

## Member Profile - Former Player - John Goodfellow

(1<sup>st</sup> XV Caps 188, Young Player of The Season 1992-93)



John evading Simon Manners @ Alnwick circa 1999

### Education:

Bellingham Primary School  
Mowden Hall  
Sedbergh School, Cumbria  
Newcastle University

Both Mowden and Sedbergh were big rugby schools which gave me a great start. I was lucky enough to be in the same year and team as Will Greenwood at Sedbergh. Will's father Dick Greenwood, who was a former England player and coach, was part of the coaching team. We were extremely fit and well drilled but you'd expect that when playing 5 days a week! I played for Border Park during school holidays then joined Morpeth after leaving school. I think I am correct in saying my first ever game for Morpeth was for the 1<sup>st</sup> team and I was notified of my selection by a postcard arriving in the post!

### Employment:

Farmer & Inventor

### Favourite Band/s:

I've never been too bothered with bands, whatever is on Radio 2 does.... If I had to pick one it would be The Killers.

**Favourite Concert/s:**

Again, I'm not too bothered, I did see INXS in Sydney which was pretty cool. I'd rather go to see comedians, I have seen: Billy Connolly, Victoria Wood, Russel Howard, Mickey Flanagan, Ross Noble to name a few.

**Favourite Film/s:**

Shawshank Redemption, this was on in the maternity suite when my eldest daughter was being born; really distracted me from the pain my wife was in!

I'd recommend people to watch "Kiss the Ground" a farming/ environmental film that is very thought provoking.

**What position would you liked to play if not Hooker?**

I did play 1 and 3 but always wanted a go in the back row, a target I never achieved, too slow!

**Most difficult opponent/s to play against:**

The match I learnt the most from was as a 19-year-old playing a warmup game at the start of the season against Newcastle Gosforth at Kingston Park. I was hooking against Neil Frankland who was a North of England hooker. He had a brilliant trick of releasing his binds and moving forward to put his head on my hooking knee meaning I could not move or hook. My response to this was to bray away with my knee against his head as hard as I could, unfortunately I could not really see what I was making contact with – Hutt was my unfortunate tight head prop that night, I vividly remember coming up from a scrum to see Hutt holding his nose saying, "John can you stop doing that!" I'm pleased to report that I learnt how to do that trick that night and went on to win Morpeth many against the head scrums in the coming years!

**Favourite/Best Morpeth Player/s in the same team:**

We had a great team in the mid to late 90s with an outstanding powerful pack. I have never been more at home anywhere in life than stuck between my props Andy and Duncan Clark having a front row battle.

My weakness as a hooker was lineout throwing however if Ben Dale was the target it was not a problem. His ball handling and athleticism got me out of trouble. It is amazing how much lineout throwing is about confidence. It is a mind game.

**Best Morpeth Match or Matches:**

My memories of matches are very sketchy. You must remember back then scrum engagement was very different, there was no Crouch, Touch, Engage. It was stand at least 1 metre apart and charge! Clashing heads with your opposite number was an intention to intimidate and get the upper hand. Possibly because of this my match memories are limited or more likely the copious amounts of beer and port afterwards... it astonishes me how Staffy remembers everything!

**Three matches that did stand out:**

Horden – April 1997 (A). I'd broken my leg playing at Durham City in December and had managed to get back fit in March. Horden always had a formidable pack, they were leading

at halftime when I got my chance to get back in the team. The first scrum back was intense, I'll never forget the tight squeeze being back with my mates, we pushed them all over. We won that game and promotion that season.

Huddersfield – November 1997 (A) I had been sussing the opposite hooker's timing all game, losing with only minutes to go they had a scrum on their 22. I managed to hook the ball against the head, "Alan Boots Keenleyside" drop kicked a goal for us, from about their 10-yard line, to win.

County Cup Final – May 1998 beating Tynedale - apparently, I scored but can't remember!

### **Best Trips/Tours:**

1990 - I toured with Sedbergh to Romania, the poverty was a real eye opener. During one match an unfortunate wild pig was caught by the spectators, it was killed then cooked over an oil drum fire whilst we played!

1991 - I took a gap year before University travelling in New Zealand and Australia. I had a job cotton harvesting in NSW and played rugby for the local town Warren. There were many great matches and tales, but the highlight was going back to New Zealand on tour with Warren.

1994 - Northumberland Development to Amsterdam.

1994/95 Season - I was lucky enough to be involved with the Northumberland County Cup run that ended playing the Final at Twickenham. It was a great season, I played in 3 of the earlier games in competition and benched the rest. I did bleed on the hallowed Twickenham turf, Dave Guthrie "accidently" clocked me one in the mouth in the warmup! I benched for Northumberland for the next four years and did not get a single minute of game time! Tactical subs were not allowed then; but I did get my money's worth in free beer!



[John & Nobby Clark @ Twickenham April 1995](#)

1996 - Morpeth to Amsterdam Sevens. Duncan Clark's purchase of a pan stand for fiancé Valerie has proven a much wiser and more durable gift than the collection of clothing I came home with for my fiancé...

1998 - Northumberland Centurions to Amsterdam

2007 - Scarborough 7s - George Brown made for a very beautiful lady in the cross-dress pub crawl!

2019 – World Cup Semi Final weekend in Japan with Duncan Clark. What could possibly be better than being in the stadium to see England beat the All Blacks whilst drinking beer with your best mate!?!



**John & Nobby Clark – World Cup Semi-Final Japan 2019 – just after full time whistle when England beat New Zealand – the Kiwi just behind them does not seem quite as happy...**

**Goody's 3 x MRFC Quiz Questions:**

Q. Why was the Morpeth Farmers v Kirkley Hall traditionally played on the last Wednesday of February?

A. Before lambing but more importantly "Nurses Pay Day" made for a good night in Morpeth!

Q. Peter Kirkup was very deservedly awarded a first team tie without having played the 25 games; one other Morpeth member has also been awarded this; Who?

A. Stu Taylor's Dad – John.

John lives in Driffield and travelled to all the 1<sup>st</sup> XV games both home and away for several seasons, to watch Stu, and was awarded his tie after the 1993-94 Season.

Q. Which player after a night out in Newcastle, got the bus back "home" to Wallsend but had moved back to Morpeth from Wallsend 18 months earlier?

A. Andy Clark.

### Club notes for John Goodfellow and his 1<sup>st</sup> XV debut Season 1991-92

Morpeth RFC have been extremely lucky over the years to have had so many good hookers – and John Goodfellow is one of a long line. John Toshak in the 1940's and 50's, Foster Hall during the 1960's, Les Railston and John Leithead in the 1970's, Gavin Cummings, Mickey Robson, and Ian Pledger in the 1980's and John Goodfellow in the 1990's. Since John we have also had James Thornton, Chris Pringle and more recently Carl Hill. John was our second hooker after Mickey Robson to play in the County Championship for Northumberland.

John played his first 1<sup>st</sup> XV game in 1991 - on Wednesday evening on Sept.25<sup>th</sup> - against Gosforth – we were well beaten by 0-34. The Morpeth XV that evening was – S Prescott, W Mcturk, S Hall (guest from Blyth), P Slater, J Younger, T Parlett, I Laidlaw, D Aynsley, J Goodfellow, D Hutton, D Herne, P Gordon, T Tench, G Stephenson, J Price. It was not the best of sides – 5 players were making their debuts – John, Sam Prescott, P Slater (who only played 2 games), Jamie Younger, and Tony Tench.

The day before Chris Lishman had Captained the County side against Durham – the County side included Iain Laidlaw and Mickey Robson – typically Paddler decided to play the day after his County match.

Two weeks later when Mickey Robson was again on County duty John played his second match against Ripon at home – we won 33-0 – John then went travelling to New Zealand and Australia and therefore did not play again that season.

The next Season 1992/3 John was Young Player of the Season and in the 1993/4 Season he became a regular 1<sup>st</sup> XV player.

John was first choice hooker from 1993-1999. He played for the Northumberland side in the County Championship in 1994/5 when they reached the County Final. He was top try scorer for the 1<sup>st</sup> XV in 1995/6 and 1997/8 Seasons – altogether he scored 56 tries for the Club and I think almost everyone would be from our number 2 penalty move which we developed during that time. John played in the Northumberland Senior Cup final when we won the Senior Cup for the first time and scored a try in that match.

John was a member of one of the best packs that the Club has ever had – with props Andy and Duncan Clark making up the front row, a second row of John Stafford and Richie Young and a back row of Duncan Hutton, Gus Nelles, and Ben Dale – all also played differing amounts and levels of County rugby.

After 1999 John continued to play at the club – he played every year up to 2007 and finished up playing 188 games for the 1<sup>st</sup> XV.

John mentions his game at Durham City when he broke his leg. Bill Hewitt remembers that game as well. Having been at college in Durham and thinking he knew his way around Durham to the Hospital – Bill offered to take John to Durham Hospital. Unfortunately, it was more than 30 years since he had been to the Hospital and the road system had altered rather a lot in the intervening years. Bill got hopelessly lost and doesn't think John was amused – they did eventually make it!

*Since 2011 John along with Simon Bainbridge now organise the Annual Morpeth Farmers Game, that David Turnbull started back in 1980. This game is one of the main Club events of the season and is the most sponsored game – originally the Farmers played a Kirkley Hall Students team but since 2013 they now play the Newcastle Agrics – John fittingly is still a member of Newcastle Agrics after playing for them during his time at Newcastle University.*

*The 1991/92 Season – we ran 5 Senior sides and a Colts side*

*Harry Kennedy was President, Ken Fraser Hon Sec., John Wright Hon Treasurer, Bill Hewitt Hon Fixture Sec., Mike Parrish Chairman of Bar, Ken Davidson Chairman of House, Stephen Forster Chairman of Rugby, Bobby Thompson Chairman of Squash, David Turnbull County Rep., Club coaches – Bill Hewitt and Bruce Liddell.*

*1<sup>st</sup> XV Captain Chris Lishman, Vice -Captain Mickey Robson  
Reivers Captain Peter Gordon, Vice-Captain Neil Campbell  
Stags Captain Pooch Thornton  
4<sup>th</sup> XV Captain Phil Gregory  
Ranters Captain Alan Lawton  
Colts Captain Alan McClement*

*The 1<sup>st</sup> XV played 10 league games – winning first 4 but eventually only winning 6 out of 10 – we beat Pontefract, Novos, Bramley, Keighley, Gateshead Fell and Brodleians. We won 19 of our 35 games but were badly hit by injuries and used 60 players - Captain Chris Lishman only played 7 games.*

*Paul Fourie, Mick Lishman, and Andy Clark were awarded their 1<sup>st</sup> XV ties – Paul Fourie, who was Young Player of the Season scored 179 points and was top try scorer with only 7 tries and with Iain Laidlaw returning from Scotland they formed a talented half back combination. Will McTurk was once again Club top Try Scorer.*

*Chris Lishman, Mickey Robson, and Iain Laidlaw played for the Senior County side and all 3 were selected to tour Canada in August. Chris captained the County XV.*

*Duncan Clark and Paul Fourie played for the County B XV.*

*Ed Bennison Captained the County Under 21 XV that also included Ben Dale and Matt Parrish.*

*Alan McClement and Ian Whitfield played for the County U19s Colts and Ian made a National Squad.*

*Michael Dungait played for Scottish Schoolboys.*