

A HISTORY OF TYNE DALE RFC (1876-2001)

125 History Booklet -available shortly (£10.00 per copy)

Edward Robson and Douglas Hamilton are preparing a booklet to commemorate the 125 years of the Tynedale Rugby Football Club's existence. The club's management committee hope that the document will be a memento of this historic achievement and provide interesting reading for the club supporters - especially younger members who may not have read Michael Sharman's excellent "Centenary History of Tynedale Rugby Club" published in 1976.

The first hundred years covered by the booklet is very much a re-draft of that centenary publication. Edward Robson, in his own inimitable way, then brings us up to date with his views on the 25 years since that centenary season. He leads us through the Scottish learning curve, via the John Player/Tetley Bitter Cup exploits and the highs and lows of League rugby to the present day.

There are comments on the young blood and John Clark's influence on their progress, items about the clubhouse and ground, the millennium season, the support group. He also selects a fifteen-man team which he regards as the backbone of Tynedale Rugby Club in the last 25 years and the reason for its success.

Who gets the nod ? How did the thousands who marched behind the Mechanics band to the White Hart in 1887 compare with "Hessies mob" which travelled to Coventry exactly a century later ? Who made more noise ?

For the answers to these and other intriguing questions read the 125 year history booklet. It will also provide answers to questions about such diverse aspects of club life as - PLAYERS, SUPPORTERS, TEAMS, FAMOUS MATCHES, OFFICIALS, GROUNDS AND OTHER MATTERS.

For example :-

PLAYERS

- Were Peter Dixon and Roger Uttley, both British Lions, really offered sides of beef to play for Tynedale ?
- What was John Shotton referring to when he said "that was Crammy, wasn't it ?"
- What happened to the 35 players from Hexham Wanderers, 72 from Hexham Rovers, 30 from Hexham Excelsior and the 24 from the Heart of All England club ?
- Were they picked by Jack Kent for his 4th XV ? Or Martin Hastie for the Grasshoppers ?
- Who was "Man of the tour" to Canada in 1986 ?
- Which player went off to play rugby against Hawick with a gold sovereign in his pocket, and returned a week later with the sovereign intact ?
- Which Tynedale player had a son who played wicketkeeper for England ?
- Who, in a cup final "broke through the Gosforth defence with a dummy here, a swerve there, and stormed between the posts" ? Dick Parker ? Mark Fletcher ?
- Which New Zealander played for Tynedale and liked the area so much he settled at Alston ?
- When did one player's build-up for a match consist of dancing at a local hunt ball until 6am on the Saturday, riding home on horseback, changing into hunting garb, hunting until mid-day and playing in a cup-tie for the club (and proving to be one of the best forwards on the field) ? James Ponton ? Steve Dunn ?
- Which Tynedale ex-captains lived, at different times, at adjacent farms at Spitalshields, Hexhamshire and at Churchlands at Catton ?
- Which Tynedale player scored in a cup-final receiving the scoring pass from his brother Percy ? Peter Telfer II ?
- Who rode on horseback from Upper Redeswater to the nearest railway station and the eighteen miles home again on dark, cold and sometimes snowy nights after a gruelling match for Tynedale ? Campbell Hewitson, Billy Robson, Alan Gledson or J.T.Dodd from Catcleugh ?
- When was James W.McIntyre, Martin Hastie's all-time favourite Tynedale player, ("no quieter or more unassuming young man plays football") hit twice on the mouth during a match by a referee, who was later RFU President ?

SUPPORTERS

- Was John Shotton the man described as "a half-deaf and blind old fellow aged sixty years or so" who was also struck by the same referee after the game ?
- Who were called the "Village Choir" by Ian Robertson the TV commentator in 1987 ?
- Who called "Tarset and Tarryburn, yit, yit, yit" ? Steve Turnbull or Jamie Self ?
- Why did Hexham rugby supporters wait outside the Post Office in Beaumont Street ? Pensions ?
- When did the Newcastle newspapers report that a referee "after a long series of anti-Tynedale decisions, was deposited at the end of the game in the River Tyne" ? Was it true ?
- When did the railway company run a special two-shilling special from Hexham to West Gosforth for a cup-final ?

TEAMS

- How does Edward Robson manage to select a fifteen which includes Jim Chapman (who never played rugby) and Simon Clayton-Hibbott ?
- Who were the Hexham Unionists, the Church Lads Brigade, Tyneside Rovers, Tyne Green Juniors, Tyneside Wanderers, Parkend Rangers and Hexham Violets ? Did any of them ever win Northumberland Cups ?
- Which team had a pre-match breakfast with Nottingham Forest and Brian Clough ?
- Were there ever rugby teams at West Wylam, Haltwhistle, Allendale, Redeswater, Bellingham and one in the North Tyne (called Border Rovers) ?
- Which English sevens team won the Gala, Hawick and Melrose Sports in 1885-86 ?
- Who were the eventual John Player cup semi-finalists who beat a team described in a national newspaper in 1975 as "Tynedale Terrors" by 16-15 ?
- Who were Elswick ?
- When did the Haltwhistle club begin a Boxing Day match against Mr John Clark's XV before a big crowd at Bellister Parks ?
- John Shotton has selected a "Champagne" team of the best players at Tynedale between 1976 and 2001. Who do you think gets into his back row ?
- When did Hexham Boy Scouts rugby section amalgamate with Tynedale ?

FAMOUS MATCHES

- Which activity ended "at eleven o'clock as the singing of the National Anthem brought festivities to a close" ? John Fletcher's stag party ? One of John Shotton's cricket dinners ? The Murrayfield gang's last dinner at St Boswells or Scorton 2001 ?
- Which of Tynedale's matches kicked off at eight o'clock in the morning so that they could get home early ?
- Was the commentator who praised "the combination and unselfishness of the Tynedale back team" speaking about the smart passing and intricate patterns weaved by Alan (Remi) Moses, Gary Fleming, Epi and Scott Ferguson in 1999 or a cup-final in April 1887 ?
- After which match did the "apathy of the players" of Tynedale prompt the resignation of the club Chairman, the Secretary, the Treasurer and two committee-men and the resignation of the first team captain ? Bridlington 1999 -Tetley's Bitter Cup tie ?
- Why were Tynedale blessed when "a rumbustious second-row forward" hung up his boots ?
- Who came as coach to Tynedale via Melrose, Alnwick and the Northumberland constabulary ?
- Who convinced a whole pack of forwards serving in the Army at Catterick that they should train at Tynedale Park ?
- Which land-agent allegedly offered tenant's rights in exchange for their sons' attendance at colts rugby ?

GROUND

- Did the club ever play on the Sele at Hexham ?
- How much land does the club now own ?
- When did Tynedale's floodlit training sessions have to be abandoned for six years ?

- How much did the land at Tynedale Park, Corbridge cost ?
- When did the club's headquarters move from the Globe, the Black Bull, the White Hart, the North Eastern, the Old Grey Bull and the Royal ?

GENERAL

- What influence did the Danes, Romans and Jacobites have on Tynedale's promotion to the National Leagues ? Was it greater than travelling tinkers, Scots and Welshmen like Dai Hopkins and Hugh Mainwaring ?
- When was Tynedale's total income for the year £32 ?
- Who sent Tynedale a telegram from Australia saying "Well done, our prayers have been answered" ? Was it Richie Benaud on hearing that Ken Bell and John Shotton would not be at Headingley for the Test Match or Hec and Walter Rutherford reacting to the 1988 Northumberland win ?
- Did Tynedale manage to claim war reparations from the Italian government when the old stand, built by Italian prisoners-of-war was condemned ?
- Which club was the first to stage a "sevens" tournament on English soil ?
- When was Tynedale's ground owned by Hexham Cricket Club ?
- In 1972-73 Tynedale's 1st XV set up a new club points scoring record (when a try was 4 points) of 814 points. How many points did the promotion-winning team score (Try 5 points) in season 1999-2000 ?
- When did Hexham Grammar School switch from Association to Rugby Football ?
- What consists of Mitford pressed silver grey rustic bricks ?
- When were Tynedale members regaled by Rolls, Royce and Walter ?
- How many Tynedale international rugby players have there been ?
- What happened when a letter addressed to the "Captain of the Tynedale Football club" arrived in 1876 ?
- When did Tynedale first play in blue and white jerseys ?
- What sport was the Hexham Courant describing when it said "it brings the brain into vigorous action, by requiring almost every instant nice calculations of distance, exact decisions of cause and effect, and by demanding prompt action when the enemy exhibits a weak point, or an opportunity of fouling him occurs" ?

If you think the answer to this last question is "John Saunders fishing for salmon" or if you don't know the answers to any of the other questions then YOU REALLY NEED TO BUY THE BOOKLET marking the 125 years history of Tynedale Rugby Football Club - Available within the next few weeks at £10.00 per copy.