

Member Profile – Ian Pringle

Club Captain 1979-80, Club President 2000-02

Former Chairman of Rugby and Selectors and Colts Manager

(1st XV Caps 415)

Education

Tritlington C of E Primary School

Friends School Wigton, Cumbria

Employment

Left school at 16 after O levels to work on the family farms and stayed in agriculture and agricultural supply trade until retirement in 2019.

Favourite Band/s

Bon Jovi, The Killers and Elbow.

Favourite Film/s

Any James Bond.

Ian's Rugby Journey

Rugby began on arrival at Friends School where I represented the school at U13s, U15s, 1st XV and 7s.

Joining Morpeth RFC on leaving school was an easy decision, following brother David to Mitford Road, as I used to come down to watch during school holidays.

Two years Colts rugby followed, one with more success than the other, and County Colts is where I first met the late Bill Charlton as a Coach - Bill was the outstanding Coach of the John Player Cup side of 1975.

April 1969 I made my 1st XV debut at Scarborough, where we lost - prior to that I had only played half a game at No 8 for the Colts.

Numerous 1st XV seasons followed, again some with more success than others as I learnt my trade as in my chosen position.

County U21s and eventually a County Cap were gained which got me onto the pitch at Twickenham for the County Championship Final against Middlesex in 1979 – losing 6-19.

The amazing events of 1975 will never be forgotten for the commitment, endeavour, and belief we had as a team and in each other - the rewards were self-evident.

Interesting footnote: -

During 18 1st XV rugby seasons I played with 15 different scrum halves that I can remember!

Most Difficult Opponents/s Encountered

Three come to mind straight away:

Paul Anderson, no 6, and the late Andy Ripley, no 8, of the Rosslyn Park back row, both big and awkward.

(Andy Ripley gained 24 England Caps and toured South Africa with the unbeaten Lions but missed out on the test team to Mervyn Davies. A fantastic sportsman Andy also excelled in several Superstars competitions)

A very youthful Rory Underwood playing for Middlesbrough, it took me 79 minutes to get anywhere near him, and I think even then it was late!

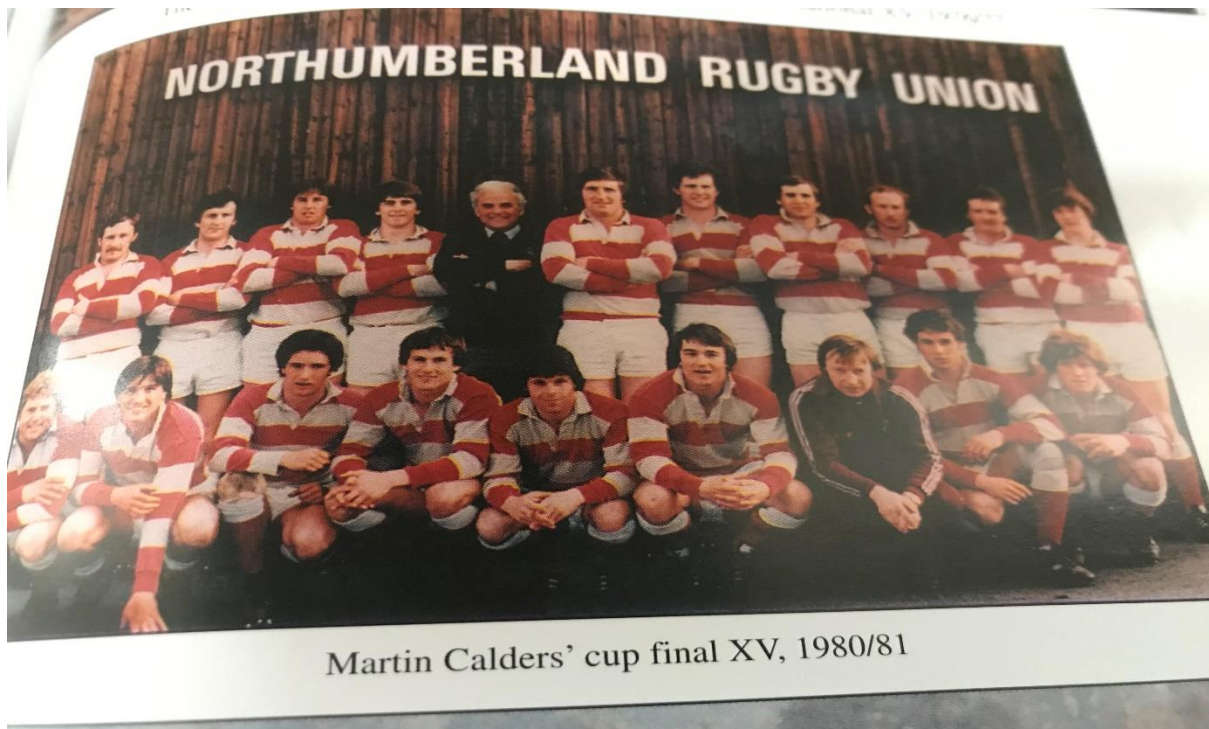
(Rory Underwood went on to gain 85 England Caps and scored a record 49 tries and gained 6 British & Irish Lions Caps, scoring 1 try)

Favourite/Best Players in The Same Team

All the 1975 John Player Cup Squad - everyone had a job which they did to the best of their ability.

Fellow County players Roger Uttley (23 England Caps & 4 British & Irish Lions Caps), Malcolm Young (10 England Caps), and Brian Patrick (Capped for Barbarians & England U23s).

I also played two invitational games with household names such as Phil Bennett (29 Wales Caps & 8 British & Irish Lions Caps), Peter Dixon (22 England Caps & 3 British & Irish Lions Caps), Jim Aitken (24 Scotland Caps), and Bobby Windsor (28 Wales Caps & 5 British & Irish Lions Caps) - Bobby was part of the celebrated Pontypool front row.



Ian's 2 x Morpeth Club Quiz Questions

Q. During my 1st XV career I played 4 positions for at least 1 game each, what were they?

A. In descending order;

No 8, Blindside Flanker, 2nd Row and Full Back.

Q. In that same period, I managed 1 drop goal, against who?

A. Newcastle University.

Club notes for Ian Pringle and his 1st XV debut Season 1968-69

The Club Colts side was started in 1966 with Gordon Keeley in charge – Ian was a member of that first side and played 4 matches. He played for our Colts for the next 2 seasons – Captaining the side in his 3rd season in 1968/9. He played for the Northumberland County Colts for 2 seasons – in 1967/8 with Dave Cornberg and in 1968/9 with Les Railston, Bob Young and Owen Turner. Several of that early Colts side went on to play senior rugby for the club – Mike Dungait, Fraser Hunter, John Hunter, Steff Hoffman, Mike Hay, Gordon Wilkinson, Stephen Forster as well as Les Railston and Bob Young.

Ian played his first 1st XV match at the end of the 1968/9 Season - still a Colt – at Scarborough – Ian will no doubt remember the match - we were hammered 3-22. The Morpeth XV was –

J Wilson, B Iley, D Jeffreys, M Bullen, P Wiggins, W Hewitt, H McGeogh, M Stoney, L Foreman, E Dobson, B Garnett, H Little, D Scott, D Pringle, and I Pringle.

The next season 1969/70 Ian played 25 out of the 28 games – got his 1st XV Tie - and was a regular 1st XV player for the next 15 seasons until 1983/4 and he played 20 games or more in 14 of those seasons. His final 1st XV match was in April 1989 – it was his 415th game – Ian has currently played more games for the Club than any other forward and this will most likely never be surpassed.

Ian played in 4 Northumberland Senior Cup finals at the County Ground – in 1974, 1977, 1981 and 1982. He played in our 25th Anniversary match in 1971, in all the Clubs National Knock Out Matches in 1974/5 and in the Ted Laidlaw International Memorial Match.

Ian was a tremendous 7 a side player and played in several Sevens Finals including the winning sides at Ashington and winning the Northumberland County Sevens in 1976 at Morpeth. Ian Captained the Club in 1979/80, was Chairman of Selectors and Chairman of Rugby in the 1990's and became our Club President in 2000-2002 and has also managed the Colts.

Ian first played for the Northumberland Senior County side in 1972/3 and was a member of the County side until the 1978/79 season – playing in the Championship Final at Twickenham in 1979. He played several of his County games with his brother David – they will be one of only a few brothers who have played Senior County rugby for Northumberland in the same side. In 1972/3 he was selected as a member of the National Under 23s squad – a squad that included Bill Beaumont a future British & Irish Lions Captain.

Ian was a very, very, good number 8 for the Club – probably our best - his defence around the scrum was first class, he was a particularly good line out jumper at a time when there was no lifting, he was deceptively quick with excellent handling skills - but more than anything he had the knack of being in the right place at the right time – something that cannot be coached.

Bill Hewitt's special memories of Ian are when he was the elder statesman in our 1980/81 season - the side were all youngsters – many Under 21s – and Ian looked after that side brilliantly and Bill will never forget his tackle in the 1981 Cup Final against Gosforth. Gosforth were one of the best sides in the country and after 20 minutes we were 0-19 down and looking as if we were going to get slaughtered. The strong Gosforth winger Steve Gustard was about to score another try in the corner when he was wiped out by Ian and tackled off the field and Steve landed beside the surrounding dog track. That one tackle changed the game - the final score was 3-19 – we won the last hour!

The 1968/69 Season – the Club ran 5 sides plus Colts

*President Alan Gordon, Hon Sec & Fix Sec. Ted Laidlaw, Hon Treasurer Stan Driver, Team Sec Angus Taylor, Hon Coach Ray Lee, County Rep Ted Laidlaw, Chairman Keith Cazaly, Hon Sec Colts Mike Duffy, Bar Chairman Isaac Arris.
Ladies Committee Mrs J L" Joan" Robson.*

1st XV Captain Ray Lee - played 26, won 18, lost 8, for 422 points, against 231 - 82 tries, Bobby Thompson 17 tries, John Wilson 126 points. Mike Stoney, Brian Garnett, and David Scott played every game – 1st XV only used 34 players; nine games cancelled in the winter. Reivers Captain – Bernard Scott - won 13 of 26 games.

Third XV Captain - Isaac Arris – won 14 of 26 games.

Third "A" XV (Under 21s) coached by Ray Davison won 13 of 18 games.

Fourth XV Captain Angus Taylor – won 10 of 20 games.

Colts Captain Ian Pringle won 15 of 25 games – Ian Pringle scored 109 points - 12 tries, 9 pen and 23 con.

Ian Pringle, Les Railston, Bob Young and Owen Turner played County Colts against Yorkshire and Cumberland.

Bill Hewitt played all Northumberland Senior Championship games and Keith Lister played Northumberland Senior Championship game against Durham.

Mike McKenzie Cambridge Blue.

Ralph Appleby was Northumberland County President.

April 4th to April 8th Prof Runcorn organised a Club Tour to Holland - played and won all 5 games.