

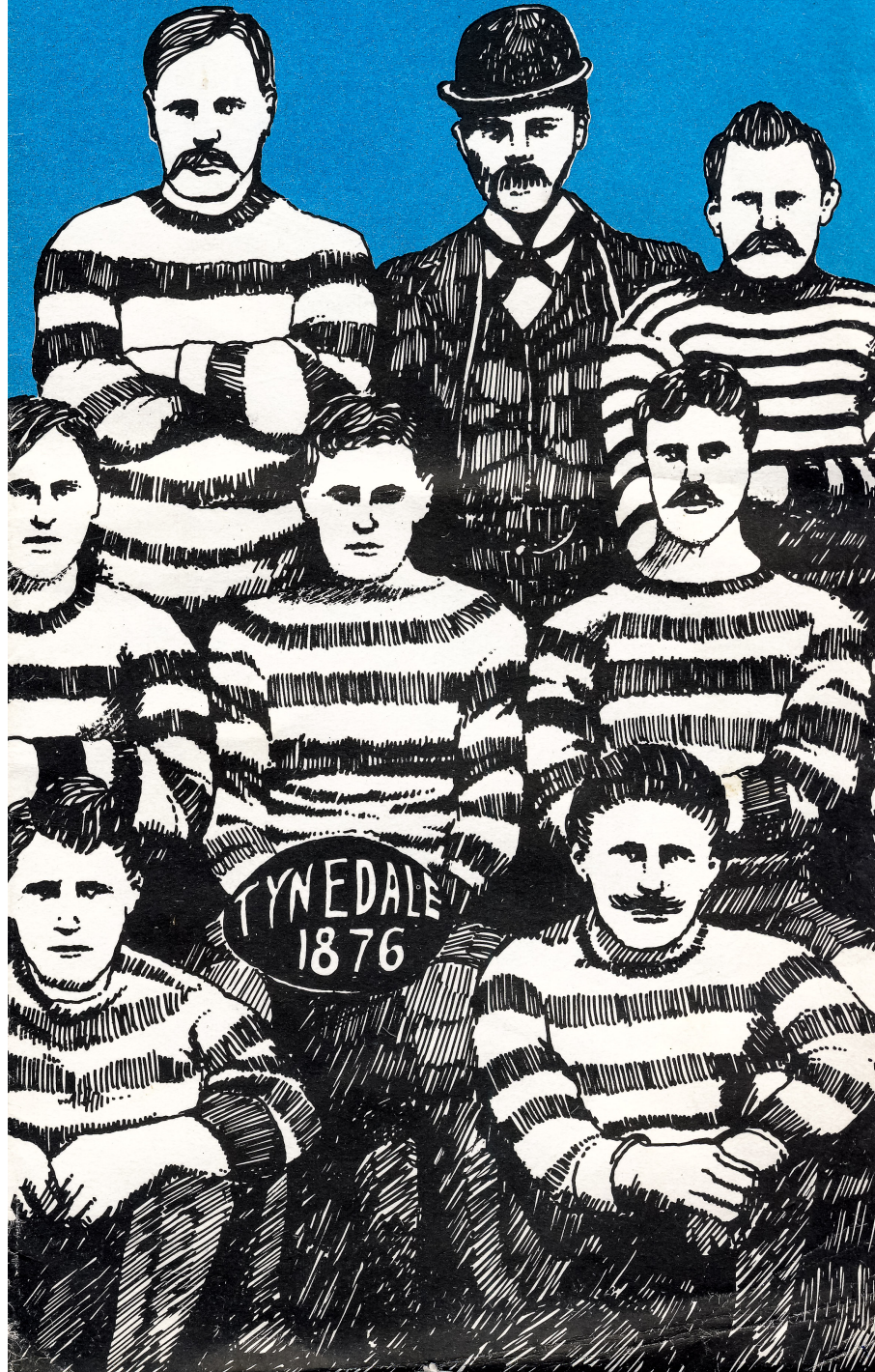
SOUVENIR 30p.

1876

TYNEDALE CENTENARY

RUGBY
FOOTBALL
CLUB

1976



INTRODUCTION



This is the story of Tynedale Rugby Club. Compared with some, it is not a big club, nor a particularly famous one. Its fixture list is attractive, but scarcely glamorous. It has had not a single international, not a solitary R.F.U. president, in a hundred years.

But in the hearts of those who play for it, those who work for it and those who follow its fortunes, Tynedale Rugby Club is a very special club indeed.

For a century now it has kept the banner of rugby football fluttering over the rolling acres of West Northumberland. Centred in the little market town of Hexham, nestling amid the lush green hills of the Tyne Valley at the geographical centre of Britain, has won county cups galore, supplied county players and administrators by the score, acquitted itself honourably on rugby fields all over the North of England and South of Scotland, and given selflessly of its men in two world wars.

Above all, it has imbued thousands of lives with the spirit of rugby. The spirit that, for rugby men, has always set the game apart from other games; the spirit that lives on today in full measure in a club which, with a hundred years already behind it, now looks forward to its next hundred year with pride in its past and a bounding enthusiasm about its future.

TRIPLE SEVEN

The Tynedale club holds three unique distinctions: it took part in the first seven-a-side tournament ever held, at Melrose in 1883; it is the only English club ever to have gained a hat-trick of successes in Border "sevens" competitions; and it was the first club ever to stage a seven-a-side tournament in England.

Those three Border "sevens" trophies came early in its history: at Galashiels and Hawick in 1885, and at Melrose the following year. Darkness prevented one final being played on the Saturday so it was held over until the Monday - kicking off at eight o'clock in the morning! Tynedale rose the fresher, won the match and rode back in triumph over the Cheviots, clutching their gold medals. Great days indeed!

It was only natural then that the Tynedale club should also go on to stage a seven-a-side tournament for itself, for the first time ever on English soil. Held on the Seal at Hexham on Whit Monday, 1894, it attracted entries from Blaydon, Hawick and Hexham, gold medals going to the Tynedale team which won the competition, and silver medals to the beaten finalists, Hexham Unionists.

1876

1887

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

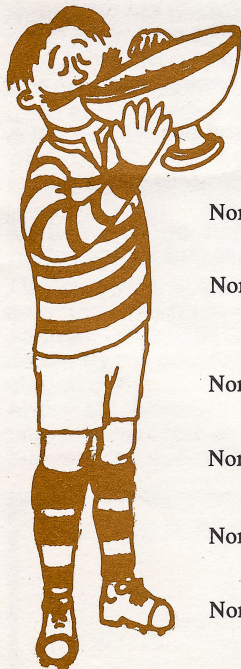
Tynedale Rugby Club began almost by accident, following the arrival in Hexham of a letter addressed to the "Captain of the Hexham Football Club". There being no-one in the town answering to that title, a group of people decided it was high time there was. On 11th October, 1876, a meeting was called in Hexham Town Hall at which Tynedale Football Club was duly formed and a captain, officials and committee appointed.

A Tynedale team took the field for the first time on 30th December, 1876, when they entertained Elswick (now Northern) at Hexham, winning by a goal and two tries to nil.

In 1880, Tynedale became one of the six founder members of the Northumberland Rugby Football Union and, by 1883, found themselves in the final of the Northumberland Challenge Cup, introduced two seasons earlier. But they lost to Tynemouth — and lost again in the final the following year to Northern.

It was third time lucky, however, in 1887 when Tynedale beat Northern before a crowd of 5,000 in a pulsating final at Jesmond to bring the Senior Cup back to Hexham for the first time. To the strains of the Mechanics Band playing "See the Conquering Hero Comes", hundreds of jubilant supporters greeted the club captain, Tom Robson, and his team on their return to Hexham railway station, and the celebrations went on long into the night at the White Hart Hotel, with a packed crowd gathered outside in the darkness.

Such was the enthusiasm that this victory generated that, three weeks later, at a momentous meeting in the White Hart, all the rugby clubs in the Hexham area decided to merge under the common banner of Tynedale Football Club. Nowadays, Hexham Excelsior, Heart of All England, Hexham Wanderers, Tyneside Rovers, Parkend Rangers and Hexham Violets may, alas, be no more than colourful names from a distant past. Without them, however, there would have been no Tynedale club as rugby men know it today.



CLUB HONOURS

Northumberland Senior Cup	1887, 1906, 1911, 1914, 1927, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1948.
Northumberland Senior Shield	1904, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1947, 1975.
Northumberland Junior Cup	1904, 1906, 1922, 1925, 1948, 1956.
Northumberland Junior Shield	1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1933, 1965.
Northumberland Under-18 Cup	1963, 1964, 1966, 1969, 1970, 1971.
Northumberland Colts Cup	1973, 1974, 1976.

OTHER TROPHIES

Gala Sevens, 1885; Hawick Sevens, 1885; Melrose Sevens, 1886; Northumberland Sevens, 1930; Northumberland Colts Sevens, 1973 and 1976; Barclays Bank Under-12 Cup, 1975; Tom Watson Under-12 Trophy, 1975.

1888 1904



Tynedale 1st XV, 1899-1900

THE YEARS OF ENDURANCE



That famous cup victory of 1887 notwithstanding, it was far from being roses all the way in those early years at Tynedale. At the beginning of that very season, indeed, the club all but folded, the secretary being instructed at one stage to cancel all fixtures for the season. Then, in 1890, six leading members of the club, including the chairman, secretary and treasurer, resigned because of the non-fulfilment of an Easter fixture with Percy Park.

Playing performance was also patchy and, after the 1st XV had won just two of their 18 matches in the 1900-01 season, with total income for the year amounting to a mere £32, members decided at their annual meeting that there was no other option but to disband the first team. It meant that, in the county cup, Tynedale had to move down the ladder into the Senior Shield competition, where they reached the final at the first attempt in 1902 and, two years later, carried off the trophy.

It was a victory which automatically entitled them to rejoin the three other senior clubs in the Senior Cup competition the following season and, the financial situation having improved and a new ground at Dene Park having been found in 1902-03, to replace earlier pitches at the Seal, Tyne Mills and the Brewery Field, all connected with the club breathed a sigh of relief. The tide had turned: Tynedale's days of crisis were over.

1905
1914



Tynedale's cup-winning 1st XV, 1906

THE GOLDEN YEARS

The Northumberland Senior Shield victory of 1904 heralded the dawn of a "Golden Age" at the club, now officially called Tynedale Rugby Football Club. During the decade up to the outbreak of the First World War Tynedale won no fewer than 15 trophies, including the Senior Cup on three occasions and the Senior Shield four times in a row between 1909 and 1912. It was a run of success which, during this period, saw a score of Tynedale players being honoured by selection for their respective counties.

The first of the three Senior Cup victories came in 1906, when the 11-0 defeat of Percy Park in the final sparked off scenes last witnessed two decades earlier, with supporters harnessing themselves to the team's brake at Hexham railway station and hauling it up the hill into the Market Place where the captain, George Spencer, triumphantly displayed the trophy to a cheering crowd.

In 1911 a tremendous second half rally again brought "Tyne" the cup — and again at Percy Park's expense. Trailing by two tries to nil at half-time and down to 14 men through an injury to wing three-quarter Braidford, they pulled back to win by a single point. It was a fitting climax to Tynedale's magnificent performance in the semi-final when a last minute try, converted by 1st XV captain Willie Robb, gave them victory over a Northern side containing five internationals from England, Scotland and Ireland.

The third Senior Cup victory came in 1914, with Percy Park yet again providing the opposition. This time it took a replay to settle the issue, Tynedale winning 9-6 following a scoreless draw first time round.

Sadly, five of that cup-winning side, captained by Sid Newman, were never again seen in a blue and white jersey. They were among 49 Tynedale players, past and present, who were soon to give their lives for their country in the First World War. A golden era was over.

1919 1939



Tynedale's cup-winning 1st XV, 1935

THE YEARS OF VICTORY

And now a great milestone in the club's history was approaching. On 13th March, 1926. Tynedale's golden jubilee was celebrated with a match at Dene Park against Waterloo, which Tynedale won 12-3. The game was followed in the evening by a jubilee dinner in Hexham Hydro under the chairmanship of the club president, Mr. Harry Robb, who had himself played in Tynedale's first-ever game against Elswick in 1876.

More significantly in the long term, the club decided to mark the jubilee in the most tangible way possible by taking up a long-standing option on Dene Park and buying the ground which it had rented for the past 23 years at a cost of £1,550. For the first time in half a century the Tynedale club had a home it could truly call its own.

Following the second team's five-year run of success in the Senior Shield competition and the fourth team's even more impressive record of six Junior Shield victories in a row between 1923 and 1928, the return of the Northumberland Senior Cup to Hexham was now long overdue. And return it did in 1927 when Davie Forster's 1st XV beat Northern 5-3 to crown a cup run which surprised everyone but Tynedale.

That cup victory of 1927 was to prove the prelude to the great years of the 'Thirties during which Tynedale carried off the Senior Cup four triumphant seasons in succession between 1933 and 1936.

The Tynedale side were captained in all four finals by wing-forward David Hodgson, games master at Hexham Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, with international trialist fly-half Angus Brogdon as his vice-captain. Six other players appeared in all four finals: Tommy Bland, Teddy Blench, Rex Graham, Ronnie Herron, Basil Liddle and Jack Suddes.

Great players all - and great days for Tynedale. Sixty years after its formation, the club was at the very pinnacle of its power. Who could foresee that another terrible war was just around the corner?

POINTS FROM THE PAST

Thirteen of the fifteen players in one Tynedale side in 1905 comprised five sets of brothers: three Spencers, three Emersons, three Pattersons, two Bates and two Ritsons.

No Tynedale player has ever won an international cap, but F.H.R. Alderson, who played in the 1887 cup-winning side, captained England several years later while with Hartlepool Rovers, and Bill Nanson joined Tynedale in 1907 from Carlisle the season after being capped against Wales and France. Noel Humphreys toured South Africa with the British Isles in 1910, while playing stand-off half for Tynedale.

The first special train ever run anywhere in the North-East for a football match was from Hexham to Newcastle for the Northumberland Senior Cup final of 1883 between Tynedale and Tynemouth.

Tynedale hooker Jack Suddes, who played in cup-winning sides at 1st XV, 2nd XV, 3rd XV and 4th XV level, later became reserve hooker for England while playing Rugby League for Bramley. Former Tynedale forward Bob Armstrong won a Rugby League cap before the First World War while playing for Salford.

Three Tynedale players, half-back John T. Dodd and forwards Tom Elliot and C.W. Harrison, played for Northumberland in their 3-3 draw against the first-ever touring side from New Zealand, the 1888-89 "Maoris". Three other Tynedale men, full-back Teddy Blench, centre Tommy Bland and hooker Jack Suddes, played in the combined Northumberland, Cumberland and Durham side which lost only 10-6 to the "All Blacks" at the County Ground, Gosforth, in 1936.

Tynedale set up a new club record of 814 points in a season in 1972-73, while Alan Stokoe set an individual record of 310 points.

THE YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT. 1945-76

For the second time in less than three decades the ravages of war took a dreadful toll of the Tynedale club. In the Second World War another 27 players and members laid down their lives for their country, among them several of the heroes of those great cup-winning sides of the 'Thirties.

Nevertheless, when club rugby resumed in earnest in Northumberland, a newly-fashioned Tynedale side led by international trialist wing-forward Will Rutherford soon picked up where Hodgson's men had left off, defeating Northern 15-13 in a thrilling final at the County Ground to win the Senior Cup of 1948.

The 75th anniversary year of 1951 brought a commemorative match on 11th October, 1951, which Tynedale lost 23-12 to a South of Scotland XV containing several internationals. Four years later another invitation match, against a County President's XV, marked the official opening of the new clubhouse at Dene Park. It replaced the old ex-Army hut which had done yeoman service ever since the First World War.

There were other developments, too. Broad Close, adjoining the first team pitch, had been acquired in 1948 as a memorial to those Tynedale men who had died in the war; and, in 1966, the clubhouse was extended to incorporate a new bar lounge.

Finally, after a period of consolidation and steady development in the 'Sixties, Tynedale took the boldest step of all when it acquired the former Tyneside Agricultural Society showfield at Corbridge to be its new headquarters, and sold its ground at Hexham to Northumberland County Council and its clubhouse to the NCB Opencast Executive.

On the threshold of its centenary, the club thus expressed its confidence in the future by embarking upon the most exciting and imaginative project in its hundred years of existence. That group of enthusiasts who founded Tynedale Rugby Football Club a century ago could never have guessed what it was they were starting.

TYNEDALE

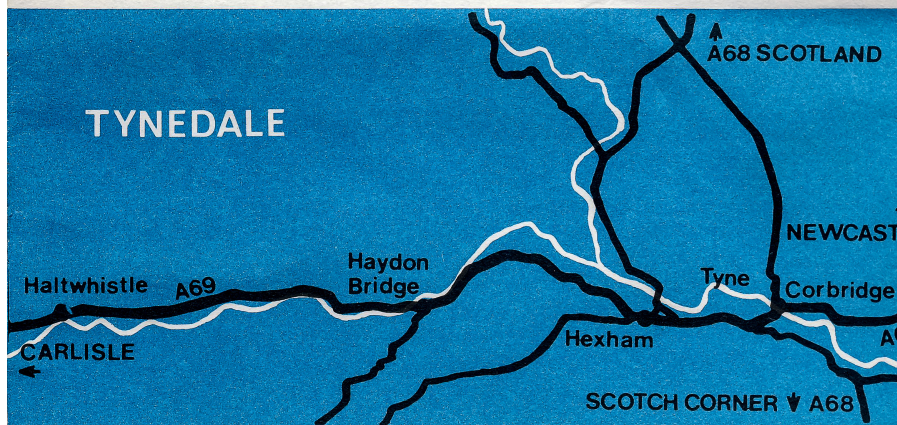
ITS NEW HEADQUARTERS



Tynedale Rugby Club has made fast and exciting progress during the 'Seventies. The symbol of its progress is its spacious new 35-acre ground at Tynedale Park, Corbridge. Beautifully situated by the banks of the River Tyne, in one of Northumberland's most historic villages, it has so far cost nearly £140,000 to acquire and develop. Provision is being made for five rugby pitches, a sixth floodlit training pitch, a soccer pitch, a cricket square and, eventually, a pair of squash courts.

The centrepiece of the new ground, which is handily positioned near the intersection of the A69 Newcastle-Carlisle road and the A68 trunk road to Scotland, is the handsome, single-storey clubhouse, opened at the start of the centenary season in September, 1976. Covering some 7,000 sq. ft., it incorporates ten changing rooms, a referees' room, tiled plunge baths and showers, a big wood-floored social room, an elegantly-furnished lounge bar, a committee room, a well-equipped kitchen and a full range of ancillary facilities. The windows are of tinted glass and the interior colour scheme is in blue, green and beige.

Around the clubhouse there is parking space for 350 cars, and a comprehensive landscaping scheme has involved the planting of nearly 300 trees, including an avenue of limes. The 1st XV pitch is flanked by a 1,925-seater stand.



All roads lead to Tynedale Park, Corbridge



CAPTAIN: Ian Blyth

A tall, elegant centre three-quarter, he has epitomised Tynedale's fluent back play during the 'Seventies and has captained the 1st XV for five seasons out of the past eight. A fine ambassador for the club both on and off the field.

The 70's

The story of the 'Seventies at Tynedale Rugby Club is one of growth. While some clubs have stood still and others, regrettably, gone into decline, Tynedale has made exciting strides. Off the field, the club has invested in its future by the acquisition of a new ground at Tynedale Park, Corbridge. On the field, the fixture list has been progressively improved and expanded, and the 1st XV playing record has been unmatched since the palmy days of the 'Thirties.

But nowhere has Tynedale expanded more than in the field of Colts and schoolboy rugby, where its organisation is the envy of many clubs throughout the North-East of England.

Fielding two Colts sides regularly, and one or more others on occasion, Tynedale has won the Northumberland Colts Cup three times in the past four seasons, and developed an increasingly attractive fixture list on both sides of the Scottish Border.

At schoolboy level, despite having only one rugby-playing school within its catchment area, Tynedale has so developed its mini-rugby scheme that it now draws players from over two dozen schools throughout the surrounding district. So far, with the help of dedicated coaching, some 200 youngsters have enjoyed their first taste of rugby through this scheme and, in the space of two seasons, the club has already carried off several mini-rugby trophies.



[Above] Tynedale Under-10 fly-half Gordon Dodd

[Below] Tynedale Colts' cup-winning XV, 1976





Leaping high, Tynedale's 18-15 win over Blackheath, 1973

TYNEDALE : ITS FIXTURE LIST

The 'Seventies have wrought a tremendous transformation in the Tynedale fixture list. Ancient links have been revived with clubs across the Border: famous clubs have been played from many corners of the country; new fields have been trodden in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire and Scotland.

Naturally, old rivalries die hard and Tynedale's fixtures with clubs it has been playing for a hundred years go on: Northern, Gosforth, Percy Park, Carlisle, Rockcliff and the rest.

But new names now appear alongside them in the fixture card, adding a fresh and attractive dimension to the playing programme. By the time the centenary season is out, Tynedale will have played, in the past few years, Blackheath and The Royal Navy from the South, Hawick, Melrose, Gala, Kelso, Langholm, Selkirk and Royal High School F.P. from Scotland; Liverpool, St. Helen's, Waterloo, Wilmslow and Sale from the North-West; and Roundhay, Hull and East Riding, Harrogate and Huddersfield from Yorkshire.

The club has acquitted itself creditably in most of those games, and emerged from them with its fair share of victories. If its appearance in the John Player Cup at Sale in 1975-76 was not crowned with instant success, defeat by the odd point in 31 by the eventual semi-finalists did nothing to disgrace it.

Above all, Tynedale 1st XV have played some fast and fluent rugby these past few seasons. Rugby which, win or lose, has given pleasure to many, players and spectators alike.

TYNEDALE 1st XV RECORD 1970-76

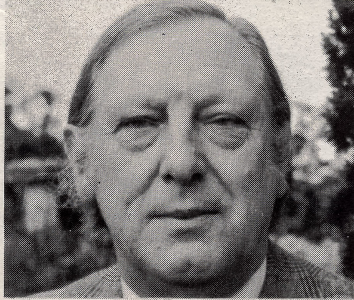
	P	W	D	L	F	A
1970-71	39	29	2	8	621	293
1971-72	35	24	1	10	628	390
1972-73	37	25	1	11	814	429
1973-74	36	21	1	14	726	372
1974-75	34	22	4	8	716	412
1975-76	37	26	1	10	665	395



TYNEDALE OFFICIALS

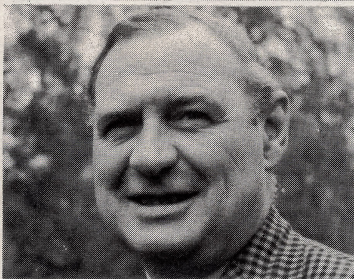
PRESIDENT: Stuart Enevoldson

A former 1st XV player, he served as secretary from 1960 to 1970 and was chairman of selectors for four years. He was made an honorary life member in 1974. His sons, Nigel and Peter, are both England schoolboy internationals.



SECRETARY: Jim Chapman

As secretary since 1970, he has played a leading role in the protracted negotiations involved in the sale of Dene Park, Hexham, and the acquisition of Tynedale Park, Corbridge. He was made an honorary life member in 1976.



TREASURER: Ken Bell

An accomplished stand-off half in his playing days, he has served as treasurer for over ten years and been closely involved in the move to Corbridge. Made an honorary life member in 1976, he was also president of the Northumberland Rugby Football Union in 1975-76.

TYNEDALE : ITS FUTURE

It is a hundred years now since the Tynedale club was formed by a band of enthusiasts in Hexham Town Hall.

In that time, it has appeared in the national cup competition, won numerous Northumberland trophies at all levels, provided many scores of county players and officials, and, above all, played the game of rugby in the spirit in which it was intended to be played.

And the club has never been in better heart than it is right now, with more teams on the field, a burgeoning membership off it, and a splendid new ground and clubhouse at Tynedale Park, Corbridge, unsurpassed by any rugby club of similar size anywhere in the country.

From top to bottom, the club brims with confidence and potential: from a 1st XV which, on its day, is capable of challenging the best in the land, to the Colts, schoolboy and mini-rugby sections which promise to yield ever richer dividends as the years roll by.

Tynedale Rugby Club enters its second century full of zest, full of confidence, and full of optimism both for its own future and for the future of the game of rugby football.

CREDITS

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Other Centenary Literature

Tynedale Rugby Club: 'A Centenary History', 1876-1976

TYNEDALE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Ground and Clubhouse: Tynedale Park, Corbridge, Northumberland.



TYNEDALE PARK '76

A close season view of Tynedale's new Corbridge ground