcement of **23rd March** it is clear the COVID – 19 pandemic is going to be with us for some time and restrictions are likely to get tighter before they are relaxed.

We have created an action plan for the immediate future and will develop that as we learn more from the RFU and Government in relation to the support available. Our greatest challenge is loss of revenue and the inevitable impact on our cash flow affecting our ability to meet our financial liabilities. We are trying to balance our moral and financial obligations while securing the future of HRUFC.

**Appleby, Norman. M.M. and Bar.** Lieutenant 31st Canadian Infantry. Killed near Neuville St. Vaast on **March 29th** 1917. Played for Harrogate Old Boys.

### Harrogate Herald - 4th April 1917

#### Roll of Honour

'Mr & Mrs John Appleby, Glen Roy, East Parade, Harrogate, have had intimation that their son, Lieutenant Norman Appleby, of the Canadians, is reported "missing as from **March 29th**." Lieutenant Appleby, it will be remembered, played three-quarters back for the Harrogate Old Boys, before emigrating to Canada. He obtained his commission some four months since and was hopefully looking forward to further usefulness in his country's cause.'

### Harrogate Herald - 11th April 1917

#### Roll of Honour



Lieutenant Norman Appleby, son of Mr & Mrs John Appleby, of Glen Roy, East Parade, Harrogate, who was reported missing in our last issue, has been killed in action. During an operation on the enemy trenches on **29th March** he was killed instantly, and died without pain. The success of the operation was due largely to the determined and gallant way in which he carried out his work. His conduct inspired those under him, and his loss to the whole battalion is keenly felt.

#### Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Norman Appleby MM and Bar, Lieutenant 31st Bn., Canadian Infantry (Alberta Regt.) who died on Thursday, **29th March 1917**, aged 27.

Son of John Appleby and Mary Amelia Appleby, of "Glen Roy," 91, East Parade, Harrogate, Yorkshire, England. Enlisted in 1914.

Memorial: Vimy Memorial, Pas de Calais, France

### Peter Spragg (14/11/1940 - 11/3/2020)



Peter Spragg died on **Wednesday 11th March 2020**.

He was a long time supporter of Harrogate Rugby Club and a valued member of the Touchline Internationals and supporter of the Harrogate Aces. He became a member of Harrogate Rugby Club in 1995 and was a fixture on the touchline, both home and away.

He played rugby during his school days but he chose to play soccer as an adult and continued playing into his late 30s.

Outside of rugby his main interests were the countryside, sea fishing and small bore rifle shooting which he took up at the Scotton and Farnham club in the 1950's and continued at Ilkley Rifle Club.



### **Graham, John, Cumming (Born 1935)**

Former Harrogate player and Captain, Graham Cumming died on **Tuesday 15th March 2022**. Graham joined Harrogate in 1956 from Hull and East Riding. He attended Fettes College and captained the school team from where he was selected to play for Yorkshire Schools. After school he went to Edinburgh Wanderers and had an Edinburgh Area trial. Whilst at Harrogate he had a trial for Yorkshire. He first appears on a team photograph for the 1958/1959 season. He was the Harrogate 1st XV Vice Captain 1960/1961 and Captain of HRUFC again from 1965 to 1967. He played full back in the 1965 Yorkshire Cup winning team and it was his three penalties which created the 9 - 8 victory against Wakefield. He was a farmer living at Poplars Farm, Ferensby and finished playing rugby in the 1967/1968 season.



### **Aspinall, Mike. (D.O.B. 26/3/1983, Leeds.)**

Player/Coach, scrum half, fly half and goal kicker. On Friday **16th March 2007** HRUFC announced that the former Harrogate player, Mike Aspinall, aged 23, would be the Harrogate coach for the 2007/2008 season and was probably the youngest National League Coach. He had previously played for Hull Ionians, Otley and Saracens. Mike had played for Harrogate during the 2005/2006 season but returned to Leeds the following season. He continued as the coach and as a player until 2011. During his playing days Mike carried injuries to both his shoulders and following examinations from consultants in Manchester he reluctantly decided to finish his playing career with his final outing being against Manchester 21/5/2011 in the last game of the season.



Mike played over 100 National League games for Harrogate and played in every back position being a regular accumulator of points through tries, conversions, penalties and a substantial number of drop goals. In 2011 Mike was a level 3 coach and chose to continue being involved in rugby as a coach.

### **Booth, Robert. (D.O.B. 20/2/1962) Centre.**

Bob learned his rugby whilst attending Ashville College, Harrogate. In 1980 he played for Yorkshire Schools 18 Group. Bob appears on the 1st XV photographs for 1980/1981, 1981/1982 and 1985/1986. He was selected for the Yorkshire 'B' team which drew 6 - 6 against Lancashire on Tuesday **3rd March 1981** at Kirkstall. He was a member of Harrogate's Yorkshire Cup winning team against Morley at Otley 28/4/1981. In 1986 he played in five games for Yorkshire which took them to the semi final of the County Championship. In 1989 Bob was playing for Otley and was Captain in their Yorkshire Cup Final match against Headingley at Morley on Tuesday 25th April 1989.

**Carbutt, Simon, Julian, Mark. (D.O.B. 27/11/1968) Prop.** He made his 1st XV debut for Harrogate as loose head prop in the game against Rosslyn Park on **18th March 1994** winning 20-15 and played for Harrogate until 1999.

**Cholewa, Lee, Roland. (D.O.B. 12/5/1978) Stand off.** Lee made his debut for the Harrogate 1st XV on **27/3/1999** against Henley and scored 7 points in the 17 - 31 defeat. In the 2000/2001 season Lee was the leading points scorer with 166 points having played in every game and in the 2001/2002 season Lee scored the most points in a season in the League with 289 points from 9 tries, 68 conversions, 35 penalties and 1 dropped goal. In 2002/2003 he was the leading points scorer with 187. In 2003/2004 he was the leading points scorer with 222 points. For the 2004/2005 season he was the leading points scorer with 196 from 3 tries, 44 conversions, 29 penalties and 2 drop goals. On 15th December 2001 Lee scored the highest number of points, 28, in a match by a Harrogate player in the game against Preston Grasshoppers at Claro Road. He played his 50th League game for Harrogate against Waterloo on Saturday 16th **March 2002** and his 100th game on Saturday 24th April 2004 in the game against Moseley. On 4th January 2004 Lee played fly half for the English Counties team when they were defeated 27 - 18 by the French Amateurs at Henley. He made 126 appearances for Harrogate.



**Mike Cowling** In the 1979/1980 and 1980/1981 seasons he played full back for the Yorkshire 'B' Team; on **3rd March 1981** against Lancashire 'B.' He played in the HRUFC Yorkshire Cup winning team against Morley 28/4/1981.

### **Easterby, Guy. (DOB: 21/3/1971)**

Playing scrum half, Guy Easterby, enjoyed a phenomenal rise to success between leaving school in 1989 and winning a full cap for Yorkshire in 1992.

After leaving Ampleforth, Guy joined the Harrogate Colts side in 1989 and his rugby career flourished. He made his Harrogate First XV debut at the age of 18 in the game against Wigan and played 7 games for the 1st XV in the 1989/1990 season. He scored his first try for Harrogate in the Yorkshire Cup game against Yarnbury winning 32 - 15 and in 1991 played seven games for the First Team, including the Yorkshire Cup Final win over Otley. His debut for Yorkshire came on his birthday in **March 1992** and he played several times for the County.



**Feurer, Lee.** Wing. Lee arrived at Harrogate for the 1996/1997 season and stayed until the end of the 1998/1999 season. He played for Yorkshire and played international rugby for Switzerland in the World Cup qualifying game against Israel in Tel Aviv on Saturday **28th March 1998**. Lee's father was Swiss.

**Fforde, Tim.** Yorkshire Colts 1996. North and East Yorkshire Colts Tour to Canada 1997. He made his 1st XV debut against Esher on **10th March 2001** and he appears on the team photograph for 2001/2002.

**Haddow, Ross.** Attended Ripon Grammar School and played for Scotland Youth in 1996. He played for Harrogate Colts. On **8th March 1997**, aged 17, Ross scored the clinching try for Scotland Under 19's during their 26 - 18 win over England.

**Harrity, David.** Prop. Yorkshire U15's in 1997 and U16's 1998. David was selected to play for Yorkshire U15s against Scotland U15s on **29th March 1998** at Yarnbury. Played several games for HRUFC from 2005 to 2009.

**Hall, David.** (D.O.B. 22/10/1971) Prop forward. Played for the Army at Twickenham on **Saturday 25th March 1994** and later played for the Combined Services. David made his debut for Harrogate in September 1993 and played his 100th game against Newbury 10/1/1998. He missed the 1995/1996 season with a broken ankle.

**Hassall, Ian** (DOB: 15/3/1966) Full back. Played over 200 games for Harrogate 1st XV including over 100 league games. He played scrum half for Yorkshire Colts against Gloucestershire Colts on **Saturday 2nd March 1985** at Lydney RFC. He played for Morley in 1985/1986 and joined Harrogate for the 1986/1987 season. He was a highly talented full back. He formerly played for York R.I. and played in promotion winning and cup winning teams for Harrogate. He finished playing 1st XV rugby in 1999.

**Irvine, Gary, John, Moray.** (Scrum half) On **3rd March 1981** he played scrum half for Yorkshire 'B' against Lancashire 'B,' played for Yorkshire from 1985 to 1988 and for the Anglo Scots. Gary was HRUFC 1st XV Captain from 1987 to 1990.

**Metcalf, Alistair.** Played for Yorkshire Colts U19's, 1990 and U21's, 1991. He was selected as one of the replacements for the England Colts v Italy at Cambridge on **15th March 1991** and against Argentina on **Friday 22/3/1991**.

**Patterson, Richard.** Yorkshire U15's in 1997. Yorkshire State Schools U18 and Scottish exiles in 1999. Richard was selected for Yorkshire U15s against Scotland U15s at Yarnbury on **29th March 1998**.

**Riley, James.** (DOB: 10/9/1970) James played wing or full back and began his rugby career at Harrogate Grammar School. He played for Harrogate's U21 team in 1990/1991 and made his Harrogate 1st XV debut in **March 1991** making his first score against Orrell seven months later.

**Swales, Brian.** Fly half. Brian played for Yorkshire U19s from 1971 to 1973 when he was a pupil at Ashville College. On Saturday **11th March 1972** Brian Swales played in the England Schools under 19 trial match and went on to be selected for the England Schoolboys team to play Scotland. In his first match he scored the first and last tries in the England victory over Scotland. He also captained the Yorkshire Schoolboys team. Brian was selected to play for Yorkshire Schoolboys against Durham on Saturday 30th December 1972. He played his first game for Harrogate 1st XV 17/4/1971 in the 11 - 3 victory against Nottingham. He continued playing for the 1st XV until 1977.

**Taylor, Peter.** (DOB: 13/1/1971) 2nd row. Peter was born in Harrogate and his father played rugby for Harrogate but he learned his rugby skills as a young stand off or full back at Scarborough Rugby Club. He played for Harrogate U21s in 1990/1991. His first game for Harrogate 1st XV was against Edinburgh Academicals in September 1991. He completed 100 appearances for the club on Saturday 20/1/1996 against Leeds in the 2nd round of the Yorkshire Cup. He played for Yorkshire from 1993 to 2002, for Combined Services in September 1993 and the RAF from 1993 to 2005 playing his final game against the Navy with Paul 'Plums' Clark in the same team. He played a record 242 games for Harrogate. He also played U21s for the South and South West. He played for the Barbarians in their 104 - 10 victory against the East Midlands at Northampton in **March 2004**. He played in the county semi final for Yorkshire against Gloucester in 1994 and was on the bench for the Twickenham Final against Durham in which Guy Easterby and Richard Whyley played, Yorkshire won 26 - 3. He played mostly in the 2nd row but enjoyed the occasional game in the back row.



**Whyley, Richard, Clive.** (DOB: 9/3/1964) Born in Liverpool he moved to Driffield at an early age. Played rugby for Driffield, Hull and East Riding, Richmond and Nottingham University. He played for Richmond from 1988 and he made his debut for Harrogate at the start of the 1990/1991 season in the game against Kendal and developed into an outstanding hooker. He played for Harrogate in the 1991 and 1992 Yorkshire Cup winning teams and the 1993 promotion winning team. Played for Yorkshire 1993 to 1999 including the County Final at Twickenham in 1994. Away from rugby Richard was a keen and talented yachtsman and was selected for Britain's Americas Cup Team. He also enjoyed cricket, golf, climbing and horse riding. In **March 1996** he had played 133 games for Harrogate and scored ten tries and continued playing until 2000.

## Former Players Reunion Saturday 17/2/2024

Andy Boyde, Nick Beaumont, Ben Reaveley, Richard Boyle, Tom Harvey Jonny Coser, Tim Heaton, Danny Matthews, Dickie Davies, Steve Parsons, Noel Minikin, Luke Edwards, Ben Hardy, Callum Irvine, Harry Barnard, George Stuffins, Nathan Smith, Brandon Hannam, Dan Metcalfe.

