

Member Profile – Andy Clark

(1st XV Caps 288, 1st XV Player of The Season 1997-98)

EDUCATION

Gosforth Park First School

Gosforth East Middle

Gosforth High School

EMPLOYMENT

Various from Prison Officer to Transport Manager.

FAVOURITE BAND or SINGER

Coldplay

Andrea Bocelli

BEST MUSICAL EVENT/S ATTENDED

Fleetwood Mac @ Maine Road, Manchester supported by the Christians.

Coldplay @ Stadium of Light - brilliant stadium band.

FAVOURITE FILM/S;

The Green Mile

IF YOU WEREN'T A PROP, WHAT POSITION WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE PLAYED

Always fancied myself as a bit of fly half, dodgy hamstrings curtailed any ambitions...

MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT/S ENCOUNTERED

One of my early games for Morpeth was for the Stags against Whitley Bay Rockcliffe I was up against an up-and-coming prop called Paul van Zandvliet (tank) it was an interesting introduction to front row rugby.

Tynedale had some great tightheads Martin White, Paul Winter etc. never gave an inch in the scrum.

Danny Peary of Ashington was tremendously strong and a good practitioner of the dark arts of the front row.

FAVOURITE/BEST MORPETH PLAYER/S IN SAME TEAM AS MYSELF

Backs – Will Munro.

Forwards – The pack of the 90's had some tremendous players and the strength in depth was excellent. I will always have a special bond with Nobby and John Goodfellow not just for the battles we had in the front row but the tremendous laughs we had after the game.

Early days Ian Pledger taught me a lot about the front row, his dedication and fitness were excellent.

BEST MORPETH RUGBY MATCH/MATCHES

Obviously, the Cup Final of 98 against Tynedale will always be special and the way Andy Hindhaugh prepared the pack went a long way to the victory.

Newcastle Gosforth away in the Cup not long before they turned professional, they had some really good players, but Morpeth's collective attitude proved the difference.

BEST MORPETH RUGBY MOMENTS

Being the first player to represent Morpeth in a 100 league games away to Percy Park, even scored a rare try, a proud moment when Bill Hewitt presented me with a Cup.

Being awarded 1st team player of the season, along with gaining the coveted 1st XV tie.

ANDY'S 2 x MRFC CLUB QUIZ QUESTIONS

Q. Which prop made his 1st XV debut, in the 2nd row, at home to Carlisle in October 1995 on his 21st birthday?

A. Rob Leiper.

Q. Which prop won Young Player of The Season 2002-03?

A. Scott Ramsay.

Club notes for Andy Clark and the 1996-97 Season

Andy Clark began playing at Mitford Road for Jimmy Pringle's Colts and in the mid 1980's he played in the Stags XV which was captained by John Leithead. He made his 1st XV debut in October 1988 at home against Thornensians in a game we won 6-3. The Morpeth XV captained by Ian Pledger that afternoon was – C Lishman, R Defty, M Calder, P Morris, S Metcalfe, A Brown, I Laidlaw, A Clark, I Pledger, D Clark, I Ireland, P Aynsley, W Farley, N Bailey, P Gordon. He had replaced Duncan Hutton in the front row – Hutt in the front row had not been a great success. Andy played 13 games in his first season.

For the next 2 seasons Andy shared his front row place with Paul Woodall – he played 16 games in 1989/90 and 19 games in 1990/91 and then in the 1991/92 season he became first choice gaining his 1st XV tie. He was to remain first choice in the front row for the next 8 seasons missing very few games – he played 30 games or more in 4 of those seasons.

In the 1997/98 season he travelled to Holland in a Northumberland Development squad which included Richie Young. Andy was 1st XV player of the season in 1997/98, he became the first player to play 100 League games at Percy Park on 31st October 1998 in the same season that he played for the Northumberland County side in Championship games against Lancashire and Cheshire.

Andy had a brief spell at Northern but returned to Mitford Road and finally played his last game for the 1st XV in Jan.2002 against Goole – it was his 288th game in a career spanning 14 seasons.

Over the years Morpeth have had several very good props – many who have played a lot of games – yet only Mike Stoney with 338 games has played more 1st XV games for the Club.

Andy Clark will be remembered as a quiet player who became a very technical scrummaging loose head and simply got on with his job on the field and he will always be associated with the first ever Cup winning front row with Duncan Clark and John Goodfellow - all of whom played many years for the 1st XV and played for the Senior County side.

1996/97 Season

President and Hon. Sec. K Fraser, Hon Treasurer G A Richer, Hon Fix Sec W G Hewitt, Bar Chairman D Metcalfe, Chairman of House G Brown, Chairman of Rugby I Pringle, Chairman of Selectors M Lishman. County Rep. D R Turnbull, Colts Managers B Richardson and J Pringle with Brian Keenleyside coaching, Sponsorship S Duckworth, Club Coaches – C Green and A Hindhaugh.

The Club ran 5 senior sides - Ranters captained by Alan Blackett, Stags captained by Andy Cottis, newly named Third XV the Edwardians captained by Iain Rickard with Tom Duckworth Team Manager, Reivers captained by Gary Stephenson with Sam Duckworth Team Manager and the 1st XV captained by Richie Young with George Brown the Team manager.

The Young Player of the Season was Adam Hall, Club Top try Scorer was Simon Crawford, 1st XV player of the season Richie Young, Reivers player of the season Paul Jackson and Alan Brown was awarded the George Brown trophy for contribution to the Club both on and off the field.

Gus Nelless gained his Northumberland County Cap and Duncan Hutton played for the County Senior XV and they both went to Colorado with the County Squad.

John Dunn, Will Munro and Nick Redpath played for Northumberland Under 21s.

Tom Bramald captained the County School Under 18s.

The Colts Section included Paul Scott, Olly Redpath, Andrew Johnson, Ally Hall, David Dickinson, Alan Keenleyside, and Ally Wotherspoon – all who went on to play for the Club 1st XV.

The 1st XV had a very good season - after 10 years we at last gained promotion from North East Division One into North Division Two. We had been top of the League from the beginning of November.

The North East Division One League consisted of 10 sides and we played 18 games – winning 13 and losing 3 with 2 drawn. We ended up with 28 points - the same as Old Crossleyans but were promoted with a better points difference. We used 37 players in the 18 games with Richie Young and John Stafford playing every game. Chris Lishman scored 124 points in 16 games and Michael Old scored 74 points in only 7 games. Duncan Hutton was top try scorer with 10 tries in his 17 games.

The new league the season after would see us play 22 games and travel for the first time to Bradford and Bingley, Huddersfield, Lymm, Vale of Lune, Broughton Park and Blackburn.