

Member Profile – Former Player, Club Groundsman – John Dungait

1st XV Caps – 293, Bill Hewitt Cup 1985-86 (top try scorer), George Brown Cup 1998-99 (for work on/off the pitch), Edwardians Player of the Season 2001-02, Stags Player of the Season 2008-09.

EDUCATION

Newlands Prep School – I started playing rugby as a seven-year-old, games master was a lad called Mick Mahoney who played rugby for Gosforth, and the County.

Kings School Tynemouth.

Kirkley Hall - Northumberland College of Agriculture.

EMPLOYMENT

Farmer/Haulier

FAVOURITE BAND/S

UB40

BEST MUSIC EVENT/S

UB40/Phil Collins at Newcastle Arena

FAVOURITE FILMS

Action Thrillers

IF I WEREN'T A WINGER

I really enjoyed playing fly half after I was no longer playing for the first team. Ran it a lot!!

MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENTS

Epi Taione, a Tongan – Tynedale's answer to Jonah Lomu.

Graham Ward – played for Novos – quick and elusive – his son Jonny currently plays at the Club.

FAVOURITE/BEST MORPETH PLAYERS IN THE SAME TEAM AS MYSELF

This has been a difficult section as I have played with lots of great players/characters, but here goes;

When I left the Colts the only aim, I had was to play for the first team. I played for every team at Morpeth on my journey, some of the Captains I will never forget - Ranters Ted Gascoigne, Fourths Trevor "Trap Door" Watson, Thirds Kenny Thompson, Stags Bryan Lawrence, Reivers John Midgely, and Ainslie Knox.

On the way up I was lucky enough to play with Club legends on their way down the teams, Billy Hewitt, Ian Pringle, Ken Fraser, John Leithead, and Brian Keenleyside. When I arrived, I was fortunate that people I had looked up to were still playing, Colin Green, Martin Calder, Alan Old, Andy Brown, Iain "Paddler" Laidlaw, Alan Woolhead, Dick Defty, Ed Amos and Peter Gordon to name but a few.

I played under many Team Captains, but Richie Young must be mentioned for being a great leader and for toughening up the whole Morpeth team – Richie had a huge impact on us.

The Club legend of my era has to be Hutt, 400 1st XV games and as hard as nails!!

I also have fond memories of the lads who played on their travels;

Paul Fourie, studying medicine at Newcastle, played 10, (still get a Christmas Card).

Mark Speke a farmer from New Zealand played 12 or 13.

Ed O'Dell a farmer from Norfolk played back-row.

Martin Evans, "The Rev" a vicar who played scrum half. He had a placement at a Morpeth Parish before joining the Navy. I remember he had to do a service on a Sunday morning with a cracking black eye from Saturdays match.

BEST MORPETH RFC MATCHES

1997/98 - the first season in North Division 2. It was a massive step up for us all and we struggled early season, can remember getting thumped up at Alnwick, but we stuck together and started playing well. It was inspirational playing against some formidable teams with impressive facilities, Bradford and Bingley, Huddersfield, and Vale of Lune to name a few.

At the end of the season we beat Tynedale to win our first Senior County Cup. I can still name every player in the squad and will never forget them.

JD's MORPETH QUIZ QUESTIONS

Q. Which local pundit said he would bare his backside in Fenwicks window if we beat Tynedale in the 1998 Cup Final?

A. The late David "Banty" Johnson.

Q. Did he go through with it?

A. To give him credit he did!!

Q. Who won the first George Hakin Cup for Stags Player of the Season in 1999-00?

A. Mick Lishman.

Club notes for John Dungait and his 1st XV debut season 1983-84;

John Dungait began playing for the club in the 1979/80 season – a member of the colts' squad who were organised by old Rob Mair and captained by Hugh Annett, the squad included the Parlett brothers and Phil Getty. John played his last game for the club in April 2012 in a winning Stags Cup Final. In a career spanning 5 decades John will have played over 600 games for the club.

After leaving the Colts - John played his way up the teams and by 1983 he was a member of a strong Reivers side captained by John Midgley, John and fellow winger Paul Barrow scored a lot of tries. In April 1984 the club sent a side to play in the Gateshead Fell Sevens – the side included Martin Calder and Colin Green. John scored several tries that afternoon and helped the side get to the Final which they eventually lost to Jedforest. After his success in the

sevens, the next week John was selected for his first 1st XV game against Ryton on April 14th, 1984, we won 3-0 with a Green penalty. The side was –
K Fraser, J Dungait, E Amos, C Green, T Parlett, T Clark, D Pledger, G Richer, B Burgess, T McDonnel, D Dungait, P Aynsley, N Bailey, I Blackett, P Gordon – it was also the first game that Tony Clark played for the 1st XV.

John eventually became a 1st XV regular in the 1986/7 season and went on to play for the 1st XV until the 1999/00 season, playing his last game in April 2000 and finishing up having played 17 seasons and playing 293 games for the 1st XV – a Club record for a winger. He gained his 1st XV tie in 1988 and played 20 games or more in 12 seasons. John played for many years with his brother Dick and in April 1995 against North Ribblesdale on the Common – 4 Dungaits played for the 1st XV – John, Dick, Mickey, and Keith.

John is from a generation that continued to play down the sides once he had finished his 1st XV career - often ending up playing at fly half for the Stags – I doubt if he kicked the ball much. Now he continues to serve the Club as groundsman – our pitches are the envy of many Clubs. On the field John will be remembered by many as a hard-running winger who in training and on the field was always 100%. As he matured and gained knowledge, he became a very, very, good defensive player who learnt to read the game well. Tackling was never a problem and over the years he must have stopped the opposition from scoring a lot of tries and indeed won us games.

The 1983/84 Season we were running 6 club sides plus the Colts

President was Bernard Dick, Hon. Sec John Wilson, Fixture Sec. Bill Hewitt, Hon Treasurer Alan Woolhead, County Rep. David Turnbull, Team Sec. Harry Kennedy, Bar Chairman Paul Mason – who also looked after the Colts, John Williams was Squash Chairman and Lillian Dick in charge of Ladies.

Ken Fraser was 1st XV Captain. The Club began well - in the Northern Sevens we beat Harrogate, London Welsh, and Sale only to lose to Gosforth who won the competition. We won 11 of our first 12 games but did not finish the season well – winning 23 out of our 40 games. Paul Aynsley played all 40 matches. 1st XV ties were awarded to Dave Pledger, Roger Biggs, Noel Bailey, Andy McDonnel, and Colin Green. Colin was top points scorer – kicking 192 points and not scoring a try.

The Reivers captained by John Midgley were a very strong side. They won a record 32 games out of 41 played. John scored 197 points and Paul Barrow was top try scorer with 29 tries. At the end of the season the Reivers went on Tour to York accompanied by President Bernard Dick.

The Stags captained by John Leithead had another good season winning 26 out of 31 games and losing in the County Cup final to a strong Northern XV. It included youngsters - Tony Clark, Simon Metcalfe with a few old hands to help.

The 3rd XV was captained by Ian Vickerman – winning 17 out of 26 games. The side included some older players such as Brian Garnett, Rob Robinson, and David Learmonth. Michael Elliott was top points scorer.

The 4th XV was captained by Gordon Laurie won 9 out of 23 games while the Ranters captained by Alan Patton won 11 of their 16 matches. The Ranters included several old hands such as John Wilson, Mike Beckwith, and Barry Crowther.

We had a thriving squash section and ex 1st XV winger Bobby Thompson won 2 of the clubs Competitions. Bobby was probably one of the best wingers we ever had and is still our leading try scorer.

Dick Defty played in the County Championship for Northumberland against Cumbria. Colin Green, Martin Calder, Peter Gordon and George Richer played for the County against South of Scotland. Ian Blackett, Ben Burgess and David Bainbridge played for the County Under 21s. Tony Parlett and Chris Lawrence played for a County Youth XV and David Brown played for the County Colts and Michael Robson and George Richer played for a County Presidents XV against Wallsend.