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**Southport  
Rugby Club  
Centenary  
1872 · 1972**

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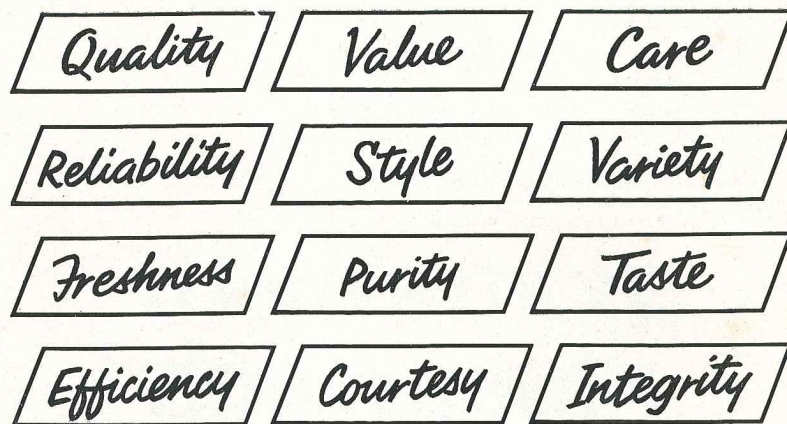
*THANKS ALSO TO JOHN JAMES OF THE KINGSWAY  
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'Southport Rugby Club Centenary 1872-1972' was published by Sponsored Publications Ltd of  
45a Kensington High Street, London W8 (01-937 1279) for the club and printed for the  
publishers by Brown Knight & Truscott Ltd, London

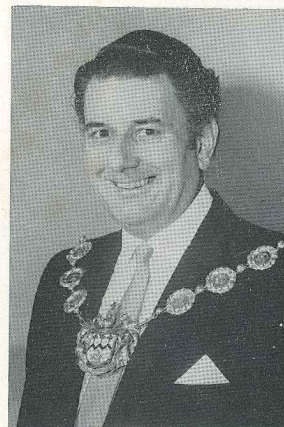




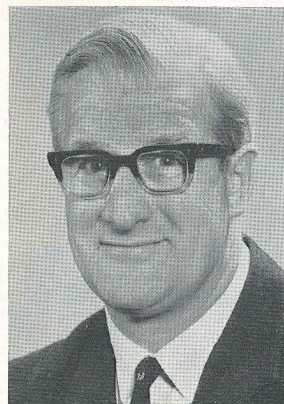
Why use a dozen words when one will do?



Marks & Spencer



Century of leisure ... Langfeld



Heritage of rivalry ... Kemp



Epoch event ... Barber

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to express my congratulations to the Southport Rugby Union Football Club in its centenary year.

Any club which can, over 100 years, provide such excellent leisure, sport and good company, has earned and deserves the warmest congratulations.

So I wish the club and its members a further long and illustrious future and proffer my good wishes for the success of all teams and members.

ALLAN LANGFELD, Mayor of Southport

Recently a number of Rugby Union clubs have celebrated their centenary and several more will do so in the next few years.

When a rugby club has existed for 100 years, it reflects the amount of hard work put in by a succession of officials and players, particularly the enthusiasts who started it all.

As time has passed ideas and schemes have been tried out to improve the game. Many years ago, for instance, we had Lancashire senior and junior cup competitions.

The County Cup Competition has been recently revised and although there may be mixed feelings about it, there is no doubt that many clubs will welcome the chance of playing against one of the senior sides.

It is up to players and officials to devote themselves to the task of keeping this great amateur game going to even greater strengths in the next 100 years.

Good wishes to Southport in their centenary season—and the years to follow.

R. G. BURTON, President, Lancashire County Rugby Football Union

On behalf of the Rugby Football Union I warmly congratulate the Southport Rugby Union Football Club on 100 years of loyal and faithful service to the game.

Unlike so many people today, rugby footballers have a strong belief in tradition and the spirit of adventure.

The wholehearted zest of our founding fathers has run through the game like a silver cord and will still be there, when we are not, in 100 years' time.

In recent decades the major problems for clubs have included the purchase of grounds and the building of pavilions and changing rooms. In years ahead clubs are likely to have to shoulder an increasing responsibility for the coaching of individual and team skills so that the game can develop further and continue to be enjoyed by those who play and watch.

At the same time they will have to ensure that the game continues to be played in the traditional spirit of friendly rivalry which is our heritage.

T. A. KEMP, President, Rugby Football Union, 1971-72

The centenary of the Southport Rugby Union Football Club is an epoch event. In fact I have been connected with the club for over half that time and have seen a great deal of progress.

I even remember those days when the club played in Victoria Park and the players had to change at the corporation baths and run along the promenade to the ground in all kinds of weather.

When the club moved to Hillside the membership increased and today, of course, we have four teams playing each week, sometimes five.

We are the oldest club in the district and whether we win or lose we provide healthy outdoor recreation for hundreds of youths who will benefit from the team work in which they take part.

Throughout this year we hope to provide many amenities, and I hope this progressive policy will be supported by the public of Southport and district.

SIR HERBERT BARBER, President Southport Rugby Club



*Congratulations  
from one  
Centenarian  
to  
Another*

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1872

1913

H. Brandon, Bean, H. Daly, H. Peck, G. Bromilow, G. Andrew, P. M. Hunter, A. Andrew,  
J. E. Fletcher, G. Nicholson, G. Schofield, W. A. Gordon,  
F. Dixon, R. Hartley, H. Stock, C. Schofield.







Open-top trams on Lord Street . . . Rugby Club formed for 'townsmen' and 'supported by gentry'

#### Southport Visiter 29-11-1872 Southport Gymnasium and Football Club

The above club has recently been inaugurated under the most encouraging circumstances.

It is to be hoped that a movement like this, which is calculated to improve the physical development of our young townsmen, will meet with the appreciation and support of the gentry of this town.

The honorary subscription is 10s 6d and a donation of £2 2s constitutes the donor a life member.

#### Work begins on Severn Tunnel

Gladstone was Prime Minister in 1872. Victoria was on the throne. Grant was re-elected president of the United States. Penny-farthings were in general use, an overland telegraph was started in Australia and the Jesuits were thrown out of Germany. And in the autumn, Southport Rugby Union Football Club was formed.

The *Southport Visiter* of November 29 recorded this last event for posterity in the prosaic phraseology typical of local newspapers of the period. It said the new club was 'calculated to improve the physical development of our young townsmen' and hoped to be supported by 'the gentry of this town'.

That was the beginning.

But it was an odd sort of rugby that was played in those days. There weren't many clubs around for a start, although other Lancashire clubs are still going strong that can trace their ancestry back 100 years. And there were usually 20 players a side: two full backs, one threequarter, two halves and 15 forwards.


It was also a pretty rough game. There were no referees and 'justice' was usually handed out by kicks, trips and the occasional punch. Offside was usually bellowed out by the side under attack and corrected with a kick on the shin, later more politely known as hacking.

Things weren't much different after the game because then as now there was generous indulgence in 'jolly song', as the *Visiter* put it in the very early days.

Scoring was most confusing. There were goals, tries, touch downs, rouges, posters and even quarter ways resulting in some very odd scores. Like the November 8, 1873 match at home to Dingle when Southport scored 'two touch downs, several rouges and one poster to nil'. There were also some disputed results, like in the November 27, 1880 match against St Ignacius of Preston which was published as 'Southport Olympic one try and one touch down to one try (disputed)'.

Main force behind the formation of the club was Dr George Coombe of Southport Infirmary who managed to get a gymnasium fixed up in the Park Street artillery drill shed and persuaded the then mayor of Southport, Samuel Swire, to become the club's first president.

W. H. Smith of the District Bank became vice-president, H. P. Stephenson honorary secretary and Stewart Allen honorary treasurer. Backing for the new venture also came from Southport Rowing Club and the Alexandra Cricket

Southport Football Club	
	
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THE RIGHT HON. MARQUIS OF HARTINGTON, M.P.	
SIR W. VERNON HARCOURT, M.P.	
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Captain:	Hon. Treasurer:
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Hon. Secretaries:	
H. W. SHEARD and WILLIAM PLATT	
Committee:	
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H. H. WHITE.	L. E. JOHNSON.
	C. TUCKNESS.
Ground: Roe Lane.	
COLOURS: BLUE, WHITE, AND RED.	

List of Matches, 1873-80.			
DATE.	CLUB.	WHERE.	RESULT.
Oct. 4	Opening Game	Home	
11	Blackburn	Blackburn	
18	Bolton (a team)	Southport	
25			
Nov. 1	Rochdale	Rochdale	
8			
15	Preston Rovers	Preston	
22	Fairfield	Southport	
29	Brightmet		
Dec. 6	Waterloo (a team)		
13	St. Helens	St. Helens	
20	Bootle Wasps	Bootle	
27	Broughton	Southport	
1880.			
Jan. 3			
10			
17	Walton	Walton	
24	Fairfield	Edge Lane	
31	St. Helens	Southport	
Feb. 7			
14	Walton	Southport	
21	Waterloo (a team)	Waterloo	
28	Brightmet	Brightmet	
Mar. 6	Bolton (a team)	Bolton	
13	Bootle Wasps	Southport	
20	Preston Rovers		
27	Blackburn		
Apr. 4	Rochdale		
11			
18	Walton	2nd team Walton	
25		Southport	

Club next to whose pitch in Manchester Road the club had its first ground.

For 52½p, more romantically known as half a guinea in those days, one could become an honorary subscriber. For two guineas you were a life member.

It seems there was no lack of support for the game because in no time Southport had a number of clubs, three of which, Southport Football Club, Southport Olympic and Southport Wasps, eventually merged under the Olympic name.

But successful or not the press of the day more or less chose to ignore rugby, match reports being few and far between. At the beginning of the club's second season in 1873, however, the *Southport Visiter* of October 31 did think the game sufficiently important to publish the club's fixture list—although after the season had started.

Things had in fact begun very well for the club. Although the second match against the Claughton Club was postponed, Southport had won the first fixture against Sandringham School by one goal and three touch downs, and the third with Liverpool College by three goals.

Skipper in those days was R. M. Smith, his deputy P. M. Hunter. The committee comprised: N. Barron, F. Gregory, G. Hall, R. Hartley, S. Lord and three of the Schofield family, C. A. G. and T. Treasurer and secretary were unchanged, the mayor remained president, George Coombe became vice-president.

A minor breakthrough as far as the press was concerned was made in 1875 when the *Visiter* added a 'sports and pastimes' section to the paper. And it is in this section that Southport Rugby Union Football Club probably made their first real claim to fame—on February 5, 1876. It involved the Liverpool Club who were really responsible for introducing rugby to the North of England with a demonstration match played before an invited audience of former public schoolboys at Edge Hill back in 1857. Playing them at home 19 years later, Southport were easy victors by one try and three touch downs to one goal and one touch down.

Just to prove it was no fluke, Southport repeated the performance the season after next, on November 3, 1877—this time at Edge Hill where they won by one goal and two tries. Liverpool didn't even manage to score.

The club had been pretty impressive the previous season, too, playing

*Irish University Bill  
thrown out of Commons*

*Prize fight at Barrow  
goes 84 rounds  
First typewriter exhibited  
at Southport's Royal Hotel*





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of India*

*Red Flag Act passed for men  
to walk in front of cars*

*Royce starts making cars in  
Manchester*

*The 'Mexico' wrecked  
off Southport*

*Jack the Ripper kills six  
women*

*Eiffel finishes his tower*

*Three Labour MPs elected  
to Commons*

*Overhead electric railway  
opens in Liverpool*

15 games, winning 13, losing and drawing one with 16 goals, 28 tries and 54 touch downs.

With this excellent early record it seems surprising that there was only one Southport player, G. Schofield, selected for the Lancashire county side for the Roses match against Yorkshire at Whalley Range on January 20, 1877. Five of this side came from Manchester. The skipper, incidentally, was E. Kewley of Liverpool who later became the first Northern player to lead England. The next real milestone came on November 19, 1878, when seven Southport players joined the 20-a-side Lancashire District game sponsored by the West Lancashire Bicycle Co and played under electric light at Edge Hill. Southport's septet comprised: Nicholson, Dixon, Forshaw, Bromilow, Thompson, Keyworth and Gordon.

Southport's second player to make the Lancashire county side was G. Nicholson, picked for the match against Durham on December 3, 1878.

In these first six years the game in Southport had matured and developed quite a bit. Referees and umpires were emerging at last, Southport Olympic were fielding two teams and the town also managed to support Southport Rangers and Southport Hornets.

Although at this time soccer was also getting very popular, there seemed to be no shortage of people who wanted to watch rugby—many more than see Southport play today. For instance, in 1884, according to the *Visiter*, 800 people watched Southport play Pagefield and 400 even turned out to see the second team match against Bury.

On December 6 of the same year, 1884, 1,000 people turned up at the Waterloo ground to see the match against Southport who had by this time merged their interests with Olympic. In the first round of the West Lancashire knock out cup, on March 13, 1886 when Southport were at home to Aspull, the visitors even went as far as bringing 300 spectators with them.

Aspull seemed to be a pretty good side where crowds were concerned because in the same season, playing against Warrington, 6,000 turned up, and when Southport visited Aspull in the first round tie the following season, 2,000 people came along.

During March 1888, 4,000 watched the first round Lancashire tie with Southport at home to Wigan. It was one month before this, by the way, that Southport's red, black and amber colours were first mentioned in the press, in part of a report of a game with New Brighton.

Before leaving the subject of rugby as a 19th century spectator sport, it is worth mentioning that in 1889, 6,000 watched Wigan win the West Lancashire cup. The same number of people watched the England-Scotland soccer international of the same year.

But well before this time the game itself had a lot of the rough corners knocked off. In the 1885-6 season, for instance, referees were first issued with whistles, and umpires with sticks. The season after this the Rugby Union introduced a proper points system: three for a goal, one for a try.

F. E. Hancock, captain of the Cardiff Club, had also experimented with a four threequarter system which eventually made the game more skilful by eliminating the mauls generated as forwards pushed each other up and down the field keeping the ball in the ruck.

But with popularity came professionalism and with that an increasing difficulty in arranging matches against purely amateur teams. This problem meant that half the 1889-90 fixture list had to be axed with the result that the club found time to reorganise itself at the Morningson Ground in Scarisbrick Road.

A couple of very lean seasons followed in spite of C. M. Sawyer playing for Southport, a man who had got two England caps while playing for Broughton 10 years earlier. The worst season was probably 1892-3 when Southport played 21 matches winning eight and losing 13 with only 16 points for and 219 against. The best result of the season was almost certainly the 5-2 victory over Waterloo. It was during this season that the *Visiter* first referred to 'modern scoring values' which meant a try was worth two points, a penalty three, a goal four and a goal from a try five points.

All clubs were affected by fixture axings and a major row started to brew over broken time payments. The official dispute day was September 20, 1893 at a Rugby Football Union meeting in London. Secretary G. Rowland-Hill proposed an amendment which was seconded by the vice-president, R. S. Whalley. Referring to broken time payments, it read: 'That this meeting,





### *Gibbs glances back . . . memories of 1913*

My first association with Southport rugby was as a junior in 1913, writes Charles Gibbs, who at 76 is the club's oldest living, one time regular playing member (above wearing his Lancashire County strip).

There were two XV's playing in Victoria Park next to Rotten Row and we changed half a mile away at Victoria swimming baths.

Big names of those days included: Dalzell, Grimshaw, Hodgson, Tom Johnson, Saul, Tim and Jack Wainwright.

People often say I am the oldest living playing member. This isn't quite true. At 78 club vice-president Walter Paton is my senior. He played on and off for Southport with his two elder brothers, George and Stanley, both now dead.

This was back in 1913. Walter in fact went on to captain a side in the Seventh Brigade of the King's Regiment, Liverpool, and his father, Sir J. W. Paton, became president of the club in 1919. But the trio weren't regular players.

When war started in 1914 most of us were either in the Royal Navy

Volunteer Reserve and the Territorial Army or we enlisted.

There was no rugby until after the war, when among others Daniel Halsall, Jack Wainwright Senior and my father George V. Gibbs, a Gloucestershire full back in the 1890s, reported back for duty.

Although ground amenities were bad, Southport were a lot better placed than some clubs.

I remember a fixture with The Aliens (now Sefton) whose ground was at West Derby, Liverpool. Dressing was in the billiard room of the Hare and Hounds, an old coaching inn then the West Derby train terminus. Washing was with cold water in two halves of a tun in the hotel yard.

It was raining, the pitch was a farmer's field 400 yards away, from which cows had been removed that morning leaving a sea of . . . mud.

Jimmy Walker couldn't face the the tub and dressed dirty.

But after the war things soon picked up. Rugby had been widely played by the Services, introducing thousands to the game.

And, of course, when grammar schools were founded in the 'twenties rugby usually became the

official game.

The public still don't recognise the basic difference between Rugby League and Rugby Union. League aims at outdoor entertainment for paying spectators, Union aims to encourage healthy masculine recreation—generally without onlookers.

After turning professional a Union International I know told me 'Rugger isn't fun anymore'—a succinct summing up.

A good example of the fellowship of Union men is, I think, shown by the following incident during the 1913-14 season.

W. H. a police constable, and T. J. had been playing together, although W. H. had later gone on duty.

He was checking the passages between Lord Street shops with a 'bulls eye' lantern. There was a questionable noise, so he opened his lantern shutter and the indifferent light revealed two undisguisable figures.

'What's going on?' said the P.C. Recognising the voice, T. J. said 'Bugger off, Bill'.

'Sorry Tom', said W. H. closing his lamp shutter.

*Boers and British battle it out in South Africa*

*Edward VII succeeds Victoria*

*San Francisco earthquake followed by fire*

*First airship flies over London*

*Blériot makes it by air from Calais to Dover*

*Titanic disaster*

*War declared after Franz-Ferdinand shot*

believing that the above principle is contrary to the game and its spirit, declines to sanction same'.

The motion was carried by 282 to 136 resulting in 22 Yorkshire and Lancashire clubs pulling out of the Rugby Union and forming what was later known as the Rugby League.

Southport's fixture list was immediately further hit and things didn't pick up until 1899 when the Birkdale Rugby Football Club, who first had come to prominence in 1882 and had by this time acquired the Victoria Park pitches, started to put the town's rugby back on the map.

This general depression was referred to in the *Visiter* of September 14, 1901 when it was pointed out that: 'The new management was still loyal to the Rugby Union'. But things remained very low until 1906 when the club was completely reformed playing a full fixture list at Victoria Park. The new secretary was T. A. Saul of 70 Leyland Road. Southport's former Member of Parliament, Sir George Pilkington, was president, a post he held for seven years.

From then on things picked up. In the 1906-7 season Southport's Vernon Rowley played for Lancashire and the referee of the November match against Waterloo was Paul Carter, later mayor of Southport and president of the club. It was during this season that the club acquired its first press officer who wrote regular reports for the *Visiter* under the 'Wanderer' pen name. This was George Gibbs (father of the writer on the opposite page), who became chairman of the club in 1919.

The next season was also a good one, 1907-8, when after Christmas, Southport won 10 matches in a row, scoring 178 points and conceding only 27.

At this time moves were afoot to change the club's name. At the annual meeting held at the Royal Hotel on September 11, 1909 a proposal to drop the Olympic name in favour of Southport Rugby Union Football Club was defeated. It was during this season, by the way, that Southport captain, D. Jackson, led Cumberland against Northumberland—on December 16, 1909.

But those that wanted to kill the Olympic name wouldn't lie down, the original 1909 motion being heavily defeated the following year. It wasn't until the general meeting of April 22, 1913 that the motion was finally carried and the club once more became the Southport Rugby Union Football Club, the Olympic name finally biting the dust.

Changing the club's name after all those years of trying might well have been helped by the 1911-2 season, without question the worst in the club's history. A win wasn't notched up until March, the club conceding 293 points and scoring a paltry 38.

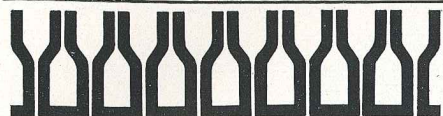
And perhaps the change of name did a little good, or perhaps it was the thought of war and no rugby until 1919, but in the following 1913-4 season Southport clobbered Kersal 51 to nil and Port Sunlight, then known as Cosmopolitan by 58 to nil. This in a full season of 17 won, nine lost and one draw with 376 points for and 192 against.

A new era had dawned.



*The Southport Olympic side of 1913-4 . . . a season of 17 victories and 376 points*



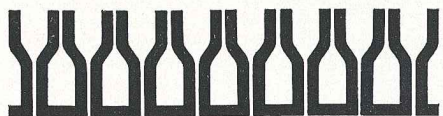


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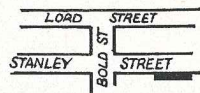
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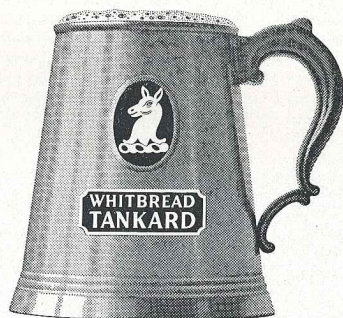
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1919

1939

Back row: H. F. Cockhill, C. E. Gibbs, J. Buck, C. R. Goldsmith, C. H. Benmore, G. C. Paton  
Middle row: R. E. Lee, T. Gore, J. Warrington, Sir James Paton, J. Broadbent (Captain), A. I. Escombe, J. E. Charnley  
Front: C. W. Hamilton, R. P. Gore



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AND WISH THE CLUB  
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*Germany surrenders*

*Lady Astor becomes  
first woman MP*

*Prohibition hits  
United States*

*Lloyd George resigns—  
Bonar Law moves to No 10*

*Bonar Law chucks it  
in to Baldwin*

*First Labour Government  
comes to power*

*King George V school opens  
in Southport—the year of the  
General Strike*

The first world war. The Great War people called it. But war is never great.

When the declaration was made in September 1914, the club called an extraordinary meeting and cancelled all fixtures. They recommended that members 'join some military organisation'.

No rugby was played until peace finally came on the 11th hour of the 11th month 1918. It seems appropriately evil that 11 club members lost their lives in the fighting.

To 1919. The war was over, but the aftermath of hardship and deprivation remained. In spite of it all the club played its part in helping the country back on its feet.

A photograph in the *Southport Visiter* even shows players helping to keep the trains running during the rail strike.

But the club were back in the rugby business.

President at that time was G. Grimshaw who took over from his brother, J. Grimshaw, president in 1914, but who was killed during the war. And so the club re-established itself.

Two of the players, Charles E. Gibbs and J. T. Walker, played in a county trial on October 21, 1919. Gibbs was in the Possibles, but Walker took the ball by the horns and scored four tries for the Probables.

First mention was also made at this time, incidentally, of an annual Christmas match with the Old Terranovans which became a regular fixture until 1938. Dressing accommodation moved from the Royal Hotel to Victoria Baths.

The Gibbs and Walker success story, however, continued into the 1920-1 season. In November 1920, both played for Lancashire against a combined Liverpool-Manchester team at Kendal, and they were also named as reserves for the match against Yorkshire.

That month, too, Gibbs played for Lancashire against Durham and later captained the Liverpool and District XV in the country trial.

Walker was then Southport's captain and he was playing well enough to be picked for Lancashire against Cumberland and Westmorland.

Notable successes for the club that season were a 65-3 defeat of Cosmopolitan, a 5-3 win over Fylde's 1st XV, and a magnificent 60-8 away win over Chester College.

Try-maker Walker also made the county side in 1922. So did T. Gore, who went on to form a coach firm, still going strong as Gores Tours.

The club began to regain some of its former strength. In September 1922, there were 75 players, 20 holiday members, nine schoolboys and 176 patrons.

They also sponsored a sports meeting at the Southport Central Football Club ground which really drew the crowds: between five and six thousand according to reports.

This growing strength was reflected in the team's game, and later that year identified itself in a 20-0 victory over New Brighton at Victoria Park.

Even the fixture list for 1923 showed many famous names: Waterloo, Liverpool, New Brighton, Stonyhurst College and St Helens.

There was also a Second XV match against Old Birkenian's First XV. But unfortunately the club underestimated the strength of the opposition and the result was a trouncing, by 80 points to nil.

Despite this setback the team were still very popular. On September 20, 1924, at Victoria Park, around 1,000 people turned up to watch the opening match against Blackburn.

History was also in the making this month when at the general meeting it was decided to transfer £88 from the investment account to 'The New Ground Fund'. A small thing, perhaps, but the significance of it is still being appreciated today.

One other outstanding event of the 1924-5 season was Southport's 'double' victory. They were the only side that season to beat Birkenhead Park twice—8-3 at home, 6-5 away.

The 1926-7 season was the last at Victoria Park. Under the captaincy of C. G. Paton, the team took the field for the last official time—against Birkenhead Park. Southport went down 14-8.

On March 26, 1927, the club celebrated the opening of their new ground at Hillside with a 16-0 win over Preston Grasshoppers. A good side to beat.

When the club first acquired the lease at Hillside the ground was in a hell of a state. Ditches had to be filled in and levelling done before any playing could be attempted. The total amount spent on the pavilion and ground was





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*Hypothetical questions have hypothetical answers . . . but there are plenty of club members who believe that without Dr A. W. Limont, president from 1924 to 1949, the club wouldn't be celebrating its 100th birthday. Two faces of the alderman and justice of the peace are shown above.*

£1,500, and the stand £231. All the money was raised by the efforts of members and friends at jumble sales, dances and so on.

At this time, in his second season as Southport captain, T. M. Mason was picked at centre threequarter for Cumberland. He scored a good ironical try in the match against Lancashire at Blundellsands later in the season, and the following year got another two—again in the Lancashire match at Liverpool.

Mason wasn't the only Southport player who won a Cumberland county cap. W. Hodgson got one. So did R. Dalzell—back in 1928.

The mid-30s were the period of Old Georgians, a club who were thriving at that time although they later amalgamated with Southport, on May 23, 1936.

Under the chairmanship of Dr A. W. Limont the club prospered—both financially and on the field. Unknowingly, they were building up to possibly the most exciting time in their history.

Under the captaincy of George White the team hit top form and for three incredible years broke all previous records. There were two reasons for this. First the formation in 1926 of King George V grammar school which was the only school teaching rugby in Southport and from where the club got a lot of new players. And second the Old Georgians merger, which further bolstered up the club's playing strength.

On November 3, 1934, the club recorded their first win over the Waterloo First XV for 21 years. With only 14 men they hung on to win by a solitary try from an up and coming young player, J. Nicholls, destined to play an important part in Southport's future.

History was made on the last Saturday of April 1935. Southport reached the final of the Manchester seven-a-side tournament. The side had beaten Old Salfordians (8-0), Vale of Lune (6-3) and Liverpool University (8-5) earning the right to face Sale for the final honour. After a close match they went down with flags flying by 10 points to three.

The successful run continued. The Club opened the 1935-36 season with a convincing win over St Helens by a drop goal, at that time worth four points.

Victory followed victory and attendances grew. So much so that the present 200 capacity stand was opened. One final nice touch to round off the season:

*Mersey Tunnel opened  
by George V*

*Belisha comes up with  
his beacon*

*Edward VIII succeeds  
George V, but abdicates  
in December . . . the  
year of the world  
record flight from  
Southport Beach*



# FROM VICTORIA PARK TO HILLSIDE

All first and second team games used to be played on the rented Victoria Park pitch near the Rotten Row cafe which still stands today.

The Southport side changed and left their clothes in the cafe, the visitors changed at Victoria baths.

But this was relative luxury compared to the Kendal ground, where visiting teams used to change and bath in a barrel at the local laundry writes John Pilling, skipper of the firsts 1931-2.

Playing surface of the pitch was good, but it was inclined to flood. It also seemed a little narrow, for it seemed far easier to find touch there than at Hillside.

No other football was played on the Park, so there was usually quite a fair crowd of spectators. There was no enclosure at that time, but a collection was made.

Every Boxing Day the club played Old Terranovans, but Southport were usually at some disadvantage as up to six of our players could end up wearing OTN jerseys.

There was little or no fraternisation with opponents. Just 'tea' in the cafe, and even this depended on the weather. One could hardly sit down at a table dripping mud. Most visitors went straight back to the Baths, many Southport players went home.

Possibly the only entertainment provided for visitors was a solitary hot-pot supper at the Bold Hotel, Lord Street, for Preston Grasshoppers. After the meal both

teams visited the now demolished Pier Pavilion. We saw a lively show in which the previously briefed comedians made reference to certain players.

In earlier years the team used to visit this Music Hall and indulge in banter with the comedians. One rumbustious character actually fell out of a box and demolished the orchestra's big drum.

Only when playing away did the team get together for a night out. There was no 'travelling fund' and players had to make their own way by public transport or car.

Training was more or less left to the honour of the individual, but there was a period when a weekly PT session was held at the TA Drill Hall in Manchester Road. It was taken by Army NCOs of the 'old school', who had no specialist training and believed the right thing to do to get the horse fit was to flog it to death.

The committee were well aware of the necessity of the club to have its own ground. But there was no question, in those days, of borrowing money for a project like this. It took a couple of largish donations and a highly successful rugby dance held at the Palais de Dance not long after it opened in 1925 before the money really began to come in. Billy Cotton was the resident band leader, more than 1,400 people attended, and the profit was well over £100. London-born Cotton was to become a well-known local character due to his land speed record attempts

in cars on the beach.

An annual dance was held every year after the first one and though the dancing boom was rapidly declining, ours remained popular and was the club's chief means of raising money for the new ground.

When the Palais folded in 1927 our dance was held at the Palace Hotel, Birkdale right up until the late '30s when we went to Floral Hall.

For a few years the third and fourth teams had played at Hillside on the Waterloo Road park—a pitch parallel to the road near today's entrance. The Corporation agreed to Hillside being the site of the club's first ground and pavilion, the stand being completed in the mid '30s.

First step had been to purchase a wooden hutted ward from the old fever hospital in Moss Lane which had been closed. While this cost only £35, the final price escalated to around £1,000.

This included the cost of dismantling and transporting it to Hillside, improvements to conform with town planning requirements, the laying on of public services, which with Lynton Road not having been built meant running pipes to Waterloo Road, bathing facilities, a fireplace in the common room (now the bar), enclosure of the ground, and the railing off and levelling of the pitch.

Regrettably, the pitch ended up about as level as the incoming tide with a fair wind blowing. The job was done by the Park's superintendent using labour from the pool of unemployed. Most were without any skill and had none of today's mechanical equipment to help them.

The move to Hillside was completed just in time for the opening of the 1929-30 season—a few weeks before the Wall Street crash.

A final memory—of a very successful jumble sale held in the spring of 1930 I think it was. Over £60 was raised.

Quite a feat when one could buy half a pint of light mild, five Woodbines, a box of matches and still have change from a 'tanner'. Or buy a 'bob' dinner from Moor's Market and eat your fill of rabbit and vegetables.

## Mrs Simpson marries former King Edward VIII

the *Southport Visiter* of February 8, showed club members playing snooker with soccer cup finalists Manchester City.

It would appear, however, that the club lost this 'match' as records are a bit vague about the result.

At the end of the actual rugby season, the records showed 19 victories. But when a report appeared in the *Sunday Times* of the opening game of the 1936-37 season headed 'Lacking in speed—but Southport score victory over St Helens', the 8-3 victory set the pattern for another great year.

Port Sunlight, Preston Grasshoppers, Hoylake and Wigan Old Boys—all fell to Southport who finished the season by beating Heaton Moor 17-6, establishing a post war record by winning 20 matches. The figures were: played 30, won 20, lost 9, drawn 1; for 450 points, against 235.

A star of the time was M. M. Pennell, a centre threequarter who played most of his football for Liverpool University. On the few occasions he managed to appear for Southport, he scored 15 tries and dropped a goal. Wing three-quarter, B. High also tallied 15 tries, and J. Nicholl kicked 42 goals.

One blackspot. Bogey team Kendal, who had not lost to Southport since 1924, continued to win. They whacked the home team 20-10, despite the fact that their fullback wore ordinary shoes for half the match, although according to reports the match wasn't entirely a walkover.

At the annual meeting, chairman Dr A. W. Limont and captain D. F. Grant were full of praise for the team's efforts. But A. B. Aitken, honorary secretary, introduced a note of caution.

The first team were doing well, he said, and the second team results were better than the season before. But the minor teams were weak. And as the lower sides provided fresh material for the first, ultimately the main team must eventually suffer.

Membership at this time was extremely healthy. There were 112 playing



A rare pre-second world war action shot . . . Bobby Scott is the kicker. He had to wait until he was 32 for his Lancashire county cap



*'Have you heard the one about...? Yet another from the House of Wainwright*



*With the watch that stopped... referee Wainwright*

Victory was as sweet before the First World War as it is today. And it needed toasting then as now.

For instance, after a good victory away to Kendal and plenty of liquid celebration, some of the Southport team found themselves in Kendal fish market.

Someone suddenly pinched a 10 lb cod which got quickly passed across the line as though Southport were going for the try of the century.

Eventually they had to be hosed out of the market.

### *Scott recalls the famous Sale Sevens*



*String of memories... Bobby Scott*

First memory of the club, Easter 1932. On holiday from school, I heard of the possibility of getting a game of rugby. Turned up at the club, who had recently moved to Hillside. The third XV were two short. So I played, writes Lancashire county cap and Southport skipper Bobby Scott.

Next week, club captain Jack Lord rang up to ask if I was available. Then I found myself in the first XV.

Highlights of rugby in the thirties included annual visits with Ken Noton's XV to play Rydal School (in Wilf Wooller's school-

This is only one of the stories Jack Wainwright was told by his father, Timothy Wainwright, who played for the First XV up until 1913.

But if any of today's members of Southport Rugby Union Football Club are likely to have more stories than anyone else, it's going to be Jack—simply because his family has been tied up with the club since 1906.

Even his grandfather, Timothy, was involved. He didn't actually play for the club, but supported it back in the '20s.

His uncles also played for the club.

John Robinson held a First XV place between 1908 and 1913, and Arthur played for the Thirds between 1929 and 1932.

Jack's brother, Timothy, also played for the club, being in the First XV for eight years up to 1938. Timothy was killed while serving in the R.A.F. during the last war.

And coming right up to date the Wainwrights are still very much involved. Jack's son, John Timothy, was a schoolboy member between 1969 and 1971 and now

plays against my schoolboy heroes Steve Meikle and Jackie McArthur (Waterloo and Lancashire half backs) and partnering Steve in a Lancashire trial.

Also Pop Ogden of Fylde and Lancashire, the original instep kicker whose style I adopted.

Relighting Kendal street lamps assisted by Frank Hollings and Wally Hudson—under police supervision. Easter tours of the Lakes.

Boxing Day matches with the OTN's, when my brother and I played for the opposition and took a hammering. Training runs to Woodvale Bridge and back to a cold shower.

The gradual improvement of our playing strength under captains Doug Grant and George White. And the sides of 1937-8 and 1938-9, under Jim Nicholl, when we became one of the best sides in Lancashire and Cheshire.

Probably the most vivid memory of this era, rugby-wise, was the last Saturday in April 1936—the Manchester seven-a-sides.

Brilliant sunshine and a large crowd. Much against expectation Southport's seven, after beating Waterloo, found themselves in the

plays for KGV, where he already has a bit of a reputation for pretty hard tackling.

There is also Jack's wife, Peggy, who was a lady committee member of the club from 1948, and last year became the joint first lady vice-president.

But Jack himself is probably the most famous club member of the House of Wainwright. He played for the club between 1934 and 1948, has been a club vice-president, chairman of the ground, match and selection committees as well as chairman of the club.

From 1949 he was also a referee. And it is in this role that club president Sir Herbert Barber suffered one of his more embarrassing moments.

He was the only Southport supporter standing lost on the touchline for an away match at Douglas on the Isle of Man.

Jack was refereeing at the time, but about when the final whistle should have gone, his watch appeared to stop.

Southport finally scored the winning try in around the 94th minute.

second semi-final playing Liverpool University.

Full time score 5-5—extra time to be played. After five minutes of extra time Benny High received the ball clear of the opposition in our '25'. He ran the 75 yards encouraged by our shouts; little did he know that the opposition had given up the chase.

Then came the final against the all conquering Sale seven. Winners for the previous two years, they were also conquerors of Blackheath on the Saturday before, in the final of the Middlesex sevens.

Sale had had a fairly easy passage in the tournament and at least 40 minutes rest. We had only 10 minutes.

Two minutes after kick-off the stands erupted as we scored under the posts, 5-0. Still leading at half time. But Sale finally ran out 10-5 winners against a side who ran themselves into the ground. This was one of Southport's finest hours.

The war stopped all club activities. And in 1946 only E. Loader (with New Brighton) and I of the 1939 first XV were still playing. Six had been killed and others scattered.

## BRILLIANT PLAY BY HEATON

### HIS BIG SHARE IN WIN FOR LANCASHIRE

### GUEST IMPRESSES

#### FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

**Lancashire 26 pts. Cumberland 3 pts.**

Cumberland were decisively beaten by Lancashire at Southport, Lancashire winning by four goals, a penalty goal and a try to a penalty goal.

Heaton and Guest, the Lancashire wing three-quarters, were the outstanding men of the match. Heaton got three of his side's tries, converted three and scored a penalty goal. Guest showed tremendous speed in scoring two tries.

The Cumberland team changes resulted in a much more effective pack, which, while it had to give way to Lancashire, for whom Toft hooked splendidly, in the set scrums, was fast in the loose.

Only the soundness of the Lancashire defence, in which Guest, Heaton and Horne

excelled, kept them from scoring.

Horne was in fine form and displayed sound judgment in his touch finding. Howarth, a newcomer to the Lancashire side, taking the place of Leyland, started shakily, being particularly weak with his passes. He soon settled down and became a good partner to Heaton and a sound link in the three-quarter line.

Lancashire often found gaps in the Cumberland defence, and no one could ably cope with the tricky running of Guest, who played one of his finest games.

Lumby and Bowker shone behind the Lancashire pack and Laithwaite put in some good runs on the right wing and scored one of the tries.

*The 'Sunday Times' report of Hillside's last county match—November 27, 1937.*

members, 75 non-playing members, 25 holiday members, 16 members under 19, seven schoolboys and two honorary life members.

Finances too, were healthy. Money was being spent improving the pitch and 60 yards of the ground were banked for spectators.

Socially this was a particularly active time. The annual dance that year was reported by the *Visiter* as 'The talk of the town for many weeks'. Hit of the evening was a cabaret arranged by Audrey Lean whose tap solo with vocal accompaniment 'brought the house down' according to the report.

Beginning of the 1937-38 season was marked by the introduction of motor coach transport for all teams for away matches. S. V. Perry from King George V school was to land seven England caps, twenty-year-old J. Nicholl was elected captain of the First XV—the youngest captain ever. At the general meeting he went as far as saying that the forthcoming fixtures were the strongest ever.

And so they were. The line-up included Manchester University, Vale of Lune, New Brighton, Old Birkenians and Wesley Old Boys.

First match of the season was against St Helens Old Boys. Old boys they may have been, but to quote the *Visiter* 'they got away like two-year-olds' and beat the home side 16-9.

But the season improved and the club chalked up eight successive victories—five without conceding a point. Notable victories included Vale of Lune, Old Birkenians, Blackburn and a 36-0 win over Bolton.

Top scorers at the end of the season were B. High with ten tries, closely followed by D. Wallace and captain Nicholl with nine tries apiece. Nicholl also chalked up 26 conversions and eight penalty goals. Final position: played 28, won 17, lost 11.

Southport's Second XV didn't come out so well. In 27 games, they won nine, drew three and lost 15. Even the Liverpool Police outran them.

Two major club events took place in 1937. Lancashire and Cumberland chose Hillside as the venue for their county championship clash, and a drinks licence was granted to the club—but just for the occasion. The result was a 26-3 win by Lancashire, and a lot of smiling faces in the clubhouse bar.

The next season began well. Blackburn were seen off 21-11, Kendal beaten 13-10.

Prospects were rosy. Then came the war.

*Hitler takes command of German army*



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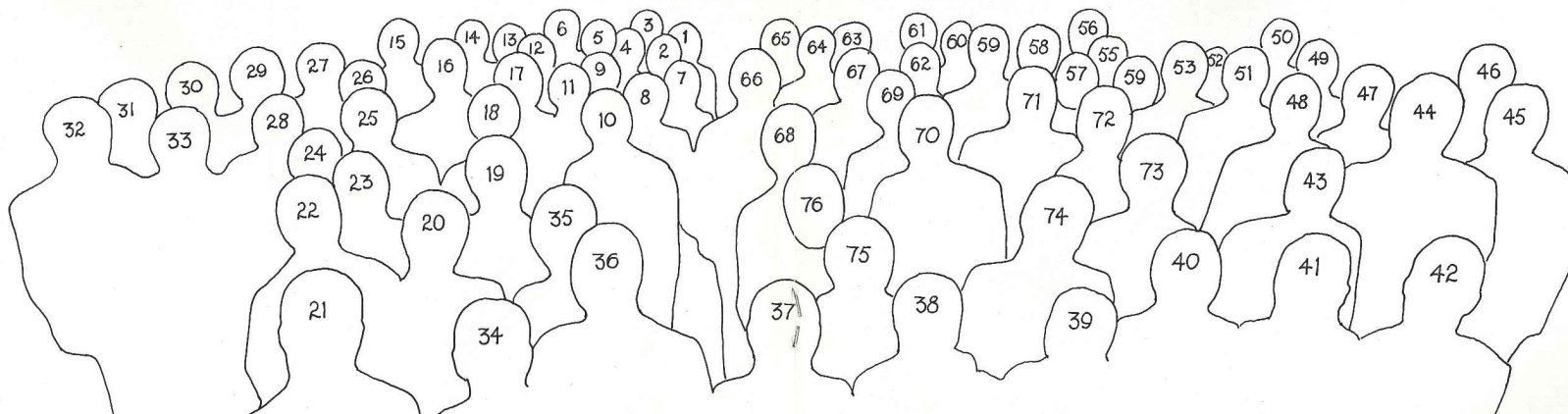
CAPTAINS		PRESIDENTS	CAPTAINS		PRESIDENTS
1872-3	R. W. Smith	S. Swire	1921-2	J. Broadbent	Sir J. W. Paton
1873-4	R. W. Smith		1922-3	J. Broadbent	Sir J. W. Paton
1874-5			1923-4	C. E. Gibbs	Sir J. W. Paton
1875-6	G. Schofield		1924-5	J. Warrington	Dr A. W. Limont
1876-7	F. Hermon		1925-6	T. Gore	Dr A. W. Limont
1877-8	G. Schofield		1926-7	G. C. Paton	Dr A. W. Limont
1878-9	H. A. Dixon		1927-8	T. Mason	Dr A. W. Limont
1879-80	J. H. White	Lord Skelmersdale	1928-9	T. Mason	Dr A. W. Limont
1880-1	H. Johnson		1929-30	J. Pilling	Dr A. W. Limont
1881-2	H. Hazlehurst		1930-1	J. Pilling	Dr A. W. Limont
1882-3	G. Bromilow		1931-2	J. C. Lord	Dr A. W. Limont
1883-4	H. S. Rheam		1932-3	K. S. Noton	Dr A. W. Limont
1884-5	J. Halsall		1933-4	F. E. Cook	Dr A. W. Limont
1885-6	W. Rimmer		1934-5	G. White	Dr A. W. Limont
1886-7	H. P. Booth		1935-6	G. White	Dr A. W. Limont
1887-8	R. Slack		1936-7	D. F. Grant	Dr A. W. Limont
1888-9	R. Webster		1937-8	J. Nicholl	Dr A. W. Limont
1889-90	no rugby		1938-9	J. Nicholl	Dr A. W. Limont
1890-1	no rugby		1939-40	R. E. Lloyd	Dr A. W. Limont
1891-2	W. K. Learoyd		1940-5	war	
1892-3	E. Brown		1945-6	R. Scott	Dr A. W. Limont
1893-4	no rugby		1946-7	R. Scott	Dr A. W. Limont
1894-5	no rugby		1947-8	G. K. Bridge	Dr A. W. Limont
1895-6	no rugby		1948-9	G. K. Bridge	Dr A. W. Limont
1896-7	no rugby		1949-50	R. Abram	Paul Carter
1897-8	no rugby		1950-1	J. A. White	Paul Carter
1898-9	no rugby		1951-2	R. H. Kinnings	Paul Carter
1899-1900	E. A. Smith		1952-3	C. J. Woodcock	Paul Carter
1900-1	R. A. Harris		1953-4	W. Dawes	Paul Carter
1901-2	J. B. Dixon		1954-5	R. A. Eccles	Paul Carter
1902-3	no fixtures		1955-6	G. K. K. Berwick	Paul Carter
1903-4	no fixtures		1956-7	G. K. K. Berwick	Paul Carter
1904-5	no fixtures		1957-8	G. K. K. Berwick	Paul Carter
1905-6	no fixtures		1958-9	G. K. K. Berwick	Paul Carter
1906-7	F. S. King	Sir George Pilkington	1959-60	G. K. K. Berwick	Sir Herbert Barber
1907-8	D. Jackson	Sir George Pilkington	1960-1	P. J. Kenyon	Sir Herbert Barber
1908-9	D. Jackson	Sir George Pilkington	1961-2	N. A. Pidduck	Sir Herbert Barber
1909-10	D. Jackson	Sir George Pilkington	1962-3	N. A. Pidduck	Sir Herbert Barber
1910-1	A. G. Terry	Sir George Pilkington	1963-4	N. A. Pidduck	Sir Herbert Barber
1911-2	J. Wilson	Sir George Pilkington	1964-5	R. M. Anderton	Sir Herbert Barber
1912-3	W. Hodgson	Sir George Pilkington	1965-6	P. S. L. Booth	Sir Herbert Barber
1913-4	W. Hodgson	C. J. B. Marriot	1966-7	P. Sanderson	Sir Herbert Barber
1914-5	J. Grimshaw (killed in action)	Sir George Pilkington	1967-8	P. Sanderson	Sir Herbert Barber
1915-9	war		1968-9	P. Sanderson	Sir Herbert Barber
1919-20	G. Grimshaw	Sir J. W. Paton	1969-70	S. Fletcher	Sir Herbert Barber
1920-1	J. T. Walker	Sir J. W. Paton	1970-1	A. Havard	Sir Herbert Barber
			1971-2	A. Havard	Sir Herbert Barber

### Touring XV's recorded

Date	Side	Home town	Score—Southport first
April 1887	Lockwood	Huddersfield	IT—JG, 2T*
April 1909	Sydenham	Belfast	6-11
September 1919	Stonygate	Leicester	9-0
January 1923	Huddersfield Old Boys	Huddersfield	3-17
April 1926	Old Bradfordians	Bradford	3-3
April 1927	Old Bradfordians	Bradford	9-14
March 1932	Ryton	Durham	3-0
April 1933	Wesley College Old Boys	Dublin	0-3
April 1935	Palmerston	Dublin	9-6
April 1938	Wesley College Old Boys	Dublin	8-11
April 1939	Hinckley	Leicester	5-10
April 1939	Railway Union of Ireland	Dublin	3-6
March 1948	Instonians	Belfast	0-20
April 1950	Halifax Vandals	Halifax	9-3
October 1950	Isle of Man		27-0
October 1951	Isle of Man		42-3
April 1955	Vadre United	Swansea	9-13
April 1955	Midland Bank	London	3-17
April 1956	C.I.Y.M.S.	Belfast	0-17
April 1957	Ystradgynlais	South Wales	3-12
April 1958	Cymgyrch	South Wales	14-12
April 1960	Glyncorrwg	South Wales	20-6
April 1961	Hendy	South Wales	3-6
April 1963	Birmingham		3-3
April 1965	C.I.Y.M.S.	Belfast	11-12
April 1966	Westminster Bank	London	15-9
April 1968	Aberavon GS	South Wales	3-11
September 1968	Impala	East Africa	13-14
April 1970	Old Emmanuel	London	3-21
April 1971	Dunlop	Coventry	18-6

\*One try to one goal and two tries.





1. David James  
2. Andrew Thompson  
3. Stuart Wilson  
4. Peter Trowsdale  
5. Peter Robinson  
6. Jim Sutton  
7. Roger Hackney  
8. Terry Maloney

9. Brian Roberts  
10. David Robinson  
11. John Roston  
12. Fred Kermode  
13. Peter Guest  
14. Jack Wainwright  
15. John Forgham  
16. John Keeley

17. Dave Richardson  
18. John Kane  
19. Peter Nixon  
20. David Bretherton  
21. Simon Guest  
22. Keith Critchley  
23. John Simpson  
24. Tony Brierley

25. Neil Blunt  
26. Dave Keeley  
27. Alan Havard  
28. Selwyn Walmsley  
29. Tony Bray  
30. Hamish Wilson  
31. John Winn  
32. Les Jackson

33. Roy Hatfield  
34. Eric Wright  
35. Peter Stanion  
36. John Simpson  
37. Ronnie Wright  
38. Tony Mason  
39. Stephen Leddy  
40. Alan Scarisbrick

41. Rodney Harrison  
42. Alastair Smith  
43. Nick Charlesworth  
44. Doug Baldwin  
45. Phil Evans  
46. John Aspinall  
47. Mike Walsh  
48. Robin Smith-Crallan

49. Tony Finlayson  
50. Jack Glassberg  
51. Andrew Weston  
52. Chris Hale  
53. Neil Crowder  
54. Kevin Archer  
55. Charlie Nightingale  
56. Steve McKillop

57. David Lee  
58. Dave Forrest  
59. Malcolm Banks  
60. Dave Brimacombe  
61. Dick Bretherton  
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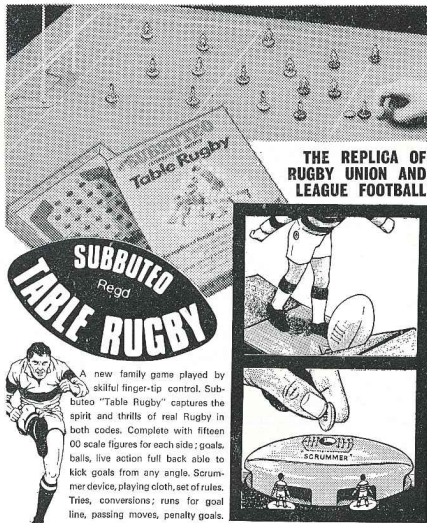
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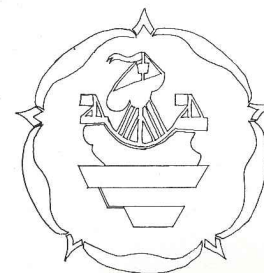
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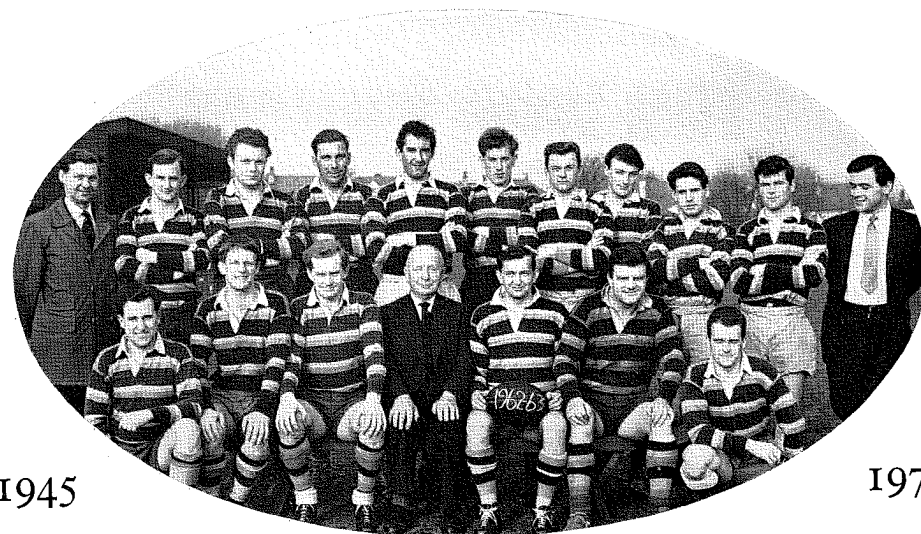
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Neil Pidduck's 1962-63 1st XV . . . the year before the record breakers.





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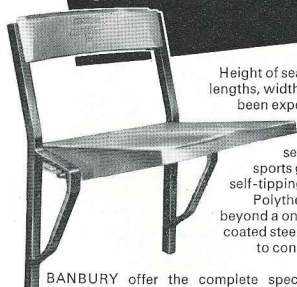
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### Labour swept to power as Germany crumbles

### Ground nut scheme fails

As far as the people at home are concerned wars are times of tremendous improvisation. Winning against all sorts of odds at great speed with an idea thought up in the pub the day before.

And that's the way it was in Southport. It may have been a tired, poverty-stricken Britain that faced the world when the peace was finally sorted out in 1945, but the ration-booked rugby fans of Lancashire hadn't lost an ounce of their flair.

Because by the October a rough and ready fixture list had been thrown together including the Southport, Blackburn, Wigan and Preston Grasshopper clubs, but essentially relying on scratch teams from the armed forces who remained scattered throughout the county.

Rugby was back.

But it was a long time getting back to normal. Even almost two years later, on September 13, 1947, when Southport's first XV had a tremendous 63 points to nil win at home to Sefton, things could hardly be called 'normal'.

That was quite a day. It was the biggest ever win for the first XV, and with the way the game is played today something one would think that is hardly likely to be repeated. But not so. Only this season (1971-2) the second XV clobbered Colwyn Bay 114 points to three. The message for the first XV is clear. They must consider Sefton's 63 points submission 25 years ago one of their main centenary year targets.

Even the score details of that epic post-war game are almost as interesting as all that 19th century nonsense over disputed rouges and posters. Bobby Scott made five conversions, R. Abram got four plus a penalty. T. G. Wilson scored four tries, K. Smethurst three, Abram two and Broughton, Ormerod and Podesta one apiece. A further try is credited to A. N. Other, one more to Fluke.

Unfortunately, post-war rugby seemed to lose something of its spectator pulling power. This was probably due as much to the mood of the late 1940s as it was to the fact that all the players hadn't yet been demobilised and reported back to the club complete with their Government issued, baggy two-piece suits.

Be that as it may 600 people still turned up to the Southport fixture away to Fylde, an exciting game with Southport coming out the worst by six points to three.

As the Sefton result implies, there was no shortage of tries in those days. In the 1947-8 season, a King George V schoolteacher, R. Abram—the same man who scored all those points above without Fluke's help—personally clocked up 119 points, becoming the first individual point scoring champion of the club.

His record stood for 20 years. It wasn't broken until Peter Thompson pipped him by one point in the 1968-9 season, and fell yet again in 1970-1 when Andrew Thompson (no relation) scored 121 points and Andrew has again exceeded that total at the time of writing.

Even these two couldn't match the overall club record of John Kermode who clocked up an incredible 177 points in the 1968-9 season.

### Gandhi shot



*Backs turned, but not forgotten . . . the dead of both wars*



## England trialist still has scar and boots to prove it



Met his Waterloo... Foster

I first joined the club as it struggled to re-establish itself after the war, writes England trialist Harry Foster who played for the club from 1948 to 1965.

In the clubhouse the pro licensed bar lobby had just won the great debate. On the field, the team was an unbalanced mixture of returned ex-servicemen and inexperienced school leavers.

We had to face opponents like Birkenhead Park, Fylde and Liverpool and our record was as tattered as our frail, all amber utility jerseys.

But there was no lack of honest endeavour. Well in evidence was

the bone crunching tackling of Bill Scarisbrick, the india rubber antics of cousin Gherkin Jim and the cool, methodical approach to point gathering by Dave Sutton.

At 18, ambition and opportunity lured me down the line, but I returned a couple of seasons later having met my Waterloo.

The side was now skippered by Gordon Berwick, king of comedy and morale boosting. His first lieutenant, Derek Oldham, was just beginning to have difficulty with his quart tankard and got very upset when he failed to catch a prop forward in a chase to the line.

We had a scrum half who would only pass with his feet and a hooker who frequently used his hands. But we did have Dr David Marsh, who although selected for the Walker Cup golf squad continued playing rugby until the end of the season.

I had mixed feelings about one of David's contributions. It was at Davenport when a Steve Allot haymaker had opened a nasty gash over my eye. Not wishing to waste Saturday night's drinking time in a casualty department waiting room, I accepted David's offer of help.

He had the thread, but no surgical needle. A lady member obliged with a sewing needle and the good doctor gave me my favourite scar.

There followed for me a very

pleasant period, out to grass with Barry Cooper's second team dreadnoughts. I was initiated in the art of 'coarse rugby refereeing'.

My finest hour came in the gathering gloom one muddy day at Oldham. From a maul, I lined up with our opponent's three-quarters. I received a pass from their fly half, turned round and ambled in for an unopposed, if greatly disputed, winning try.

When I returned to the firsts it was to one of the best balanced, well drilled packs I have played in. Brother Booth and Frank Anderson propping the ubiquitous Frank Wright. The leaping ball playing Geoff Watkinson was my second row partner and the back row included uncompromising Paul Sargent, Geoff Carr, the elegant skirmisher, and the so-functional Peter Sanderson.

This pack provided the springboard for Roger Anderton's siege gun kicking and for Neil Pidduck's memorable season, 1963-4.

The *Daily Telegraph* reported the last game of this season and described how the veteran Foster had decided to call it a day and retire. A fire had been built on the grass outside the pavilion for the ceremonial burning of the old warrior's boots.

Since then I have often wondered who found themselves short of a pair of boots when they unpacked their kit for the following season.

I still had mine.

## ... and that visitor from the Visiter

Reporting Southport rugby is probably no more hazardous than reporting rugby anywhere. But Hillside has contributed its share of problems over the years, writes Arnold Heald, assistant sports editor of the *Visiter*.

Trying to identify players in the gathering gloom after a late mid-winter kick-off isn't easy.

Lighting-up time comes about three-quarters of the way through the match and the lights of Waterloo Road cast their glare over the pitch long before the final whistle.

If poor light is one problem,

fog is another. There aren't many fog-affected matches at Hillside, but on some occasions it has swirled down from the sandhills so only the referee could be trusted to know the score.

And as for the names of the scorers there have been occasions when even the captain hasn't been certain.

Referees are usually co-operative, but there was one who said the press wouldn't be allowed on the pitch at half-time to find out who had scored.

This was when several pressmen used to cover Southport matches so they spent less time watching the match and more in the bar.

Going to the dressing rooms to find out team names is customary practice, but there were problems

for a reporter one week—she was a lady.

But she had no difficulty getting the names—and didn't need to go in the dressing rooms either.

On match days when there used to be more bicycles than cars at Southport Rugby Club players often turned up with their kit swaying dangerously on back mudguards.

The comments of one player whose newly-washed gear fell into several inches of mud can well be imagined.

And, believe it or not, there was one occasion many years ago when 16 players were on the field for Southport—and it was some time before the attention of the referee was drawn to the fact.

By the opposition, of course.



Bobby Scott's side of 1945-6



Scott still in charge, the 1946-7 XV



Les Ryden skippered this 1947-8 B side... Dr A. W. Limont was coming to the end of his term as president which started in 1924-5

## Cripps devalues pound

But back to the '40s. As Lancashire smiled its way out of the doldrums more people came along to watch rugby. It was almost as though people didn't want to be entertained when they were miserable; they had to be reasonably happy in the first place.

This probably explains why 2,000 people turned up to see a Southport District XV beat a Cheshire XV at Hillside at the beginning of the 1949-50 season—on September 8. Three internationals took to the field on this occasion, one for Cheshire, two for Southport, R. H. Guest and G. Rimmer, all three playing for Waterloo.

It all prompted the then club chairman, W. Limont, to say at the time: 'Not since the match between Lancashire and Cumberland at Hillside before the war have we had so many distinguished players on our ground at one time'.

Skipper of the Southport XV was big scoring record holder R. Abram. Timed very well for the occasion were a number of improvements at the club. The stand had been renovated and adapted to accommodate more people, the changing facilities had been improved and the pavilion painted. The club also got new colours.

This was also the year of 'Atherton's Folly', part of an extension to the brick path secretly laid while all the 'foremen'—who often outnumbered the workers—weren't around. Even before the season started grass was sprouting between the bricks. Great stuff when the rains came.

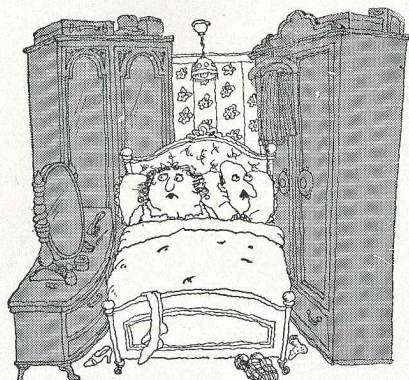
It wasn't too long after this that the magnificent victory against Sefton almost deserved to be buried for ever. This was December 1950 when Southport received their two biggest ever defeats.

Pasting number one came from Birkenhead Park who ran up 66 points without even allowing Southport to break their duck.

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Steve Allott under pressure in a 1969 match... Roy Hatfield is the head in the corner

*Harold Wilson resigns*

*95,000 flock to Ellis Park, Johannesburg, to see the British Lions beat South Africa 23-22*

*Macmillan replaces Eden as Prime Minister three weeks after Suez attack*

Second was a miserable Christmas present from Fylde, who although they let Southport score three points during the Boxing Day fixture, took complete advantage of their Christmas ale-laden stomachs and notched up a magnificent 71 points.

By the beginning of the next decade the war had been well and truly forgotten and the club organised in much the same way as it is today with three pitches and five teams.

Club president for 1951-2 was Paul Carter with the two Dr Limonts and Herbert Barber (not yet a knight of the realm) among the 26 vice-presidents. Chairman was G. K. Bridge. Skipper of the first XV was R. H. Kinnings, D. A. Cox was skipper of the seconds. The A XV was led by R. M. Finney, the extra As by R. J. Wilson and the Bs by J. E. Ball.

Things were quiet for a few seasons with no notable results and no Southport players reaching the county side. On October 29, 1955, the final trial for the Lancashire XV for the Northern Counties championship was held at Southport, but no club members were picked for either side.

One interesting point about this fixture was a 30-minute warm-up match by two under 15-year-old sevens from King George V School in Southport. No one at that time is likely to have predicted the boom of seven-a-side rugby during the last few years.

Next most significant season in the club's history was 1957-8 when, under the leadership of G. K. Berwick, the first XV played 32 games, won 19, lost eight and drew five. In this season's 5-0 victory over Chester, incidentally, Max Beever broke his arm, but finished the match, which says almost as much for Max as it does for Chester's performance. One further thing, Southport beat the scourge of the seventies, Orrell, 6-0 this season. Something not achieved since.



## Maybe we lost it at the palace



Tricks—on and off the field . . . Berwick

In the early 1960s the combination of a dislocated shoulder, length of tooth and lack of mind over matter gave rise to my retirement as a Southport player. So writes Gordon Berwick, Captain from 1956-61.

I had been a playing member since the late forties and I ignored the jibes of those who said I must have been on the touch line for several years already.

Our entertainment at that time was self-inflicted. Little was heard, let alone seen, of television. This made one more appreciative, for example, of Peter Taylor's intoxicated yearnings for stardom in pantomime or Bob Kinning's affinity to a particularly cosmopolitan ball.

During this period, our playing record was not as good as it might have been, although our fixture list was as good as ever.

It was acknowledged, with great

diplomacy, that it was 'taking the Lancashire club longer than most to regain their pre-war strength'.

Despite support from many directions we still haven't regained it—yet.

One could hardly attribute this to Peter Hunt, Rob Wilkins, Mike Wild and Ken Bridge appearing in drag singing 'She had to go and lose it at the palace' during our annual dinner and ball in 1948—but it's worth thinking about.

Nor would most people accept that it was due to bar facilities being allowed in the clubhouse for the first time.

In between flannel dances at the Birkdale Palace Hotel, we were regularly fielding five sides. Selection and committee meetings were held in London Street over Hingle's Auction Rooms where the Wigan Trustee Savings Bank now stands.

Local playing strength was no longer deteriorating, but it was not improving as fast as many of our then regular opponents. Such clubs sought stronger opposition. So we found slightly less exalted company on our fixture list.

This enforced programme change had one beneficial effect—we started to win a few more matches.

And since the nucleus of a comparatively young team had now welded itself into a more cohesive unit, we began to surge forward again.

This culminated in our most successful post-war season in

1958-9 with only nine defeats and 19 or 20 wins.

'You're not trying, Southport' seemed a rather unfair exhortation during these seasons.

But it was of more significance than it appeared. Originally, it had been our secret signal to attempt a push-over try. And why not? With the bulk of Harry Foster, Peter Kenyon, Tom Marshaw, Larry Whiteley and Ken Holmes in the pack it was usually worth a go.

It eventually became the best known cry not only of Southport supporters, but most of their opponents too.

Things were now going well and about three seasons later Neil Pidduck's team bettered our previous pinnacle.

Success leads to a bigger following, which means a better financial situation. Improvements had been needed in the clubhouse for a long time, and in 1959, as part of our fund raising activities, we arranged a special match between a Southport & District XV and Jasper Bartlett's International and County XV.

It was a proud moment for me when my late father, William Berwick, who was then Mayor of Southport, kicked off for us.

This in spite of his being president of the Southport and District Amateur Football League.

Eric Evans, Dickie Uren, Reg Brazley, Gordon Rimmer and Freddie Griffiths were on view, Vic Tindall refereed and Jim Frazer got the baths ready.

of beer—us.

When we got back to Southport we usually managed the inevitable dance. It was remarkable how many owed so much to so few ticket holders.

The winters really evaporated in those days.

Goodfellowship seems inborn in rugby players.



Twisted the arm, but not the drive . . . Marsh

Soon I was training twice a week, and then it happened. I was running out in the first XV with Catterall, Bretherton, Oldham, Dawes and that other joker we played—Captain Gordon Berwick.

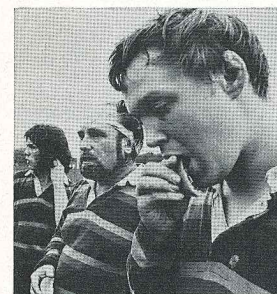
It was a team full of characters—right down to the bearded winger we called Yung Tang. We always seemed to leave him in Preston outside a Chinese Restaurant—I'm sure it was called Cafe Swandarin.

What a way to spend Saturday. Golf in the morning, or sometimes I had to go to a lecture to tell the professor I was still alive. Then rugby in the afternoon, and seemingly most of the evening.

I learnt my way round Lancashire by pubs and have never needed the AA book since. The away matches always ended rather abruptly—when the coach driver had enough. Not

## Kennedy killed in Dallas

## American Apollo Eight orbits moon



Pep talk from bearded John Winn . . . the thirds against Winnington Park in 1971. Also shown: Neil Crowder and Oxford golf blue Dave Sinclair



Lancashire trial scrum half Peter Forsshaw about to get away to help the home win over Winnington last October

This 19 victory record season wasn't surpassed until the 1963-4 period and surprised everybody. Up until December 1963 things had looked pretty grim for Southport with only three victories. Then suddenly everything clicked. Under skipper and fitness fanatic, Neil Pidduck, the first XV had an incredible run, winning 18 times in 22 consecutive matches making 21 victories in all, two wins better than in 1957-8.

Club history at this point more or less reaches the time when most playing members can remember the best things that happened and in many cases actually took part. All the best stories have been well and often told. Unlike those of the high and far off days recorded here in earlier pages when the game was totally different and the participants long dead with their achievements waiting to be rescued from musty and generally boring newspaper archives. As local newspapers are very often journals of record and because the exigencies of production made anecdote difficult, the best of the earlier stories have probably been lost forever.

Bearing this in mind and avoiding the temptation of making recent history more interesting than old, there are probably only two events to record before bringing this narrative to a close.

First, partly due to the fact that in September 1966 new bathing and changing facilities were added to the present clubhouse making Southport R.U.F.C. second to none in Lancashire, the club two years later broke new ground and played host to the East African Impala Sports Club.

The match took place on September 5, 1968, when the home side went down to the all-white Nairobi visitors 13 to 14 the spectators getting a good tight result although continuous heavy rain did its best to ruin everyone's day.

Impala's tour, under president Frank Lawson, included Germany, Denmark and Sweden as well as England. Pretty ambitious for a club only



Happy Terry Maloney in the thirds against Winnington Park last year . . . Roy Hatfield is on the right



Waiting for the line out . . . the thirds against Winnington in 1971



## 23 years hard labour but I wouldn't have missed a minute of it



Memory for emergencies . . . Glassberg

My first game for Southport as far as I can recall was in the autumn of 1949; long black shorts, and short cropped haircuts were my earliest impressions of the regulars of those years, writes Jack Glassberg, Southport's oldest playing member and current skipper of the fourths.

Swapping positions was the order of the day in those years—especially in the lower teams in the club. As long as a player had two arms and legs and could breathe he was expected to be able to fill any position in emergencies.

All I can remember were emergencies.

It always started on Friday night. The selection committee used to rely almost exclusively on the card system.

This used to develop some rather curious results—cards arriving on Monday informing the lucky recipient that he had been selected to play at Fylde the previous Saturday.

One match I remember rather better than others was played in a dour grey Lancashire cotton town in the very early 1950s, in freezing rain on a muddy November Saturday afternoon.

When we arrived it emerged that while the senior side was to play at the ground, the Third C (as it was known then) had to travel some distance.

Since we were two players short the coach driver, whose athletic career was in the main confined to pulling on the handbrake, was pressed into service at tighthead prop.

Also in the side were the family Wilson. This consisted of Ron Wilson and his brother (whose name I have forgotten) and their father Pop Wilson. This trio turned out regularly in those days and as far as I know we must have been one of the few teams in the north of England which included a father and his two sons at the same time.

Pop, surprisingly mobile and fit although in his mid 40s, used to play at centre but for this game he deputised as hooker.

One of the more interesting aspects of this game was the actual pitch. While there were conventional posts at one end, at the other only one upright stood forlornly isolated in the gloom.

This added an interesting dimension to the game as all attempts at goal had to be taken at the other end.

The dimensions of the pitch were also most peculiar. There was a conventional length between the halfway line and the set of posts, but the length of the other half seemed at least one and a quarter times what it should have been.

Since most of the play seemed to be in that half there was a good deal of puffing and blowing long before the end. The only other noteworthy feature of this encounter was that a chipped chamber pot was discovered embedded in one of the 10 yard lines. Proceedings had to be suspended while visitors and opposition combined in mutual excavation work to rid the scene of the offending obstacle.

When we arrived back at the clubhouse it was announced by somebody enjoying the title of 'resident caretaker' that the boilers had broken down and only cold water to a depth of three inches awaited us in the stone baths.

The result of this Olympian contest, incidentally, was a draw,

but somehow it didn't seem very important.

As far as third teams were concerned spectators were a rarity. Apart from the occasional rheumy eyed Labrador I don't think I ever saw one. The only time I can recall a few people watching was when Dr Limont (junior) turned out for us. This happened when the Third As were short of a centre and the doctor, who I think was then chairman, turned out. He had no boots and played in shoes. This couldn't have made it very easy for him on what I recall was a wet, slippery surface, yet all went well.

A few spectators turned out to watch this mighty contest, possibly attracted by our guest player, but soon disappeared for a half-time cup of tea.

Training was another sphere where things were a lot different in the early '50s. It consisted of endless running round the field; forwards were expected to do a minimum of six laps, backs four.

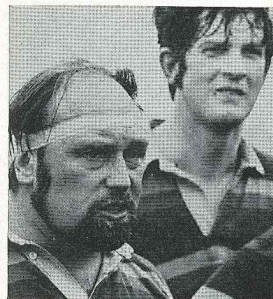
One player, who shall be anonymous, although he is now retired, used to turn out regularly for the Third Cs years ago and had a perfect solution to fitness problems. He simply used to stop the game with a complaint of feeling unwell.

This generally took the form of a bad knee or an awkward sprain in a vital part. Allowing for the variety of different ailments he could complain about in one match (mostly away games) I would say he was something of a biological curiosity.

In those days training used to begin late in July and build up to the start of the season in September. But it now seems that one never really finishes—what with the season ending the last week of April and light training starting mid-June, the season is long and hard especially for those of us, say, of advancing years.

For all that I wouldn't have wished to miss a minute of it. In 23 years of playing for Southport, when scores and results remain only a dim memory, I value most the friendships made, the companionships shared and that benevolent glow of goodwill which to me is the very essence of the game of rugby football.

## Tories back in power



'Come on Southport' . . . chairman of ground committee John Winn urges on the 1971-2 thirds. At the back Peter Robinson



Made agony pay off . . . trainer Bray

formed after the last war and who are even more active in cricket, hockey, squash and soccer than they are in rugby, partly due to the fact, incidentally, that there are only 18 rugby clubs throughout the entire country.

There might well be some debate about the second major event of recent years. The majority will safely plump for the appointment of the club's first ever trainer/coach in its century of history. This was school-teacher Tony Bray, who in 1970-1 joined the club after five seasons with Preston Grasshoppers.

His pre-season routines were pretty arduous, but Bray made the agony pay off because the first six games that season were all won. Further proof of the significance of his appointment came when Bray was suddenly ill. Results quickly deteriorated although skipper Alan Havard did his best to keep up the pressure.

Histories of anything are never totally satisfactory. When the emotions of the past are removed what remains can be a cold succession of facts, usually irrelevant when looked at against what eventually happened and how we stand today.

So it is with this one. The best stories of the early days have almost certainly been lost. Of the more recent past, although a lot of people can remember what happened, facts are still disputed and referee's decisions argued about. Opinions are often poles apart, real points of significance missed.

But one thing is certain. Time will show that what today looks insignificant, as far as Southport rugby is concerned, will tomorrow be seen in a totally different, much more important, light.

Because who knows, in the club's ranks today—shown more or less completely on pages 24 and 25—there may be future England caps and the space heroes, business tycoons and politicians of the 1980s and 1990s.

The next history in 2072 will have to take care of them.



Peter Forshaw gets it away . . . for the firsts against Winnington last year



Ready to go . . . the 1971-2 firsts. Left to right: Brian Roberts, Peter Sanderson, Dave Richardson, Brian Pook, Jim Simpson, Roger Davies, Alan Haward, Peter Forshaw, Les Jackson, Robin Porter, Kevin Mercer, Brian Spark and Tim Vincent





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Top left is today's club chairman, Dick Bretherton ... it always rains on Saturdays, win or lose. He enjoys his rugby and is unashamed of his touch-line encouragement. As Peter Kenyon says ... 'Dick had to retire early because of a leg injury which may have been caused on the field or more likely due to walking with one foot in the gutter during his monologue about the man with a short leg and his friend with a speech impediment.'

Above ... club treasurer Bob Ratcliffe complete with £sd pot ... made the first XV during the 50s, but was usually in the seconds. Seen here sitting in the stands for the first time in years ... if you want Bob, look in the bar.

From PoW to the front row ... left is club secretary Stuart Wilson, a first XV hooker and wing forward in the immediate post-war period.

## Little man in a boat . . .

Little man in a boat ... Sea Egg man and one-time player John Riding.

'On the rare occasions I was in possession of the ball it was usually in the clubhouse,' he says in a letter to Larry Whiteley.

'About the only thing I became experienced in was dirty tactics that the referee never saw, and I can hardly describe those ...'

'In distant lands where they have the ignorance to avoid playing rugby, I've often reminisced affectionately of the times I lumbered about the field attempting to prove my strongly held belief that training on beer was a foolproof method for success ... and wished I had the opportunity to don togs, be pointed in the right direction and told to "get that bugger".'

'Tempering this wish, on the other hand, I would reflect soberly upon all the times I was rabbit-punched, kicked in the balls, or the owner of skinned knuckles, and decide that lazing on an un-named beach thousands of miles away was a far better idea'.





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## At the heart of things

Roy Hatfield,  
centenary committee chairman  
... a memorable season for  
him, the one when his skull  
was crunched



Peter Lunt,  
one-time regular first team  
player and now stalwart of  
the bar committee

Bill Fairclough,  
treasurer of the centenary  
committee, a club faithful,  
but never a player



Sylvia Ratcliffe,  
chairman of the ladies  
committee and the first of a  
good looking quartet

Jack Wainwright,  
now on the finance committee  
and head of a family tied up  
with the club since before the  
Great War



Peggy Wainwright,  
a lady vice-president, next  
to her husband and away  
from the teapot for once

Larry Whiteley,  
press officer, magazine  
researcher and on the  
centenary committee



Audrey Bretherton,  
wife of the club chairman  
and apparently no worse  
for it

Jim Scarisbrick,  
someone nobody is prepared  
to admit to, not even the  
first XV or centenary  
committee



Enid Wilson,  
second of the lady vice-  
presidents, first ever with  
canteen colleague Peggy  
Wainwright

John Pilling,  
chairman of the match  
committee and one-time  
first XV player



Bob Hooper,  
how he got here no one knows.  
He is really a cricketer, a  
slow left-arm bowler with  
Albion CC, with whom  
SRUFC has close ties ... like  
drinking in the summer



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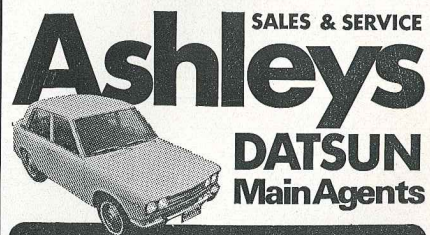
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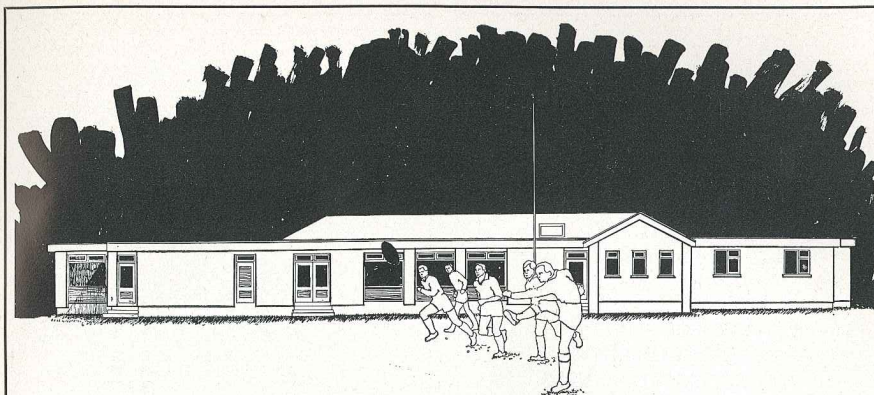
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## TOMORROW'S HILLSIDE

You don't have to be brilliant to work out what the new building plans above and the colts side below have in common. The future. Raising £10,000 to improve things is about the future. So are the youngest members of the club. This magazine may be about the past, but only in so far as the club's future is concerned.



The colts, back row left to right: R. J. Hackney (chairman, colts committee), J. M. Kane, D. Robinson, J. Simpson, D. E. Hooker, K. J. P. Critchley, A. Brearley, D. R. W. Bretherton and H. A. Kneen (colts committee); front row left to right: S. N. Guest, A. Scarisbrick, M. B. Dixon, C. Carney (captain), M. B. Addison, G. Pennington and A. P. B. Line; in front, A. Mason and M. Marsh



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*Tailpiece or a glimpse of the future? . . . in the bath at Sefton, November 1971*





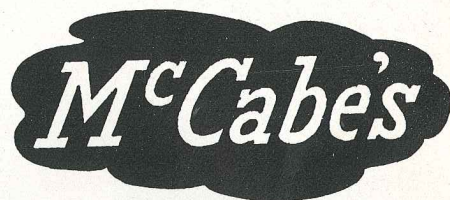
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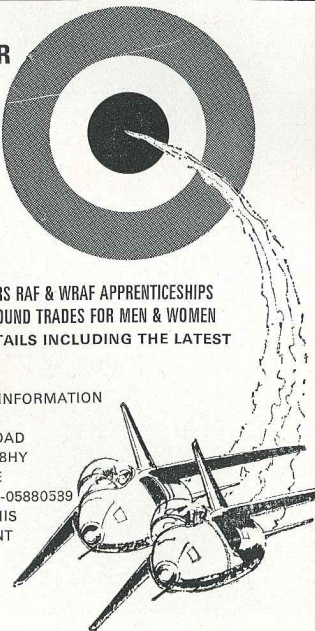
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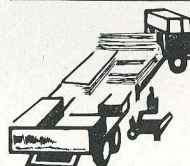
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