

NEWARK RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB

The First Seventy Five Years

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Foreword.

The first mention of Rugby in the Newark area is a paragraph in a book, Football the Rugby Union Game, published in 1891. This states that the Hull Club, formed in 1865, played a type of Rugby and amongst its opponents were Newark, whom they played four times a year.

A search through the Newark Advertisers and Heralds of that time and an investigation by the R.F.U. cannot offer any information, but one possibility is that there may have been a Military Unit stationed in the area who played this handling game.

Dr. Ernest Ringrose, a Rugby fanatic arrived at Newark in the 1880's. The "little" doctor as he was affectionately known, a talented player with Old Merchant Taylors Club soon tried to enthuse the people of Newark into the game of Rugby Football. On December 19th 1891, a challenge match took place on the Sconce Hills between a team from Newark and a team from Nottingham. The Newark team was composed from the people of Newark to "this side of Bingham". This match is assumed to be the first to be played in Newark although a press caption of several issues prior to the event states "that Newarkers do not often enjoy the chance of seeing Rugby Football" giving further claim that there had been a Military Unit playing a type of Rugby Football. The match details which were reported in both the local Newspapers (although they could not agree on the score) and allowing a little poetic licence went as follows:

"Newark Rugby lads are a hardy lot for this game they played alongside a group of iceskaters. The skaters took the frozen Town Ground and the match was switched to a pitch atop the hill. The many spectators, who had travelled by Hansom Cab, Shank's Pony or the 'Newfangled Railway' showed great interest and especially enjoyed a good run followed by a collar, a heavy fall and grimaces. The first scrum evoked a shout of amusement and derision."

Although it was agreed that the play should be gentle, the report says:

"In a few minutes the men realised the difficulty of collaring a man gently at full speed and only tried to be at the top as they fell."

"In a very short time it was evident by torn jerseys and by grazed knees that the ground was punishing the men severely and they must have longed for the mud."

The game was described as "of a most pleasant character" but then as now, the reporter had advice for the players pointing out, "had the halves fed the threequarters with more accuracy there would have been more scoring."

The Newark team, happily there are some descendants amongst us, was:

H. Matterson, R. Thompson, E. Ringrose, E. Wilson-Smith, Oliver Quibell, H. Ryder, R.K. Beaumont, Hurst, S. Swire, B.J. Huskinson, G. Bellis, E. Harker, E. Lambert, E. Forrester, F.A.L. Matterson.

The result (according to Dr. Ringrose): Newark 8 Nottingham 0

After 1891 several matches were played each season and the opponents included Nottingham, Worksop and Mansfield. It is not possible to obtain a comprehensive list of games played, as the reporting of sports events was not yet widespread.

These games would have had to be played when boys were home on holiday or when service personnel had been granted leave, as it is difficult to imagine that sufficient local people took part in this new handling game.

Travelling to away matches would still be difficult and grounds would have to be within walking distance of a Railway Station. The home games took place on a field close to the Muskham Road. The pitch is now encompassed in the new A46 Relief Road.

The moving and opening of the Magnus Grammar School, in 1908, to its present site in Earp Avenue and the appointment of the Reverend Henry Gorse, a Rugby man, as Headmaster boded well for the game in Newark. The School quickly began training, initially playing Rugby only during the Autumn Terms.

In 1913, a Principle of the company of A. Ransome & Co (latterly known as R.H.P.), Geoffrey Ransome, arranged a game - G. Ransome's XV v. Magnus Grammar School. This was a forerunner of several contests between the School as the Antediluvians and the Stanley Works XV. The Works XV was probably a cosmopolitan team, as amongst its members was a local Vicar. The Magnus side usually included several Masters who had probably helped to coach the boys.

A Newark team, which entertained Grantham in 1914, had hoped to play twelve matches during Season 1914/15. They advertised for prospective players, but sadly no games took place, as the players marched away to fight in the forthcoming hostilities and for a time all local sporting events were suspended.

1919 - 1929

With the ending of the Great War (1914 -1919) the thoughts of certain people once more turned to Sport. A meeting was held at the Magnus Grammar School to discuss the prospect of forming a local Rugby Football Club. This meeting, which was held on Saturday, July 26th was convened by the then Headmaster, Rev. H. Gorse, Dr. E. Ringrose and others and adopted a motion that the Newark Rugby Union Football Club be formed. The annual subscription be 5/-, the Club would play their home matches at the School and the School playing colours were adopted. The Rev. H. Gorse was elected President, C.L. Peet Treasurer and Secretary and J.G. Harrison the Club Captain.

The Club soon became affiliated to the Rugby Football Union and the Leicestershire Rugby Football Union, transferring to the Notts. Lincs. and Derby. R.F.U. after its formation in 1926.

Committee Meetings were held regularly and as only brief details are recorded in the Minute Book we have little knowledge of the trials and tribulations that would beset this or any new Club. The Playing Record for the 1919-20 season was:

Played 19, Won 12, Drawn 1, Lost 6. Points for 188 points against 143.

Whilst it may seem that the number of matches played in this and other early seasons were few, it must be appreciated that the playing season did not commence until late September generally finishing at the end of March and winters were usually harsher.

In Season 1920/21 with an influx of playing members 2nd XV's were fielded on many occasions. Amongst the opponents that appeared on the Fixture Card were Burton-on-Trent, Nottingham, Doncaster, Chesterfield and the Magnus Grammar School.

H.H. Selby became Secretary in 1922, a position he held for six years, afterwards becoming Treasurer. He gave great stability to the Club and was instructed to "make the best possible arrangements with regard to a motor conveyance for away fixtures." It was during this period that the first Charity Match against the Magnus was played. These matches played annually for over fifty years raised many thousands for local worthy causes and were only stopped when the R.F.U. in its wisdom decreed that men could not play against boys. The Club playing colours were changed to broad dark blue and thin white hoops with a white collar. When the first Boxing Day fixture was played the opposition was raised by Dr. Ringrose for many years, later by F.N.C. Dwyer and now some seventy-five years later the President has to cajole fifteen stalwarts to run off any excess of Christmas Pudding.

The Club played their home games at the School until 1922, when an agreement was reached with the Newark Cricket Club and matches were played there until 1930.

Names such as R. Bloom who toured France whilst still at the Magnus School playing full back for Notts. S.W. Hill, the brothers H. & G. Bloom, C. Smith, W.H. Royall, the Rev. C. Gillett, T. Porter and many others now began to figure as players and officials. Finance was always a problem and subscriptions were increased, a match tax instigated and players were expected to pay for the visiting teams' teas. The Secretary was instructed to provide a more realistic Fixture List with less travelling. Dances were held, a gate was taken at Home Matches, but it was not until 1928 that the Treasurer reported a balance of 2/6 in the Club Accounts. Senior Members were relieved as they had had to act as Guarantors and there had been many lengthy meetings with Bank officials. This precarious money situation meant that the Club could not support the formation of a Notts. Referees' Society.

Recalling these days, Ken Wardley, who joined the Club in 1926 and together with Fred Bayliss are our oldest members, writes:

"The pitch was on Newark Cricket Ground running parallel with the Road just inside the Entrance Gate, to the left of which was a small muddy pond. Odd latecomers were often splattered with mud by a landing ball. There were always close relations between the Rugby and Rowing Clubs - rowing in summer; rugby in winter was the drill. Training consisted mostly of long runs on winter nights."

Changing quarters were at the Royal Oak in Castlegate where a brick built copper up the yard provided the bath water. Transport to the ground was largely by bicycle or by Shank's Pony and by coach or train for away fixtures. An old character named Alvine was Groundsman; he always sported a bowler hat. Two important games were Dr. Ringrose's XV v. Newark played on Boxing Day and the Charity Match played between Magnus and Newark. Magnus rarely won as they lacked height though when Norman Taylor (some twenty odd stones) got the ball he went quite a long way.

The play, whilst technically much lower than today's standard was very keen and played in a joyous spirit. Shorts were longer, pockets very light and the rugby balls, made of leather, soon became misshapen during the wetter parts of the Season. Injuries were less frequent, usually of a simple nature; many caused by one large member who always broke from the scrum with both arms flailing like a windmill. Social functions usually consisted of dances, tripe suppers or the like.

There weren't many spectators, usually a good spirit on the field which blossomed gradually into the splendid Club of today".

As can be seen, the Club had Headquarters at the Royal Oak, Castlegate; a happy association which lasted until 1964 when the present Clubhouse was opened on the Ground.

The Annual Ball, which was held in the Town Hall, was well attended and other dances were usually held in the Beaumont Chambers or in Bailey's Rooms in Kirkgate.

Thus with the passing of the first ten years, always considered one is told - even in marriage - as the worst, those daring enthusiastic starters would sit back in 1929, counting the few half crowns which they had in their assets.

1929 - 1939

From 1929 onwards to the outbreak of World War II there is little information about the Club's activities, the second Minute Book having been lost. Photographs, press reports and oral reminiscences must suffice. The Fixture Cards show that on many occasions R.A.F. Units from the many local stations provided the opposition, R.A.F. Spitalgate, R.A.F. Digby and R.A.F. Cranwell being our opponents for many years. High Pavement O.B. were played in 1930-32, later (as now of course) the Paviours, with whom Newark have had many struggles for years. Many local clubs had now been formed and this was beneficial, not only to the Club's finances, as less travelling was involved, but also as the majority of players still had to work on a Saturday morning, stronger fifteens could be selected with the later departure time from Newark. Employers were not so lenient in those days in granting leave of absence for sporting events. Local opposition included Lincoln, Southwell, Old Notts. and Casuals whilst longer journeys were taken to towns such as Scunthorpe, Grimsby and Chesterfield, names which will revive many memories amongst the players of those years.

Officials in the thirties included Bill Royal, Tom Hindley, W. Aubrey Richardson, Frank Bealby, Henry Bugg and Ralph Reddish all of whom were active for many years and who can forget J. Leslie Phillips, with his large mittens, directing operations during his tenure as the 1st XV Captain. George Pollard, Life Member, and Sam Derry, Vice President, both became playing members in this period and they are both still active within the Club administration occupying the office of Trustees, whilst three brothers, Bill, George and Archie Burkett all wore the Newark Colours during this decade.

The Club was lucky in having a close friendly contact with Magnus School who provided Staff to play, occasionally loaning pitches to play on and boys to join the Club on leaving School. It was proposed more than once to call the teams Old Magnusians, but an influx of non-Old Magnusians to the Club, put an end the suggestion once and for all.

The depression having started, and as players in those days had to provide their own shirts, the colours were changed to dark blue, these being cheaper to buy and enabling Old Magnusians to dye their school alternative white strip.

In 1930 the Club was able to rent a sports field on the Muskham Road. This had been vacated by the then R. & M. Sports Club, and had more than sufficient room for a Rugby Pitch. It also had a Bowling Green and three grass tennis courts. In the summer Cricket was played there by the Newark Amateurs whilst on an adjoining pitch the Newark Ladies played hockey, a sure distraction if the rugby being played was dull and boring.

The wooden hut used for changing was divided into two by a hinged partition and the teams bathed 'on site' in very primitive conditions. The baths consisted of four galvanised tubs - two for the home side and two for the visitors. The water was heated outside in an army type field-kitchen boiler and carried to the baths a bucketful at a time. Tribute should be paid to the groundsmen of this period, Mr. Bradley and then Joe Jackson, whose main concern was to gauge the wind direction and strength so enabling reasonably hot water to be provided.

Joe also acted as trainer, soothing pains at the sessions. Then, as now, training was not well attended causing problems to the Coach, Dr. Ringrose, as he tried to plan the playing strategy.

Soon even the most hardy rebelled at these conditions and a Clubroom, changing and bathing facilities were opened at the Royal Oak, provision being made for the most important item, the dart board. All these facilities, with very little modification, still being used in 1964.

The finances were boosted with Rug and Stop-watch competitions and jumble sales. Collections were taken at home matches and the Annual Ball was the highlight of the populace of Newark.

In 1935 the N.L.D. Referees' Society organised the "Sevens" tournament and Newark usually entered two sides. The Annual Dinner was first held in 1936, at the Ram Hotel. It is worth mentioning that, as well as the speeches, there was always entertainment provided either professional or amateur.

Progress was made in this pre-war period with, occasionally three fifteens playing, a change from one early Saturday in the Club's history, when seven men left to play a Nottingham XV, the remaining eight being "press-ganged" en route - and Newark won! Different too, from a journey some can remember by train to Lincoln, there to pick up a coach to Grimsby. There was no coach and the journey was completed in an open lorry, bone shaking and cold, but as Dr. Ringrose said, "a certain cure for kidney trouble!"

So the first twenty years ended and the prospects looked good, but in the world outside others had different ideas.

The playing record for the last peacetime season is as follows:

	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	24	14	1	9	262	267
'A' XV	16	8	0	8	167	159

1939 - 1945

The War Years

Happy years for many Rugby enthusiasts terminated, unfortunately, when war was declared in September 1939. An emergency meeting was summoned for Wednesday, September 25th and a decision taken to continue as long as possible - a wise and courageous move. Many were the setbacks and worries, but members home on leave, an influx of sixteen year-olds from the Magnus and Service XVs in the district were thankful for that decision. "As long as possible" turned out to be for the duration of the War, thus ensuring that the Newark Club continued without a break from the moment of its formation in 1919 to the present day. Very few, if any, Clubs in the Three Counties can claim to have continued as an independent body during the war years.

To raise a fifteen and a referee was often a struggle and 'Dickie' Dwyer recalled many a Saturday when he refereed the Magnus match first, then with the help of 'Oswald', his bicycle, he dashed off to referee the Town's game. Once he barely escaped from a hostile reception from a XV of ardent Welsh players who disagreed with his decisions and who threatened to throw him and his bicycle into the stream that flowed nearby. About 100 games were played during those six wartime years, but with no printed fixture cards, records of these games are far from complete. One remembers in October 1943, the Club played R.A.F. Bottesford, losing 74 - 3, surely a Club record when for scoring a try only 3 points were awarded. However, the following records exist:

	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1941/42	19	5	2	12	135	240
1942/43	12	9	0	3	153	100
1944/45	11	2	0	9	73	134

As can be seen the Club was overmatched on many occasions, but it must be appreciated that boys of 16 and 17 often played against men of International character, both Union and League, as League players were allowed to play Rugby Union during the period of hostilities.

Many fixtures were cancelled due to either bad weather or various necessary military manoeuvres. Sunday games with local Service sides were started and without the Service teams and willing help it is doubtful if Newark could have carried on. One can recall walking along the cinema queues, with shaded torchlight on a Friday night shouting, "Would anyone like a game of Rugby tomorrow?" With this and many other ruses the Club would manage to turn out a full, or nearly full XV at the weekend.

Away games were few and far between as transport was largely limited to cycling, and ten miles or so on a bicycle was not looked upon favourably! Now and again one or two of the more influential members managed to spare the Club a few prized pieces of paper known as 'petrol coupons'. Thus, very occasionally, two or three over-loaded cars would proceed along the road to some distant venue such as Swinderby R.A.F. Station. These cars would be laden with spades and shovels as civilians could only use their cars for necessary war work. The excuse if stopped was that we were all going to help a farmer friend with work on his fields.

Equipment was at a premium and it is recalled how one of our Royal Navy members had managed to buy and donate a rugby ball. This was obtained when his ship had docked at one of the ports in South Africa. In 1940, due to severe frosts, the boiler burst at the Club Headquarters and visiting teams did not always relish the idea of cold water, so games were cancelled unless the opposition was local. Feeding our visitors also presented many difficulties. Rationing prevented the Club from providing refreshments so various local cafes were regularly patronised. On several occasions the Club tried rushing round to the nearest fish and chip shop at a pre-arranged time and collecting many portions of pie and chips. This was soon stopped mainly because no one seemed to like nearly cold chips and pies, whose contents were, to say the least, mysterious. Later the slipper baths in the Market Hall were used and with the 58 M.U. Lincoln Road and the R.E. O.C.T.U. Bowbridge Road, giving valuable help both in administration and playing the Club survived unlike many others who were forced to close down. To add to the problems to be surmounted in 1944, notice was received terminating the Tenancy of the Muskhams Road Ground, where the Club had been since 1930. This was unfortunate and a long search began with many people being contacted to no avail, until once again, the services came to our assistance, lending a field on the Bowbridge Road, which the Club used for the next season. After this the team played for the next season further along Bowbridge Road on a large expanse known as Bates Field.

Mr. Chris Smith, Landlord of the Royal Oak and a staunch supporter since the formation of the Club retired in 1944. The Club must be ever grateful to him for his kindness and hospitality to all Rugger men. All rents due to him in the war years he refused to take and no history of Newark's Rugby Club could ever be complete without his generosity being recorded.

It was a miracle of organisation and administration for Tom Beeston, for years the Hon. Treasurer and a wonderful character, to be able to declare at the A.G.M. of September 1945 that, for the first time in the Club's history, the balance at the Bank was £100 plus - this when all subscriptions were waived for six years and the finances dependent on match fees, an occasional dance and the odd raffle.

1945 - 1957

With the ending of the Second World War, those members who had served in the forces returned and were welcomed back to the Club. They combined with the many new boys from the Magnus School, then enjoying one of their most successful periods, to produce some very exciting rugby.

All clubs have their ups and downs and for a few years after 1945, the Newark Club flourished and succeeded to a degree never before reached, only later to encounter such a slump that members were warned of the dangers of collapse.

Vice-President, Roland Cope, writes:

Rugby at Newark in the Forties.

"Rugby at the Magnus School during the war years provided the School XVs with the hard-learned experience of games against Service sides, that bit older and somewhat fitter, inter-schools competition being restricted by the embargo on travelling.

Many of the boys left school at 17 or 18, only to be drafted into the services themselves where many earned great credit on sports grounds throughout the world. The war over, the drift back into the uncertainties of civilian life and Newark R.U.F.C. began to receive its players, some eager to resume, others just recruits to Club Rugby. Sadly some did not return and potential stars were lost to their families, the town and to the game.

Games were played down Muskhams Road with access to the pitches through a scrap yard. There was no lack of enthusiasm and commitment, but equally, no coaching or finesse as such. Modern day players would be appalled at the way preparations were made. Weekly runs to the Sugar Factory and back from the Club's Headquarters at the Royal Oak in Castlegate constituted training.

There were changing rooms 'Up the yard' at the Royal Oak and it was a regular thing for players to assemble there, change and set off for the ground on bicycles, returning by the same process after the game, muddied, tired and sometimes injured. Some were lucky to enjoy hot baths, others were not so lucky and some even returned home for the comfort of domestic bathrooms. Conditions for away games varied with the clubs, sometimes changing in the bars of Public Houses, but perhaps Derby was more Spartan than Newark.

Fellowship on match days was very strong for the teams tended to stay together, no matter whether playing home or away. There was never any hurry to get home when playing away unless the bus driver had been instructed otherwise. The bar across the yard at the Royal Oak held the players until closing time unless some chose to join the throng, dancing at the Corn Exchange. The Landlord at the Royal Oak was Harold Hopkinson and whilst he must have been pleased with the trade, he often had hair-raising moments. One memorable occasion was on Guy Fawkes Night, Westleigh the visitors, and someone let a firework off in the bar - he reckoned the beer was at risk from the smoke.

We played Derby, Old Nottinghamians, Old Mornensians, Sheffield, Lincoln, Leicester 2nd XV, Northampton Wanderers, Corsairs' Peterborough, Southwell, Boston, Aylestone St. James and there was one famous trip to Stratford-on-Avon - but that may have been in the fifties.

As now, fundraising was an essential part of the Clubs' activities. It was not until 'Joe' Howard had the great idea of a Grand National Draw, involving all clubs in the English Union, that we surged forward and became a strong club with its own ground and ambitious schemes. In the forties we were content with crimped football tickets, the Christmas Draw and Match Fees. Once a month we put on our dinner jackets and enjoyed a Town Hall Dance with tickets at 4/6, Mr. Griffin controlling the door and music by Basil Rose with Jim Padgett's Aunt at the piano.

Russell Brown suffered a serious leg injury at Scunthorpe. Sam Morley's father remonstrated with the referee after dangerous play in the same game. Geoff Hampson of Old Nottinghamians broke his neck at Newark (happily he recovered), Grandpa Saxilby and Bill Royal bellowed away on the touchline and Ernie Pilsworth, George Cullen, Denis Burgin, Bill Hodges, Reg Longmate, Tom Grocock and Tim Wood among many others played their hearts out for Newark and then enjoyed themselves afterwards in the build-up to the proud Club of today.

Great things from a little beginning.

The link between them and now has been maintained by a small number of stalwarts, some of whom are generous in support but, from a practical point of view, there has been no greater long term enthusiast than Jeff Coleman. His memoirs and statistics will make fascinating reading one day to succeed those of Dr. Ringrose, whose written record has, very sadly, been mislaid or lost, apparently during the Town Hall Refurbishment programme.

Many hours were spent trying to find a field suitable to satisfy our needs and luckily in 1946, Dick Lamb was able to persuade the Price Bros. to rent to the Club one of their fields on the Muskham Road. The playing area was suitable for two pitches and was our home for the next four years.

In May 1947, the Committee was hastily summoned and told that six acres of land on the Kelham Road was to be auctioned. The Ground Committee was aware that although the land was liable to occasional flooding it was perhaps the only chance of obtaining a field close to the heart of Newark. Permission to attend the auction and to bid was soon granted and Past-President Sam Derry recalls the day of the auction.

"Talking to Bob Wilkinson recently we were reminded when we were entrusted (by the then Committee) to try to buy the first part of the present ground on Kelham Road. We were authorised to go up to a maximum of £500 if necessary. After some interesting bidding by William Hare (Dusty's grandfather) and ourselves, William bid £500, Bob and I had a quick whispered conversation and decided to make one last bid of £520.

A few days later I was travelling by train to London, Mr and Mrs William Hare were the only other occupants in the compartment. Naturally we talked about the recent auction and William remarked, "When I saw who was bidding against me I gave up, thinking you can't f-t against thunder!"

Little did he realise we were making our last bid."

Through the generosity of several senior members the field was levelled, re-seeded and carefully nurtured; the first games being played there during 1949. To provide hard standing at the gateway several players occupied the summer months by knocking down many now redundant air-raid shelters in the district. To finance the ground an appeal fund was set up, £300 was borrowed from the R.F.U. the interest payable on the 15 year loan was 2% per annum.

1946 saw the Newark Seven, for the first time, reach the final of the Referees' Society Tournament at Beeston. Four years out of five Newark reached the final, winning the Noel Syston Cup in 1948. They played superb rugby through all the rounds - the winning team was Peter Gammon, George Cullen, Ernest Pilsworth, Malcolm Gwilym, Freddy Brooks, Bill Wilson and George Coppin.

The rugby played in those early post-war days was of an exceedingly high standard, large crowds gathered on the touch lines for home matches whilst supporters' buses often accompanied the 1st XV to the away fixtures. Francis Dwyer was the popular President during those exciting times and together with the enthusiastic Hon. Secretary, Ralph Reddish, was instrumental in the formation of the Nottinghamshire Union.

Three and occasionally four XVs played each weekend. Playing records as given at the A.G.M.s are as follows:

1947/48	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	31	26	0	5	491	181
2 nd XV	24	15	3	6	304	167

1948/49	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	39	29	1	9	691	241
2 nd XV	34	26	2	6	547	180
3 rd XV	19	13	0	6	240	146

To encourage recruitment a film show was held at the George St. Boys' Club, coaching sessions under the supervision of Francis Dwyer and Geoff Windsor were conducted for boys from the non-rugby playing school and several of these boys later played for the junior sides of the Club.

With the relaxing of the food restrictions the Annual Dinners were once more held and we were fortunate in those years in having as our guests the President and Secretary of the R.F.U. and the Captain of England.

There always was a certain amount of humour and it is recalled that on a certain Saturday the 1st XV were playing at South Leicester. After the posts had been erected, the home backs carrying the cross bars the forwards hauling the goal posts and the visitors idly looking on, one of the Newark players realised he had forgotten to remove his dentures. Wrapping them up in a piece of cloth he placed them beyond the touchline. Later the Newark team were temporarily reduced to 14 men whilst the unfortunate player was busy chasing a dog who had 'christened' his handkerchief. One can recall an 'A'XV match at Sheffield being held up whilst the Referee and all thirty players crawled on hands and knees trying to locate a gold tooth which had been knocked out of the visiting full-back's mouth. Unfortunately we lost both the tooth and the match.

It was obvious that Newark were proving themselves to be above average standard, attracting great notice and receiving considerable help from Rugby sources throughout the Midlands. Names of Newark players began to appear in County Championship matches and in George Cullen, the Club had an outstanding player. Later he went to Leicester, playing for the Tigers for many years and achieving the honour of an England Trial. On one occasion in 1948 Newark provided the following players for N.L.D. versus North Midlands, all were backs - George Cullen, Ernest Pilsworth, Malcolm Gwilym and John Barker. Cyril Marshall also played on one occasion.

It was about this time that the Rev. H. Gorse and Dr. E. Ringrose were proposed Honorary Life Members as a tribute to their work in starting the Club in 1919 and their devotion to it ever since. Both accepted and were full of praise for the outstanding achievements of the Club.

The laws of the game being different from those of the present time and dribbling the ball by the forwards was a great and effective part of the game. Johnnie Gardiner and George Coppin were masters of this art whilst the devastating tackling by Tom Grocock had to be seen to be believed. The playing standard of the Club was usually judged by the records of the 1st XV, but the other teams had many outstanding results with players, who by staying loyal to Newark, did not often have the chance of displaying their true capabilities. One of the highlights of this 'golden age' was a tremendously exciting struggle when Newark travelled to Beeston on 27th April 1949 to play the full Notts. 1st XV. The Nottingham Evening Post reported the match as follows:

WONDER TEAM NEWARK ACHIEVE

BY D.R. RILEY

NOTTS. 0 NEWARK 3

"Newark, wonder Rugby Team of the Midlands achieved their ambition last evening. They shook Notts at Beeston in one of the most remarkable games there since the war.

A penalty goal by George Cullen, who played on the right wing instead of centre, his County position, was the only scoreboard difference, it is true. They can forget it. They beat the premier club fairly and squarely from start to finish, not too squarely either, for at one period of five minutes they were attacking with 12 men.

One, centre, P. Gammon, went home with it is feared, a broken ankle; full back D. Robb and front row forward J.F. Gardiner came back on. Newark played themselves into a daze in proving they are a first class side. Notts' share of the battering was the loss of Stan Leonard, fly-half, with torn ligaments, after 20 minutes.

No excuse.

This disorganised the home fifteen. As an excuse it can be ruled out, though it was a blow following the missing of two penalty kicks by Dick Davidson in the first ten minutes.

Newark were already dictating the play, and main credit goes to the forwards and to J. Barker at the base.

The forwards in the loose were magnificent, streaming across to break up Notts. attacks and aiding backs who marked so closely that the home outsiders were knocked clean off their game. Harried home defenders resorted to fly-kicking and aimless punting. Harry Hardwick was the only Notts. back who looked like reaching the line. Usually three Newark men were hurling themselves at him - once he was felled by deputy full-back W.J. Wilson, a forward. The best of the home threes was forward Derrick Dunn, whose grand tackle of winger; G.K. Saxelby averted a try later on. A dribble by Dan Isles and a break through by John Otter and Brian Nichols enlivened a ragged second half, in which Notts. incursions into the Newark half were brief.

Nothing passed.

Newark backs, with M.M. Gwilym prominent, were not of a high attacking standard, but they let nothing go by them.

A sensational feat by a 'junior' club. And the secret? Forty matches a season, training three times a week, summer training with the Athletics Club and thinking and talking Rugby in between. Thirteen of the players are Newark born and old boys of Magnus School.

They won the Peterborough Sevens on Saturday by scoring 76 and yielding none.

And Notts. reaction? Before the 'no-side' blast had brought Newark spectators to their feet, Notts. players hurried to be the first to congratulate their victors."

Notts: R.J. Davidson, H. Hardwick, A.F. Jones, B. Nichols, D. Whiteman, S. Leonard, D.W. Bailey, D.A. Dunn, R. Malpas, J. Stuart, J.H. Otter, A. Warner, J.E. Nicholson, D.E. Isles, E.H. Farr.

Newark: D. Robb, G.K. Saxelby, P. Gammon, M.M. Gwilym, G.H. Cullen, C.L. Marshall, J. Barker, S.A. Morley, D.A. Burgin, J.F. Gardiner, A.R. Chubb, W. Hodges, T.H. Grocock, W.J. Wilson, F. Brooks.

Referee: S.B. Olsen. (N. L. D)

It will be noticed from the Notts match report that a stringent training programme was now adhered to. Sunday mornings on the ground, mid-week exercising in a local school gymnasium, but also the weekly run to the Sugar Factory for those with excess energy.

During this period the Three Counties played several County Championship matches at Newark. These games were played on Ransome & Marles ground by kind permission, as a covered stand was necessary under the Championship rules. These games were played for several seasons until the Rugby Union decreed that fixtures could not be played on Association Football grounds.

J.E. Thorneloe brought a strong XV from Leicester including England players Bob Stirling and Bob Weighill, both stalwarts of R.A.F. Rugby. This match played in April 1950 was the occasion when the new ground was officially opened. Peter Birkin, from Nottingham more than once brought strong representative XVs to Newark, hoping perhaps that Newark players would transfer their allegiance to Beeston. These and many other evening attractions proved most popular, the large crowds attending helping to swell the ground appeal fund.

In recognition of the above achievements an anonymous benefactor presented the Club with a set of shirts, these were supplemented by the local R.E. Unit who donated an alternative strip. It was several years, however, before the Club was able to provide and launder shirts for all the players.

After five years as President, Mr. Dwyer resigned, handing over the reins to Bob Wilkinson. Bob held this Office with distinction for several years as well as being Match Secretary for the Three Counties, a post he did not relinquish for eighteen years. Tom Beeston resigned the office of Treasurer. During his eleven year stint, in itself a remarkable achievement, he proudly reported at each A.G.M. a steady growth in the Club's finances. Arthur Skaith was elected as the new Treasurer, he afterwards handing over to Denis Burgin.

Providing refreshments for visiting teams was always a problem. The usual practice in those days was to parade the visitors round to various cafes; this exercise was both costly and unsatisfactory. The following notes were compiled by Bill Drury several years ago.

"In 1950, Bill Hodges, Denis Burgin and myself were designated to explore the possibilities of providing teas at the Royal Oak. It must be appreciated that as certain food commodities were still subject to rationing, and with little help expected from the local food office, the meals provided would have to be of a simple nature.

A re-organisation would be necessary, moving the changing rooms downstairs; the huge zinc bath had to be located in another converted stable, leaving the upstairs accommodation for use as a kitchen and dining room. A gas stove was installed, water laid on, pots and cutlery were purchased and some semblance or order began to appear.

Invitations were sent to players' wives and girlfriends to attend a meeting. The ladies agreed to undertake the catering by forming a working rota and by the next Saturday we were in business.

The project was a great success from the start. I had the doubtful honour of being in charge of the catering section, but if anyone was glad to be under "petticoat government" it was me! Rationing was always a problem, sometimes it was necessary to mix the margarine with mashed potato to make it go further.

We were asked to be hosts at a forthcoming County game. This was a challenge, as a hot meal was expected which had not attempted before because of lack of space and facilities. Our worthy Landlord, Mr. H. Hopkinson was consulted and yet another room was offered to us. It was a loft next door, with no internal entrance, no windows and as we found out later, no floor.

Apprehensively we tackled to job of converting this shambles into a kitchen. The equipment was transferred into its new abode and we were ready for the big event, The County Match. This was to be the greatest challenge to the ladies yet. Sausage and mash was asked for.

Now a gas stove and a copper does not lend itself to providing hot meals for a party of some fifty strong players of county status, with the possibility of International players as well. Two of our catering ladies, Mrs Hayes and Mrs Everett were able to obtain six Primus stoves on loan from a Boy Scout group and with the aid of some metal, a hot plate was devised. Sausages, peas and potatoes were purchased and we were ready to go. The meal was a great success, but behind the scenes the kitchen looked like a Boy Scout Jamboree.

The following season a similar meal was planned for a like occasion, but with a slight variation - roast potatoes being required. The quantity required was beyond our facilities so Jeff Coleman and I prepared the potatoes and arranged with John Noble, a player of the day and a local baker, to roast the same. When we went to deliver the uncooked potatoes we found the bakehouse closed. This did not deter us. We merely pushed three stones of potatoes under a gap in the door and hoped for the best!

As a general rule, our activities were confined to tea, buns and sandwiches at a fraction of the cost of the previous method."

We shall always be grateful to Bill and Ann Drury and the other ladies; too numerous to mention for the sterling work they all performed in conditions that would not now be acceptable to the various hygiene laws.

In December 1951, the C.O. of the local R.E.M.E Camp, Bill Bush, presented the Club with a silver cup in grateful thanks for the help and co-operation the Club had given to this Army Unit. The Annual Sevens Tournament for the Bush Cup was inaugurated. For many years this was held on the first Saturday in September, catering by the ladies and the day's event concluding with a dance.

Ralph Reddish resigned as Secretary; he had held this position for seven years and was largely instrumental in obtaining for the Club the first class fixture list we now enjoyed. John Gardiner held the position of Secretary for two years and he then became Fixture Secretary for ten years. Bert Emerson started his fourteen-year tenure as Match Secretary, never failing to produce players when all seemed lost.

As mentioned earlier the years of success stopped in the early fifties and the Club slid from the heights to the depths, from good to bad, from the sublime to the ridiculous. Nine of the team that had played against Notts in 1949 had left the district, together with several of the more accomplished members from the lower teams. The teams fielded were sometimes not of the standard required to fulfil the better fixtures. Tom Grocock recently remarked that no Club could afford to lose so many class players in so short a time. There was no prospect of fielding a Third XV and the Second XV occasionally had to cancel fixtures or went away without a full complement. Player recruitment was very slow, the closing of the local Army and R.A.F. Units was a great loss, the Magnus now had a greater catchment area, so boys tended to join clubs that were nearer to their homes. Another factor was National Service, which took the younger players away for 2 years.

The annual trip to Twickenham, to watch the Home Internationals was started in 1952 and continued for many years. Dances were regularly held, but a blow to the Club's finances was delivered when in 1954. The Police declared that the Football Doubles that we had sold for many years were deemed to be illegal.

George Jeffcott and Gordon Dawes both played for Counties during this period. In appreciation of years he had devoted to Rugby Football Mr F.N.C. Dwyer was elected as President of the Three Counties in 1956.

Several approaches had been made to various authorities to see if we could have the main tapped and a water supply carried to the Ground. We were unsuccessful in our request so all thoughts of the building of a Clubhouse etc. had to be shelved for the time being. A temporary building was erected and a well dug to enable the field to be hired out for summer grazing of the land. After many months of discussion at the Committee Meetings, President, Ralph Reddish was able to announce that the Club ties would soon be available.

The Captains, during this period, George Jeffcott and Malcolm Gwilym had a really difficult task. Several clubs refused to play us, as they were often let down at short notice, by the inability of Newark to field a 2nd XV, especially for away games. The only consolation during this dismal period was winning the Skegness Sevens Tournament in 1956 by the following players: Russell Brown, Brian Asher, Brian Poxon, Geoff Windsor, David Johnson, Maurice Dobbs and Barry Robb. The trusty boot of Tom Grocock winning for him the Place-kicking Tournament.

At the A.G.M.s held during this period, various presidents expressed concern over the lack of training and the inability of certain members to be available for playing away matches. Retiring as Secretary in 1957, Jeff Coleman said that the Club stood at the crossroads, greater dedication was needed, not only by the players, but also by the Committee. We had to examine every aspect of our failure and to try to attract new members. Drastic steps were needed if we were hoping to return to our former glories. He also wished a happy retirement to our hosts for thirteen years, Mr. & Mrs. H. Hopkinson.

1957 – 1970

Due to the efforts of a small hard-core of Committee Members, the Club gradually began to fight back, hoping to achieve some of the former glories. Stanley Hill continued as the President and Joe Howard was elected to be the Secretary. Within a short time, owing to the generosity of James Hole & Co., further accommodation, complete with furnishings was provided. An old dance studio was fitted out for use as a Clubroom complete with a small bar and the ladies, at last, had a respectable kitchen. Larger baths and showers were installed and the fitting of a gas boiler ensured that there would always be a constant supply of hot water, something that was often lacking in the past.

A Licence for the selling and consumption of alcohol on the premises was obtained, the members quickly learning how to dispense the brewery supplies. The winter always seemed colder in those days and with no provision for keeping the supplies at a regulated temperature, the beer was sometimes poured into a galvanised bucket and warmed in the gas oven. On occasions, such as the 'day of the sevens' we couldn't keep pace with the demand for shandy, so the brew was mixed and supplied from a carefully hidden metal bath. A senior member, when recalling those happy days recently remarked, "It's a wonder that we all lived to tell the tale." We were lucky to obtain the services of Alf Norris as our Groundsman and he coped with our ever-increasing demands for many years.

Geoff Windsor handed over the reins to Frank Latham. Frank was Captain 1958 to 1960 and all his friends will remember his colossal feats of strength, not to mention his insatiable capacity for bitter!

The fortunes of Rugby Clubs can be likened to a barometer and slowly the needle began to climb. An influx of newcomers to the town and club ensured that an 'A'XV could be re-established on a regular basis. George Jeffcott came out of retirement to lead this blend of both experienced and youthful players. The coaching sessions, ably led by George Pollard, Archie Birkett and latterly by Ned Foster, continued to flourish and soon there was sufficient support to form a regular Colts XV. Matches were played on a regular basis against other local clubs. These matches played on a Saturday comprised teams of players who were not in full-time education and under 18 years of age when the playing season started.

At the A.G.M. in 1958 Secretary, Joe Howard asked for better attendance at training, firm leadership and better Club spirit. He then stated that if we achieved all of these three aims we should continue on the road to success.

The sea air of Skegness once more proved bracing, the 'Links' Sevens was won on Easter Monday 1959. The following comprised the winning team: Tom Grocock, David Johnson, Brian Brimelow, Barry Staniforth, Terry Blatherwick, Clive Raggett and Brian Asher. Veteran scrum-half, John Barker, came out of retirement to play in the Final replacing one of the Newark team who had been injured in a previous round.

With the improved facilities the Ladies formed their own section and for several years held monthly meetings, lectures and demonstrations being the principal items on their fixture card.

A versatile team well led by Frank Latham once a wing forward and an able footballer, always stronger than his opposite prop. Versatile in that Fraser Dewar was equally happy at wing-forward as in the centre, Tony Colton and Terry Blatherwick were very able standoffs, Brian Asher was just as happy at full-back, Barry Robb was a converted wing forward, Barry Staniforth could also hook and David Johnson was not a bad full-back. Good players all. Tom Grocock, well, he could literally play anywhere and finished as stand-off in his later years.

Fixtures in those days included Norwich, Lincoln, Doncaster, Ilkeston, Chesterfield, Spalding, Kettering, Westleigh, Derby, Mansfield, R.A.F. Cranwell and Kesteven; as well as Leicester and Coventry 2nd XV's. Home and away games were played against the majority of sides, the advantage from the players' angles being the friendships formed with the opposition which is such an important part of Rugby Football; sometimes lacking in today's game.

Sam Derry was President of the Club at that time and along with Bob Wilkinson was usually to be seen on the touchline at most games. Joe Howard was the Secretary, one of the most able and popular figures to have held the position in the Club's history.

Frank Latham held the Captaincy for three years, succeeded in the 61/62 season by Mike Lockwood, who had been his ever-present Vice-Captain. Mike held the distinction of never missing a single game during the first ten years of his playing career. The XV did not change much over the four years covered by this passage.

Emerging players included Geoff Bond, Doug Easton, Adrian Allen, Jon Shackleton, David Duncombe, John Leggatt, John Cousins, Martin Craven, Ken Hunter and David Bott.

George Jeffcott was doing sterling work at 2nd XV Captain to be succeeded by Peter Spawton who did that most important job for several years. Graham Pulfrey, who had been the Club Secretary for two years, left for Leicester where he was to enjoy a good many years as the Tigers' full-back, enjoying a deserved reputation as one of the best players in that position in the Country. He was rewarded when he received a Reserve Card for one of the England XV Final Trials.

Brian Fisher succeeded Graham as Secretary, a position he filled with great authority and huge success for many years. The name of Brian Fisher has cropped up so many times and he has been at the very root of the Club's improving fortunes. It was his drive and his enthusiasm, ably supported by a good committee, which was the prime reason for the Club developing its own Club House at Kelham Road. Several of us attended the auction of the Army Guardroom.

The money for the erection of the new buildings, or the majority of it, came from a number of fund raising activities which themselves form part of any successful Rugby Club, not the least of which was the Grand National Draw. This Draw which was the brainchild of Joe Howard and Barry Staniforth, involved the participation of many Rugby and some other sporting clubs up and down the country. Since the Club did not have a large enough drum for the tickets, one such draw was held in the bath at Kelham Road, with the then President, George Pollard, standing in the bath, knee deep in tickets conducting the draw summoning as much dignity as he could muster. What a pity we don't have a photograph of that!

The Annual Dinner in that period saw some important speakers e.g. Bob Stirling, Eirie Evans (both England Captains) and England International, Derek Morgan, and it has been an important part of the Club scene. Arthur Organ was now Treasurer, a post he held for several years.

This is the period of the Royal Oak, bath and changing rooms down the yard with the Club Room opposite. Dances at the Ram Hotel on Saturday nights were always well attended after 11 p.m. but not much went on before. The Christmas Draw reached a profit level of £100, Thursday night Club nights, card schools, beer throwing etc., the usual activities of a healthy Rugby Club.

Jeff Coleman was propping up the 2nd XV and was at the core of all the working activities of the Club as he has been for so many years and the bar check was in the hands of John Harris - as it still is to the present day.

Many playing in the teams of the late fifties who have not moved away, are still seen at Kelham Road. Barry Staniforth, David Johnson and Tony Colton went on to Captain the 1st XV. Mike Shea is still refereeing and officiated in an emergency situation in a League Game in 1993 following an injury to the selected referee.

My 1st XV days finished in the early to mid sixties and the Club was fortunate to have then a scrum-half in Mick Edlin, who was the best Club scrum-half I ever saw who did not play for England. Some not as good as Edlin did.

The Club prospered, entering the Hunter/Maltby era, the best second row partnership enjoyed by the Club. Cup Rugby was starting, but I had moved down the teams now and must leave this successful period in the Club's fortunes to someone else."

At the A.G.M. in 1962, George Pollard was elected as President of the Club. This was a move of considerable significance. Previously the policy of the Club had been to elect its most distinguished member regardless of his ability to find the time to attend to Club matters. Without in any way suggesting that George Pollard was not a distinguished member of the Club, he was at the same time very much an active and working member. George never missed chairing the monthly Committee Meetings; he was a real leader and worker, refereeing minor games, Team Secretary after Bert Emerson, Colts Manager and a great humourist into the bargain. The policy of having a working President continues to the present day. The financial strength of the Club continued to such an extent that in 1962 the Mortgage on the ground in favour of the Rugby Union was redeemed.

In February 1963, the Club embarked on a new venture when a Club Trip was organised on the occasion of the England/Ireland Match. This event is still long remembered by those who took part and still remained sober. A game should have been played against a Dublin Club XV, but fortunately the pitch was flooded making it unnecessary for the Guinness sodden players to face the unpleasant task of running about in the cold and wet. Wisely they all adjourned to a pub known as the Lincoln Inn, which in fact seemed to be occupied day and night by our members over the entire weekend.

The following season the Club ventured onto the Continent. Chartering a plane from Luton members went to Paris to watch France v. England. During the flight to Paris, such was the crush round the spirits serving area, the Pilot announced that as he was having difficulty in flying the plane the bar would be closed. Luckily the Stewardesses soon moved down the aisles selling the Duty Free products. With a limited knowledge of the French language the tourists coped well and the flight back was somewhat quieter, most tired and weary, some smiling apparently taking advantage of the "Entente Cordiale."

FISHER'S FOLLY - CHIP & HEP DECEMBER 1964

"In the late fifties and early sixties playing Rugby at Newark meant changing at the Royal Oak, cadging a lift to the Ground, usually in the back of Frank Latham's canvas-sided Land Rover, bathing in an old concrete bath and drinking icy cold beer in the little Clubhouse up the old wooden steps. I thought there ought to be more to Rugby in Newark than this.

The story of Fisher's Folly began when the former Army Camp on Hawton Road was put up for sale in 1963. The site was bought from the Government by builders William Davis of Loughborough. Having bought the site purely for the land they gave instructions for the wooden buildings to be auctioned off. The two main buildings just inside the main gate immediately appealed to the writer as being a suitable opportunity to acquire a building to create a Clubhouse at Kelham Road.

After a great deal of heart-searching and debate the Committee narrowly voted in favour of bidding for the Guard Room for a Clubhouse (The Rowing Club became interested in the situation and they subsequently bought the other building, which can be seen at their Headquarters by the River Devon). Since I was professionally involved in the Auction, the bidding was left to Bob Wilkinson and the building was duly bought for the sum of £470. Several other Club members attended the auction.

The building was then dismantled (with every piece numbered) and stored in Staniforth's stockyard where it gently warped for six months whilst plans were drawn up and a base for its re-erection was built. The Club had been divided almost down the middle by the decision to buy this building and all of the Club reserves were plunged into the purchase. Several senior members predicted it would be impossible to re-erect, that I had gambled away the Club's capital and that the Club was faced with ruin. Hence the heap of warped firewood became known as **Fisher's Folly**.

In the early days of 1964 work commenced. It is fair to say that all those members who had been so bitterly opposed to the project threw their wholehearted support behind the idea, and none of them more so than **Chip and Hep!** The response throughout the Club was magnificent. All the finishing work, the floor laying, painting and so on was taken over by Club members, for we could not have afforded to pay contractors.

Eventually we reached the stage where the sapele panelling of the Clubroom was due to go into place. This task was undertaken by Chip and Hep who would not allow anyone else to touch their work. As the weeks went by, enthusiasm to use the Club was running at a tremendous pitch - but they refused to be hurried. It became obvious that the building was not going to be finished in time for the opening game, a County Championship match N.L.D. v. Leicestershire. An almighty row broke out between Fisher and Chip & Hep. George Pollard, the President, had to intervene and came up with a masterly compromise. The Clubhouse was opened for the County Match and then closed again, until December 1964, after the last piece of sapele had been fitted. These 20th century craftsmen seemed to me more like a pair of 18th century cabinet makers and so it came to pass that **George Jeffcott** became known as **Chippendale** and **John Harris** was known as **Hepplewhite**, suitable shortened to **Chip & Hep**.

Hence: **"FISHERIS FOLLY - 1964 and CHIP & HEP."**

Brian Fisher

For over forty years, the Headquarters had been at the Royal Oak and it is a credit to the members that we had never been threatened with eviction. Tribute must be paid to all the various Landlords who totally supported us, shared with us our moments of glory and watched with interest the Club prosper, both on the financial side and on the steady growth of membership.

To commemorate the official opening of the new pavilion a match was played on Tuesday, April 27th 1965 between the President of the Notts. Lincs. & Derbys. XV and the President of Newark R.U.F.C. XV. An item taken from the match programme stated:

"Although the Newark Club has been established since 1919 this is the first time in history that full changing, bathing and clubroom facilities have been owned by the Club and all enclosed under one roof."

A substantial grant towards expenses was received from Ministry of Education, in recognition of the efforts that Club were making in promoting Junior Rugby in the town.

The heating and lighting of the premises was by gas and this, combined with the effects of drinking Worthington 'E', caused various side-effects, several members having difficulty reaching work the next day without several stops on the way! Tony Colton, who was elected as the 1st XV Captain for the 1964 & 1965 seasons was as graceful a centre three-quarter as you could wish to see, but sadly his playing career was shortened by a knee injury. Peter Spawton was a very able 2nd XV Captain between the years 1962 - 66 and an equally efficient Treasurer of the Club.

The playing record for the season 1965/66 read:

	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	39	25	3	11	518	274
2 nd XV	32	25	1	6	405	171
3 rd XV	24	18	0	6	388	161
Colts XV	18	14	1	3	250	52

Sadly this was the last season that the Club was able to field, on a regular basis, a Saturday Colts' XV. Fixtures against the Colts were difficult to obtain and the policy of playing against opposing Clubs' 3rd and 4th XVs had not proved practical.

An influx of new playing members, possibly due to the improved facilities, boded well, the 3rd XV once more appearing on the fixture card. A 4th XV composed of a mixture of veterans and the nucleus of the previous Colts soon started playing matches.

The lack of support for the September Saturday Sevens was resolved when it was decided to switch the event to a Sunday in April. The success of this was immediate with teams travelling from all over England for the Bush Trophy.

In December 1965 George Jeffcott was appointed to be the Club Coach. This was an important move and arose from the great wave of interest in Coaching which spread through the County at that time, following the British Lions' terrific battering in New Zealand the previous summer. The Club at this time benefited immensely from a visit by several Internationals and a leading Coach, Jack Searle, who demonstrated the techniques of coaching for the Three Counties Clubs, when the Newark Club were used as guinea-pigs. What was learned that day proved to be of terrific value. Concerned with the falling quality of rugby being played in the County, the Nottinghamshire Union inaugurated the Notts. Knock-Out Cup. George Jeffcott organised the most successful coaching campaign in the then history of the Club, with the result that in 1966, 1967 and 1968, Newark walked away with the cup. Five players, Neil Ashmore, Mike Edlin, Rod Haslam, Doug Easton and Ken Hunter played in all three matches. The skipper of the Club at this time was Nick Maltby. Nick was a great motivator, both of the playing and non-playing members and will be remembered as one of the most outstanding Captains in the post war period.

The great cup run of these years produced the most exciting Rugby of the decade. All three games, played during April evenings attracted large crowds and there were some tremendous battles. Great struggles with Old Paviers who we played into extra time and then a replay in 1967.

Some recollections - Geoffrey Bond:

"My first recollection of being associated with Newark Rugby Club was when George Pollard knocked on the door of my family home in Lime Grove to ask if I would be prepared to come to the Club and play Rugby Football. I was somewhat surprised, as I had never previously played the game! However this did not seem to deter George who obviously thought that the young 17 year old at 6' 3" and 14 stone could be moulded into some sort of second row forward, aided and assisted by that great second row forward, Mike Lockwood.

My recollections are that I first played for the 2nd XV and, being somewhat short-sighted, would be told by Jeff Coleman, "Bondy! The ball went that way!" I made the 1st XV with the likes of Mike Shea, Mike Lockwood, George Jeffcott, Frank Latham, Barry Staniforth, Brian Fisher and of course, the inimitable Tom Grocock.

In those days we changed at the Royal Oak where, down the yard and up the stairs was our Clubroom. Across the yard was the communal bath where soaking after a hard game, Tom Grocock would widen one's knowledge about the opposite sex. On one famous occasion after, no doubt, being beaten yet again at dominoes by Locky and the others, I left the Club Room, vaulted over the banister falling some 15 feet onto the wet, cobbled yard below, to walk home quite unscathed.

University intervened and I managed to make the University 1st XV, but returning to Newark from time to time was able to have the occasional game. After University I worked in London and played for Rosslyn Park, then returned to Nottingham to work. After a spell with Notts. RFC I returned to my true home, Newark, where I was lucky enough to play second row for the 1st XV.

One of my best-remembered games was when Newark played Old Westbridgfordians in the Nottinghamshire Knock-out cup final at Beeston on 26th April 1967. I was in the second row with Ken Hunter and I can still remember the team. Alistair Orman at full-back, John Richards, Mike Elliott, Neil Ashmore and Mel Farrar. John Hackett was at outside half and the great Mick Edlin, the Captain, at scrum half. Forwards; the formidable front row of Doug Easton, Rod Haslam and Adrian Allen, flankers; Rob Speir and Roly Taylor with Colin Drummond, the dancing dentist at number 8. I am pleased to say we won the cup by 14 points to 3, by a goal. two tries and a penalty goal - to a try. Reading the old newspaper report, some of the quotations were:

"The game's best tactician was undoubtedly Edlin, the Newark Captain and scrum half. He scored his sides second try with a devastating burst down the wing and was the mainspring of his team both in defence and attack." The report went on further to say:

"In the second half, Newark forwards powerfully and ruthlessly took control of the game. With good throwing-in by the wings, Hunter and Bond came more into the game and with a good try by Allen from a maul near the line, which Ashmore converted".

The other try was scored by Mel Farrar and a penalty kicked by Neil Ashmore completed the scoring. One notable matter of incident, Referee Don Jones suffered a leg injury after fifteen minutes of play and was replaced by George Allen, the Notts. R.F.U. Secretary. It was reported that the Cup win was our 29th win of the season, making it the Club's best season since 1960 and I felt very proud to be a member of the side.

In the late 50s early 60s transport was not as freely available as now. We travelled together on buses to away venues, Grimsby, Chesterfield, Scunthorpe etc. and I feel sure it led to a far stronger sense of camaraderie than the younger players obtain today. I remember many a night careering back in the bus from the wilds of Lincolnshire with a harmonious refrain being sung by all and somebody or other attempting to pee into the wind through an open door! Towards the mid to late 60s I enjoyed the company of rugged types such as Tony Masding and Richard Derry in the 2nd XV which was just as much fun as playing in the senior side. I even made the sports page of the Newark Advertiser being photographed scoring probably the only try I ever scored for the Club. I do not think we were into the physical training as with the players of today. Nevertheless I like to think that if we were spirited back in time, we could give the present youngsters a good game and show them a trick or two! Whatever the case, I have many happy memories of Newark R.F.C. and wish the Club and its members every success for the future, and here's to the next 75 years."

Whilst the success of the Club is judged by the 1st XV results, the other sides were turning out some impressive performances. Many of these players, by staying loyal to Newark, did not always have the opportunity to show their true potential. It was during this period that the Club visited Southend-on-Sea for the Easter Festival and this was the forerunner of many other Easter Tours.

Having built the Clubhouse and established a highly successful team, the Club did not stop there. In September 1966 the Club decided to bring mains electricity to the ground. It was also decided to install training lights to enable the coaching and fitness sessions to be held outdoors. Whilst these lights were not totally suitable, a mixture of the junior sides played several matches, the Newark side being known as the Gloworms. The Club was considering installing full floodlights, the decision being made easier when the Three Counties R.F.U. promised to play all their home games at Newark. The total cost of bringing electricity to the ground and installing the floodlights amounted to some £4000. It was a proud night in the Club's history, when on the 17th October 1968 Mr. J.W.T. Berry, the President of the Rugby Union, declared the system open. This was followed by a game, Newark v. The Three Counties XV. These lights were the first installation on a rugby ground in the whole of the Notts. Linc. & Derbys Rugby Union.

At the same time negotiations were going on for the acquisition of the field on the west side of the Club House and in the summer of 1967 this was purchased for £2000. The money for all these ventures was raised through the tireless efforts of the Social Committee with various dances, raffles, the Grand National Draw and the weekly Tote Draw. In addition the Club entered the pop music entertainment field and staged a series of spectacular barbecues, which drew up to two thousand teenagers and made two thousand pounds in the process.

At the A.G.M. in 1967 George Pollard retired as President and the rare honour of Honorary Life Membership was bestowed on him. George, who had served for five years, was an outstanding President and was followed by an equally outstanding President in George Jeffcott, who served for three years. Ray O'Brien followed George as Club Coach.

There were many people who gave outstanding service during these years, the Treasurers Arthur Organ and Peter Spawton, John Beddoe and Des Frost, the second XV Captains, and Frank Latham, Jeff Coleman, Bob Bembow and Bob Palethorpe, who guided the fortunes of the junior sides.

Nick Maltby resigned as the 1st XV Captain, handing over the reins to Ken Hunter. Nick made many innovations whilst helping to raise money for the Club - one being the Annual Song Festival. Local Clubs were invited to attend and sing songs of their own composition. The judging by notable Newarkers, was usually of a high standard, unless these gentlemen had been "nobbled" by the amount of free beer they had been given. The evening concluded with displays of "posture and exuberant charm" by ladies hired for the occasion. At the A.G.M. in 1969 Brian Fisher resigned after six years as Secretary of the Club. A man of vision with tremendous energy and enthusiasm, he pointed the Club in the right direction to achieve the dream of making Newark the leading Club in the Three Counties. At the Annual Dinner, a silver salver was presented to him in appreciation and to show the respect all Club Members felt towards him.

3rd XV DAYS 1967-70 Bob Benbow writes:

"What better way to finish one's playing days than to have three years as 3rd team captain. I always felt that the success of this most important of teams lay in Sunday morning's team selection. We met at the Club House and over coffee, Nick Maltby, Peter Spawton, Bob Palethorpe (4th team Captain) and myself, picked the teams. I made it my business to know the availability of certain University and College boys, some ex 1st and 2nd team players looking for a run out after injury and of new players moving into the area - all essential information.

I quickly learned not to display my hand until the first two teams had been selected and then I produced my side. I took no notice of exclamations from the other - "I didn't know he was available", references to David Bell, Paul Cattermole, John Shackleton, Will Derry, the Brothwell brothers, Ken Hunter, Graham Bond, David Stacey, Mike Shea, Peter Mitchell, Adrian and Gale Allen, Barry Woodward, Tony Colton, Roy Scott, Bill Russell and so on. The list is endless; they've all played in the 3rd XV though some might not admit it.

We used to travel away with the 1st XV and I can see Nick Maltby's face now as he saw the galaxy of stars I had around me on some of the games. Selection is vital, a clear head, do your homework and keep your peace whilst the first two teams are being selected. And no going back, they will be available for the higher teams next week if I put them forward!

But in the main, the 3rd XV was built around a nucleus of regulars. Peter Graveney and the late Sandy Bennett were usually the props, Jess Vamplew sometimes, Doug Padgett, Tony Masding or later on Frank West were hookers. Tony Rose and Tom Spedding were often in the 2nd row but when he was available (that word again) Graham Cheeseborough was always worth his place. To be honest, Graham would have played 1st team rugby had he always been available. Tom Spedding was a great chap to have in the side; a fierce tackler and just the man to have to bring down the Pontefract forwards as they burst through the line bent on kicking the scrum half in possession. He was always high on my list as my minder. Jim Speir, Bob Clare, Paul Leates, Malcolm Davison (another iron man), Roger Parker, Jimmy Churcher, Rod Johnston, John Pearson, Greg Holyland and Peter Perley were others who figured prominently in the forwards of that day. One young man had his first ever game of rugby in the 3rd XV at that time - Dickie Marshall - and look what he went on to achieve for the Club.

Stand Offs - I've had a few! Gordon Croft, Mike Kimberley and Tom Grocock being the most often present. Gordon, bearing a striking likeness to Henry Cooper, used to bring out the cry from the opposition - "bring down that old bald headed guy". In fact he was one of the younger ones! Mike Kimberley was probably the only 3rd team player to make a ground inspection before deciding which of two pairs of boots to wear. He was a very good 3rd XV stand off; at Oakham one afternoon, we beat their 2nd XV 25 - 0 and Mike scored the lot - tries, penalties, conversions and a drop goal from the half way line. Tom Grocock was a great player to have in the side, very good hands and a trusty left foot. Who can forget the dipped shoulder and glance to the spectators, if any, when yet another kick went sailing through the posts? A man never short of advice for his fellow players, the opposition and very often for the referee, too.

The threequarters usually had Alan Wharton and Bruce Allen on the wings and players like Tim Healey, David Taylor, John Underwood, John Oldham, Graham Bond, John Noble, Barry Woodward, Roy Scott, John Maguire or Peter Mitchell in the centre. Trevor Layne was invariably full back, steadiness itself when of course, you could kick straight into touch. David Johnson, Alastair Orman, Martin Craven or Andy Cobb also played at full back - or anyone else who couldn't get into the thirds. Queuing up to play they were!

Well, they liked the brand of rugby we played. Rugby was undergoing a change at this time. Expressions like second phase, third phase, advantage lines, rucking etc. were creeping into the game. "You can't score from set scrums," they said! We quickly decided to ignore all this new talk - tries scored from set scrums will be allowed and loose scrums will continue as before. Quick heels will be the order of the day before all this holding it in the back row business.

As a scrum half I liked to see a lot of the ball; I certainly didn't turn out week after week to follow some back row forward with the ball at his feet waiting for the opposition to get off side. No! Quickly back and if there's nothing on, safely into touch. But in fact the ball was flung about and a lot of tries were scored by the wingers; e.g. Bruce Allen's 3 out of 8 tries scored in a 34 - 6 win at Chesterfield in '69. I've got a note that Geoff Bond owes his match tax of 4/- from the game at Lincoln the same year. Did I ever get that?

But all good things must come to an end, and they did for me. My last Season was 1969/70 when our record was:

Played 26, Won 21, Drew 2, Lost 3. Points for 525. Against 141.

I was lucky in having a number of very good players around me at a time when the Club was prospering both on and off the field. It was time to go!

John Shackleton was elected as Secretary and Ken Hunter became Captain of the Club. During the late 1960s Mike Edlin, Richard Pike, Ken Hunter, Paul Cattermole and Neil Ashmore had all represented the Three Counties and Ray O'Brien had played for Staffordshire. The decade ended with the Club once more winning the Nottinghamshire Cup and with nearly £10,000 in the bank the future looked rosy.

To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Club, a reception was held at the Headquarters. The Guest of Honour was Col. G.A. Wharton, N.L.D. Representative on the Rugby Union, who spoke glowingly of the Club's achievements. To mark the occasion he presented the Club with an inscribed tankard.

1970 - 1982

The A.G.M. in 1970 elected Jeff Coleman as President and John Shackleton was re-elected as Secretary of the Club. It was during this season that William Henry (Dusty) Hare joined the Club. It was soon realised that he was destined for greatness but it is perhaps ironic as he later held the world record for total points scored that, during his one season with Newark, he had to share the place kicking with David Stacey.

Richard Ewens writes:

"There is one prediction which did not come true! When Dusty appeared as a replacement in the Midlands XV against Fiji as a 17 year old - his first representative match - his team mates from the Magnus School from the previous season all went along to watch. Dusty came on the field to play at fly half and the first touch of the ball that he had was from the Midlands Scrum. The pass landed somewhere around his ankles and at the same time as Dusty picked up the ball he was hit - or rather steam-rolled by a rampant George Barley, the Fijian stand off. This was rather akin to being hit by a charging rhino. As Dusty picked himself up and shook his head to clear his brain, a voice came from one of the Magnus boys saying, "Blow me, that's the end of a promising career!"

Although the 1st XV contested the 1971 & 1972 Nottinghamshire Cup Finals being losers on both occasions there was a decline in the playing fortunes. A falling playing membership meant that that on many occasions the 4th team matches had to be cancelled or when they played suffered many heavy defeats.

Playing Record 1971 - 72

	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	41	19	5	17	410	358
2 nd XV	34	21	3	10	342	282
3 rd XV	29	19	0	10	312	314
4 th XV	21	2	1	18	72	533

A senior Club official of the day stated: "It is ironic that just as in the early 1950s the Clubs fortunes changed dramatically."

Although the loss of so many good players, either through retirement or through leaving the district, must have been the reason for the decline I think two other factors were involved.

Firstly, whilst the Club was doing so well in the late 1960s a lot of people wanted to be involved but as soon as the playing side suffered, they were nowhere to be seen. Secondly, the Club had no definite Youth Policy and the supply of really talented players, Dusty excepted, from the Magnus had virtually dried up."

Slowly the younger players matured and after several uneventful seasons the playing strength of the Club increased.

In keeping with modern trends the design of the shirts was changed and a white hoop was included. The Ladies Section was reformed and many interesting meetings were held. These well attended monthly meetings usually had a guest speaker and the Ladies organised fund-raising events, a welcome extra source of income.

Peter Spawton resigned as the Club Treasurer and John Beddoe was elected to this position.

With the provision of floodlights various tournaments were held, enabling the younger players to gain valuable experience and it was also instrumental in that several newcomers joined the Club as either playing or social members.

The Club continued to host all the home County Championship matches of the Three Counties until the end of the decade. To ensure that our facilities were suitable to stage these and other representative matches, the railings were placed close to the touchlines and a generous donation from John Player & Co. enabled the Club to erect a reasonable scoreboard.

It had been thought for a long time that use should be made of the playing areas during the summer months. Although the Club finances were always being sought to generate extra income it has always been the policy that if any member has a bright or feasible idea, he should promote it. Mel Farrar, during his travels, had visited a Carnival promoted by a Rugby Club. Our first Carnival, held in June 1971, was organised by Mel and Nick Maltby. This was held under the most atrocious weather conditions and was opened by Jimmy Young, of radio fame, and a profit of £400 was raised. In order not to clash with other local events, it was decided in future to hold the dance on Saturday night but the Carnival should be held on a Sunday. The next year Len Fairclough (Peter Adamson) of Coronation Street was the official opener, the sun shone and the members manning the sideshows were hard pressed to cope with the willing customers. Aggravation by certain elements of the public at the dances was always a problem so these were discontinued and it was also decided to have a major attraction instead of an official opener.

The Club were thus able to bring for the enjoyment of the people of Newark various high-class circus acts, stunt driving, the strongest man in the world and on one memorable occasion the Fly-Past of the Battle of Britain Plight graced our proceedings. The public was able to watch local organisations competing in events such as "It's a Knock-Out" and waited with baited breath for the announcement of the results of the various beauty contests that were held. At the end of 1980 it was decided, due to dwindling support, that the Carnival had run its course and it was discontinued.

At Pontypool, on the 17th March 1972, the fixture Wales Youth v. England Youth was played. Appearing and hooking for the visitors was Phil Loftus, the highest honour at that time achieved by a Newark Player. This game, for which no caps or shirts were awarded was played at the Under 18 age group and in recognition of this distinction, Phil was presented with an inscribed tankard at the Annual Dinner.

An influx of newcomers to the club, a vigorous recruitment campaign in the local schools saw in 1972 the appearance for the first time of a fifth team. This team, nick-named The Herons, was ably led by the Scotsman, Hamish Coutts. New players also appeared from an unexpected quarter. Maltby sent this sporting question to a London Newspaper:

Q. Has a rugby team ever had a fixture against a team composed entirely of brothers?

A. The Newark 4th XV played a game against the trainee Brothers from the Anglican Society of the Sacred Mission, Kelham.

Prior to this era the Brothers were unable to join and play for local sporting organisations. One can recall in the late 1940s, one Brother always turned up at the ground hoping that any team, Newark or the Visitors, was short of players. Stripping off his monastic garb he revealed Rugby kit underneath and when ready he would give vent to his celibate life by his vigorous approach to the game. His appearances suddenly stopped when once he returned to Kelham for evening prayers sporting a black eye. A suitable penance was awarded for his misdemeanour.

Several of the Brothers were players of a good standard, but the restrictions of having to report back to Kelham, reasonably sober, by early evening meant that they could not always be considered for the longer away fixtures. Chris Armstrong, writing in the newsletter of October 1974, penned the following:

"Gentlemen,

I feel I ought to write and thank you on behalf of myself and all the other rugby-playing Students who have lived at the Monastery, for your many kindnesses towards us, particularly in the sphere of Rugby Football. I realise that your problems of selection, transport etc. have been increased considerably in order to enable us to play for the Club. Your generosity has not passed unnoticed. I would like to say that your reward will be in Heaven, but that decision, thank goodness, is not ours to make!

The relationship between the Club and the College has not been an easy one to maintain. It would seem to me that it has been a very one-sided affair - all give on your part and all take on ours. Personally I would have preferred to partake more fully in the life of such an active Club, but the exigencies of the monastic life has precluded this. In fact, the two types of existence - rugby player and 'monk' - are almost mutually exclusive. After a 1st XV game, the thought of scrubbing corridors is painful; after a 2nd XV game, kneeling is hell, but after a 4th XV game one is rendered useless for several services!

Apart from the physical limitations, ones' spiritual life is thrown into confusion; instead of thinking "beautiful thoughts" meditations are centred round back-row movements or three-quarter tactics. However, having said all that, it's been a privilege to associate ourselves with such a splendid Rugby Club. Many thanks indeed.

May I finish off by offering a quotation from the Bible - a book from which one can justify most actions, good or bad, which would seem to incorporate all that is worthwhile at Newark R.U.F.C.

"And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." EXODUS.

Sadly the association was soon ended, the Religious Order moving to another part of the Country, the buildings they occupied are now the Headquarters of the Newark & Sherwood District Council.

In 1972 Brian Fisher was elected as President, a position which he held for three years, John Beddoe followed Rod Haslam as Secretary whilst Tom Grocock, John Harris and George Jeffcott were elected to Honorary Life Members, in recognition of their years of outstanding services to the Club. Brian was also the President of the Nottinghamshire Union and that Union, concerned that boys on leaving school were being lost to the game, inaugurated the Under 19 Cup, hoping that this competition would foster greater interest in the sport. When David Williams, a schoolmaster at the Magnus, suggested at the AGM in 1973 that boys between the ages of 9 and 13, should be coached, nobody present at that meeting could possibly have envisaged the impact that the introduction of mini-rugby would have.

The Social side was flourishing with monthly dances whilst angling, picnics and car treasure hunts helped to keep the members together during the summer months. A Colour TV was the prize one year, a car the next, in the many fund-raising activities that brought welcome income to the Club's finances.

Concerned with the decline in the playing ability of many of the local Clubs, Newark decided to seek fixtures with teams of comparable strength. The new motorway systems enabled the Club to travel greater distances within a reasonable time and soon Hertford, Norwich, Leamington, Earlsdon and a strong Yorkshire connection of Bingley, Castleford, Pontefract, Selby and Bradford Salem were appearing on the Club's Fixture List.

There was usually a small firework display for the children of members and friends each year and Richard Derry, having thought there was no local organised display, suggested and was granted permission to light up the skies each year on November 5th. These evenings are enjoyed now by thousands of children and adults. Richard eventually handed over his duties to David Taylor and the added attractions of a fairground and fast-food outlets help to ensure that the paying public has a safe and enjoyable evening.

An approach was made by the then Newark Agricultural Show Committee for us to consider whether or not it would be feasible for the Club to provide Staff to control and take admission money from the car-parks and gates. The appointed sub-committee initially said not, but on reconsideration suggested the format that is still largely adhered to. The financial reward to the Club being either a flat rate or a percentage of the takings, whichever is the larger.

Rod Johnstone, who was the organiser during the early years, has seen our involvement with the Agricultural Show grow in stature, with greater financial rewards, better facilities for our Staff and some of our duties now extending over four days.

The early days saw the Treasurer cycling round the show ground collecting the returns from each cash point; today other methods are used ensuring greater safety for all those concerned. Sometimes there have been problems; several car-park attendants had mild doses of sun-stroke one year and on another occasion a roll of admission tickets was found in the boot of a car after several members had spent endless hours and sleepless nights trying to reconcile the admission tickets and takings. Well over £80,000 has been received from the profits generated by the firework displays started in 1974 and from our duties

started in 1975 at the Agricultural Show. Without these sources of income, it would be difficult to maintain or improve our facilities. Newark Rugby Club has always had its helpers and support has come from some for twenty years or more.

Peter Fleetwood was appointed groundsman in 1974 and he served the Club faithfully for 14 years. Having played Rugby in his youth he knew what was required, both on and off the field and his engineering skills ensured that we did not often have to call in the services of maintenance engineers. The growth of our facilities and the increasing number of evening fixtures resulted in the appointment of George Richardson as assistant. Some 17 years later George is still busily engaged in the service of the Club. A truly remarkable achievement by these two gentlemen.

1975 was the time for change, John Barker being elected as the Club President and Dick Liversidge as 1st XV Captain. With an increasing playing and social membership it was found that our facilities were becoming inadequate. The Bar was moved to its present position, a beer store and a dining area added, whilst alterations to the kitchen, shower area and extra changing rooms ensured that we could entertain in greater comfort.

It was with great sadness we learned of the death, on 6th Jan. 1976, of Francis Noel Calvert Dwyer. 'Dickie' as he was affectionately known, was a Club member for over fifty years. As a master of the Magnus Grammar School he was responsible for the many boys who joined the Club and wore our colours.

Tom Ollerhead, a popular member of the visiting Kesteven Old Boys Club, collapsed and died playing at Newark. A trophy in his honour is competed for annually and has been won on several occasions by Newark.

Playing Record 1976 - 1977:

	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	32	15	3	14	414	426
2 nd XV	30	7	1	22	517	504
3 rd XV	25	15	0	12	389	333
4 th XV	23	14	0	9	332	139
5 th XV	19	13	0	6	409	189
6 th XV	9	5	0	4	181	177

Whilst the results may seem somewhat disappointing, it will be noted that for the first time a 6th Team appears on the Fixture List. This was due largely to several of the re-formed colts side becoming over age and making the transition to senior Rugby. During the seasons 1975-77 several Newark players played in representative matches. Dick Liversidge and Alan Swain played for Nottinghamshire R.F.U., Tim Barker, Kieron Peacock and Joe Blow represented the Nottinghamshire Under 23s, whilst 'old boys' Dusty Hare had gained his first International Cap and Andy Simpson was a member of the England Under 23 XV.

Richard Ewens writes:

"Playing memories abound - all of them good - even though I had to retire from playing owing to injuries before most people would have liked to, but the ability to have become part of the management of the Club has compensated in many ways for this.

There are too many memories to put down in many respects, but I can certainly remember in particular the last match we played against Castleford. They had dropped us from their Fixture List for the following Season as we were 'not up to their standard', which precluded the need for any team talk! I scored one of the two tries in the 16 - 12 win which gave everyone as much pleasure as I think I can remember and everyone who played in the match had a severe headache owing to the celebrations!

I also recall somewhat wistfully the occasion when Barry Thompson and I played for the 1st XV against Nottinghamians; he scored two tries and I scored three in that away match - and the next game we played for Newark the following week was in the 3rd XV (the only team playing away). It did not really matter though at that time because at least you were playing!

I suppose I was the first 6th XV Captain at Newark. This was in the match against Meden Vale, away at their ground - in mud getting on for a foot deep - at least it felt like it! They had a useful side but our 6th played out of their skins to lose by about 23 - 15,"

Peter Butler writes:

"In January 1971 I moved to Newark as Head of Holy Trinity School. At a Parents' Evening Alf McNamara casually remarked that his son-in-law, Bob Crowe, was Captain of Newark 3rd XV. The next Saturday I was playing and after that seldom missed a game. I became Captain of the 3rd XV and then the 2nd XV, which surprised me, somewhat as I was in my early thirties when I arrived at Newark. I did marvel at the 40+ year old Tom Grocock who needed to arrive early in order to ensure all his bandages which held him together were intact. I was in excellent company of second row forwards namely Ken Hunter, John Charlesworth, Nick Maltby, Tony Rose and John Harrison (ex. England triallist) and the Club Captain who made me so welcome was Richard Pike. We both often recall a night out in Bradford after the delights of a game against Bradford Salem.

The achievements of the Newark 1st XV are well documented in the seventies, but my fun and enjoyment was mainly in the seconds and thirds. My wife, Sheila, and our two daughters were regular members of the catering team, also attending meetings of the Ladies' Section, then organised by my colleague Jean Smith. Being a member of such a welcoming and social Club helped my family and I quickly settle at Newark.

I remember, as 3rd XV Captain, being asked to assess a young scrum-half from Retford, Richard Liversidge, who was keen to join the Club. Later as 2nd XV Captain, I was able to watch Tim Barker playing scrum-half, following in his father's footsteps. Talking of scrum-halves, a main stalwart was John Coles, who used to turn up with his kit in a blue fertiliser sack. Unfortunately his main claim to fame, that of the bouncing-bomb pass, had already been patented by Barnes Wallace! Training and pre-match warm-ups used to consist of discussion with the forwards, Peter Graveney, Ron Madden, Frank Harris etc; either Plan A - to win in the shortest possible time or Plan B, if wet, which was to bunch and take and not let the backs see the ball, which was a pity for we had some talented youngsters. Kim Jones, Barry Thompson, Chris Waddington, Peter Mason and David Taylor to name but a few.

One of the tours that will always live in my memory was the 1977 visit to Guernsey - the object was to play Rugby and we failed. Kim Jones was able to organise a magnificent fines 'sock' and some of the penalties were a revelation. On one occasion when Doyle-Davison was demonstrating golf swings he was fined for "practising golf swings in working-class company!" So fitness and the urge to play Rugby diminished as the contents of the 'sock' were spent. Jim Bradley organised 'boat' trips and our hooker and Treasurer, Ian Robson, had a quiet night drinking the night away with an aniseed fruit juice, which unfortunately turned out to be Pernod.

Another tour undertaken was when we had a weekend jaunt to Wigan to play at Graham Macfarlane's old Club, Orrell. The 'makeshift' Newark team was well and truly thrashed on a pitch that was at least 3 feet deep in mud but 'perfectly playable' and I am sure our three-quarters went off at half time and nobody noticed. Our tour manager, Jeff Coleman used his diplomatic skills and we were wined and dined on the Saturday afternoon after having viewed the delights of Wigan Pier and listened to the crying and wiping away the tears of 'Spanky' as he discovered his favourite spit and sawdust pub had been somewhat modernised, with wall to wall carpeting. Not even the 3lb of black pudding we bought him (after watching it being made) could console him.

I finished playing at the tender age of forty years and felt that the Pontefract referees were trying to tell me something - but early baths at that Club were somewhat unique. After my retirement from playing I was Chairman of the playing committee for several years. Selection used to be on a Sunday morning, when bruised and battered captains tried to select their teams with the games fresh in their minds. Later in the day whilst listening to Top of the Pops, players could set their clocks as the Match Secretary, Bob Crowe, telephoned to report the results of the Captains' deliberations. Selection Meetings were later switched to Monday evenings with more and more emphasis placed, rightly so, on the training programmes, as many games had and were still being lost through a total lack of fitness."

Barry Staniforth was elected as President in 1979, Dickie Liversidge as Club Captain and Roger Swain as Treasurer. Richard Ewens became Club Secretary, a position he held for the next four years. It was during this Season that the 60th Anniversary was celebrated. A Buffet Dance was held in the Clubhouse, which was honoured by the presence of Rodney Payne, then the President of the Notts. Lincs. & Derbys. R.F.U.

Concerned with the general level of fitness, particularly in the forwards, the Club invested in a simple scrummaging machine. Clem Lee, Don Maltby and Terry Dillon, the coaches during this period, worked hard and applied very vigorous training schedules and gradually they were rewarded by greater dedication and improved playing performances.

The Annual Dinners were well supported and we were fortunate to obtain the services as Guest Speakers of such notables as Tony Neary, ex. British Lion and England, former Newark players Bill Hodges and Graham Pulfrey, whilst the ex. Captain of Wales, Norman Gale, graced our table in 1980.

Describing this dinner, "A FLY ON THE WALL" wrote in the Newsletter that year:

"On the night of Friday, 16th May, approximately 100 well-dressed humans came into the big room and sat down to take part in some strange ritual. Some took off their jackets and others started throwing things at each other. A lot of money started to change hands and some lady humans in black dresses served food. The male humans began to devour this very quickly. The food must have been very hot because they kept drinking lots of different coloured liquids. All, that is, except the Manager who must have been cold because he kept rubbing his hands together.

Then a man banged on the table with a hammer and a man with a strange accent stood up and kept telling everyone that friendship meant more than honours in the game of Rugby (as a Welshman who's he trying to kid!). They didn't collect any money from this man as he paid for his meal with a piece of wood with 3 feathers painted on it. Everyone seemed overjoyed by this, so much so that they forgot his gift when he left.

Another bang on the table, followed by a little blond haired man who stood up, I think, and just managed to congratulate everybody on doing so well, but hoped they would do better next year. I think he had a liking for the red liquid.

Then a man started telling stories; these went down well with these humans. The ritual finished with a song about a man called Hare who had been kicking a ball at a place called Twickenham. Everybody found this song amusing, except the man with the strange accent.

When the humans had satisfied their need to drink, they all went away, taking plant pots but leaving some nice silver ones in their place. My friends and I had our own celebration with the leftovers and looked forward to witnessing this ritual again."

The Annual Sevens Tournament for the Bush Cup was attracting teams from many English Counties and it is noted that Stockton-on-Tees, Nottingham, Marist O.Bs. (Hull), Westleigh and Doncaster were among the Clubs that mounted the Winners' Rostrum.

To create interest in the game John Player & Sons donated pennants, to be contested by all the Clubs in Nottinghamshire, each Club to be played each season. The winner to be the Club which headed the Merit Table. Pennants were also contested for by the 2nd XV's of Clubs and in 1980/81, in David Taylor's first season as this team's Captain, by winning every match, Newark were awarded the Trophy. Players who appeared in this successful team included David Taylor, Ted Hine, Chris Lennon, David Mosedale, Russell Smith, Kevin Vaughan, Graham Hopkinson, Ron Williams, Trevor Lockwood, David Townsend, John Allen, Tony Rose, Lol Jordon, Duncan Thorpe, David Saxelby, Tom Pykett and David Mitchell. Several of the above became outstanding players and administrators in the Seasons ahead.

Guernsey beckoned once more in 1981.

Peter Butler writes:

"By some strange coincidence we were invited back and this time we went for the entertainment and passed! Several Vice-Presidents accompanied the President, Barry Staniforth, and the younger members David Townsend, Richard Todd. Kieron Peacock and Tom Pykett led them a merry dance. Playing soon after the flight and probably suffering from 'jet-lag', the Newark team lost the first match, but after winning the remainder were awarded the Guernsey Plate.

The Landlord of the Hotel where we were staying, who was under the impression he was hosting a party of pensioners, can only be described as odd! Who else would have an easily dismantled fall-out shelter in his garden? Sad to say he evicted us from the Hotel on the morning we were leaving, but he did allow us to have our breakfast first!"

Season 1981/82 was the time for change, Geoff Mollart becoming President and Alan Swain elected Club Captain. The playing fortunes continued to improve as the record for the Season 1981/82 shows:

	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	34	29	1	4	550	194
2 nd XV	38	33	1	4	642	181
3 rd XV	27	17	3	7	473	262
4 th XV	28	16	2	10	509	276
5 th XV	23	12	1	10	343	317
6 th XV	4	2	0	2	50	63

Allan Swain writes:

"Please find below some assorted reminiscences of my years at Newark, which are not in chronological order, but really just a string of the more memorable moments of many years.

My proudest moment was receiving the Nottinghamshire Cup on 21st March 1982 when we beat Mansfield 12 - 6. We were not favourites for the game, but I was always confident that we would win. We had five players in the side that day who had played rugby for England. Four at Schoolboy level (John Wells, Glyn Britten, Kevin Priestley and Wayne Andrews) and one at Under 18s, Phil Loftus). This is probably a record for a Junior Club.

The 1981/82 season was probably one of the most successful the Club has ever enjoyed with 29 wins out of 34 for the 1st XV. That winter there were floods then snow and we did not play from the 12th December until the 20th January, 8 games being lost in all. We would probably have recorded the greatest number of wins ever, in a Season, if the weather had been kinder.

Our wedding reception in August 1979 was held at the Rugby Club, with Bob's Disco providing the music. The Club members joined together to buy us a present and Barry Staniforth, as Club President, presented Carole and I with a tumble drier. Our official photographer, Larry Dukes, seemed enthralled and took dozens of shots of the tumble drier yet none of either Barry or ourselves!

Just as the Cup Final of 1982 was memorable, so also was the Cup Final defeat against Mellish in 1972, my first Season with the Club. A try in the last minute, incorrectly awarded, sealed our fate in a very close game. Richard Pike was a disappointed Captain of a very disappointed team.

Talking of Richard Pike, the following year Richard broke his leg in a horrendous accident in an early season match. I well remember the 30 or so people visiting the hospital after the disco at Norwich Rugby Club, to collect him to bring him home. I am sure the nurses also remember it well!

Norwich was a favourite venue for our people getting lost. I recall one match when we started with only 12 men - Tony Rose, Will Derry and Richard Ewens were missing for the first twenty minutes. At this stage we were winning 3 - 0, but on their arrival we disintegrated to lose by some twenty points. Their presence was obviously appreciated. Their excuse for being late was that they got lost after visiting a TV store to see the result of a race in which a horse Tony owned was running. Tony's horse won - it is a pity that Newark didn't!

During the seasons 1977-80 Duncan Thorpe and Larry Dukes boasted of going to the ground every Saturday during these playing seasons. In the winter of 1979 the ground was cut off by floods - or so I thought. At 2pm. Dukes and Thorpe arrived at our house to borrow my dinghy, launching it at the end of Kelham Road they then paddled it to the Ground. What dedication!

The second tour to Guernsey was unforgettable, when it took all of the charms of the senior members to persuade the authorities to let us fly home on our scheduled flights. I am sure that our trips to Guernsey and our visit to Carmarthen will be remembered by many people for many reasons.

Saturday nights after the home matches always seemed to consist of Fisher, Jeffcott, Staniforth, Coleman and Mollart and a collection of other senior statesmen pontificating on a variety of subjects.

One of my favourite individuals was Tom Coates who died tragically and prematurely in 1982. He formed the 'Newark from Lincoln' connection that served the Club so well. Players such as Tim Naylor and the Townsends joining Newark was all down to Tom's charisma and leadership. I can still see him in the bath, with a cigarette in his mouth, talking to Gale Allen or standing wobbling on a table recounting the Alphabet Song. A trophy, donated by members is still competed for annually between Newark and North Kesteven Old Boys' Clubs.

Bonfire nights were always a success. I remember one particular muddy evening when a mother with a small child insisted that he remove his Wellington Boots because the sign on the Clubhouse door said, "No boots in the Clubhouse."

John Perkins and myself were intimately involved with the Agricultural Show for a number of years and there are countless memories of these. The blistering heat of 1976, causing eye irritations because of the dust. Geoff Mollart and his "chuck-wagon" became synonymous with this event.

One member enjoyed admiring the attributes of the fairer sex. This he was able to do at a certain Yorkshire Club when told by the Referee to have an early bath. He inadvertently joined the ladies of the Hockey Club in the showers.

Last, but not least I remember, or partially remember, the Club Dinners over the years and will draw a veil over the many escapades."

Concerned with the standard of rugby in England, various committees under the jurisdiction of the Rugby Union had met to consider how to raise the playing standards of the game. The Newark Club supported the idea of leagues both at national and local level, but this and other suggestions were vetoed by some of the larger counties. So any proposed restructuring was not considered for several years.

As previously described the season 1981/82 was highly successful. The 2nd XV won their first 18 matches, surely a Club record for teams at this level, and completed the season by annexing the Tom Ollerhead Trophy.

Disposing of Notts. Police, Moderns and Notts. Casuals in earlier rounds, the players and supporters eagerly awaited the final of the Nottinghamshire Cup. Writing his pre-match analysis in the Nottingham Evening Post, Mike Matthews stated:

"The form-book final" that's the first reaction to Sunday's game. Only blinkered die-hards would deny that on current form, the best two clubs in the County are fighting out the final. My assessment is Newark, but it will be so close. They are an all-round side. They train well and their results are the best they have achieved for a decade. They have missed out on major honours for 12 years and that's a long time for a Club of their standing."

NEWARK 12 MANSFIELD 6

"Newark had a dream start with a simple penalty kick from Alan King within the first minute. The game settled down to an evenly matched forward battle with both teams' backs given little opportunity to show their paces. The game, which was played on a mud-bath, was settled when three more successful penalties from Alan King completed their scoring. Determined tackling denied Mansfield the few chances they had of breaching the solid defence; their only reward was by successfully kicking 2 penalties.

Skipper Alan Swain recognised the importance of having a reliable place-kicker and he was anxious to emphasise that the win was founded on a superb overall team performance.

"I was confident beforehand that we would win as we had trained hard for the game. Where the game was lost and won was the fact that we scrummaged better than Mansfield thought we would. We also showed a better performance in the line-outs than I anticipated. Sadly the conditions did not allow us to exploit the handling movement of our free-running backs."

Mike Matthews describing the after-match celebrations wrote:

"The suspense during the Notts. Cup Final was nothing compared with the epic battle fought out in the Committee Box immediately after the game.

Burly men were almost reduced to tears as they grappled with a reluctant champagne cork!

Eventually the battle was won and the bubbly, thoughtfully produced by the Mansfield Captain - did he wrongly anticipate a win? - went into the trophy.

Newark Skipper, Alan Swain, was delighted whilst the crowd, released from their suspense went off to celebrate as well.

No wonder the Notts. President, George Jeffcott, was happy with the match, he is a Newark member!"

The Newark XV was Tim Barker, Wayne Andrews, Glyn Britten, Tim Naylor, "Q" Gilder, Alan King, Nick Scott, Trevor Lockwood, David Townsend, David Pick, Kevin Priestley, Alan Swain, John Wells (rep. Lol Jordon), Phil Loftus and Tony Magri.

Newark has always enjoyed a happy association with local Referees and their Society, hosting seminars and providing players to act as guinea-pigs when alterations to or interpretations of the laws of the game were explained. Let the final words in this eventful period be left to one of those Referees, Don Jones. Refereeing At Newark.

"I had the pleasure, privilege and honour of refereeing a fair number of times at Newark during my career. Names spring to mind quickly, when I think back to the many happy hours spent on the field and in the bar afterwards. Who can forget (no matter how hard you try) the front row of Easton, Haslam and Rogers, the second row Hunter and Maltby, the running of Coles that confused team mates and opposition alike, the Peter Pan existence of Tom Grocock. Snapping at the heels of the pack there was always a great scrum half - who would like to say which was the better player - Edlin or Liversidge?

When the final whistle had gone the pleasures did not end - Oh No! - who would be waiting in the bar but those great rugby pontificators, Fisher and Jeffcott? Those two gentlemen could describe incidents in minute detail, which they claimed happened in the match - but which most of the players and I could not recollect!

It was, and still is, a pleasure to visit Newark R.U.F.C. Even though you have moved from the Royal Oak to the more palatial setting of Kelham Road the friendliness still comes through. So on behalf of the Referees, I thank you for your many kindnesses and wish you well in the future."

1982 - 1994

At the AGM in 1982 Geoff Mollart was re-elected as President and Richard Ewens and Roger Swain continued as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. A new 1st XV Captain, Phil Loftus was appointed.

In August of that year the first Newark Half Marathon was held. The Marathon, the brain child of Barry Thompson, was evolved after a request from the Mayor of Newark, Mrs. Maureen Dobson, that the Rugby Club should promote an event; the proceeds going to both Local and National Charities. The Club still continues to be involved, providing a large number of Stewards and manning the drinks stations, providing nurture to the many thousands who pound the streets of Newark and surrounding districts.

The teams, particularly the senior sides, who had been strengthened by an influx of RAF Personnel, continued to play attractive and successful games of Rugby culminating in the win over Nottingham University by 12 points to 7, to retain the Nottinghamshire County Cup. The present format of the Three Counties Cup did not apply in those days; the winners of the three domestic Unions competed for the prize of a place in the John Player (later Pilkington) Cup. The semi-final of the Three Counties Cup saw Newark drawn away to Matlock. Newark managed to win by 9 points to 6, all the scoring, three penalty goals, from the boot of Alan King. The game was described as a match with little adventurous play, with both place-kickers being very much off form. As a rest before the final many members went on an Easter Tour to Kent and whilst losing all three matches, distinguished themselves with their off-field activities!

The final, which was played at Lincoln on a wet afternoon, was like the semi-final at Matlock. There was little running rugby with the conditions dictating play, the fly-halves rarely moving the ball by hand. Unlike the Matlock match though, Newark thoroughly deserved their victory by 9 points to 7. The penalty goals, two by Alan King and a long distance one by Glyn Britten which hit the cross-bar, falling on the right side. That kick proved to be the winning score. An injury to David Townsend resulted in Phil Loftus moving to hooker, the replacement player being Kevin Saxelby. Kevin, the Nottinghamshire cricketer, had only recently returned from a coaching trip in South Africa and he certainly felt the cold weather like the many supporters who had travelled to watch the Newark team. An entry into the first round of the John Player Cup had then been obtained, the first Junior Club from Nottinghamshire to gain this distinction.

The Newark XV: Mike Bossart, Russell Smith, Glyn Britten, Neil Loftus, Alan King, Nick Scott, Paul Dudley, Jim Peters, Dave Townsend (rep. Kevin Saxelby), David Lord, Kevin Priestley, John Charlesworth, Stan Hutchinson, Phil Loftus, David Saxelby.

Playing Record 1982-83:

	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	38	30	6	2	654	251
2 nd XV	38	16	20	2	410	431
3 rd XV	34	16	17	1	443	381
4 th XV	29	18	10	1	497	181
5 th XV	21	7	14	0	244	279

The 30 wins was the highest number recorded by a Newark 1st XV and considering that after this final, four of the last five games were lost and over 50 players had worn the 1st XV shirts during the season, this had been a tremendous effort.

The AGM in 1983 elected Ken Hunter as President and Charles Hine took over the secretarial duties. Geoff Mollart, the retiring President, who had had two successful seasons during his tenure of Office, now devoted his energies to the maintenance and upkeep of the playing pitches during the summer months. It is largely due to his efforts then and now that the playing surfaces, come September, are always in first class condition.

Before the playing season commenced the Club hosted a Floodlight 6-a-side Cricket tournament on behalf of the Nottinghamshire Cricketer, Derek Randall. This was well attended by all the enthusiasts of the summer game and a substantial sum of money was added to Derek's benefit appeal.

Members were very sad to hear of the death of D.C. (Joe) Howard. Joe was a most popular Vice President who had played for and served the Club so well. He was Secretary in the late fifties and continued to serve on finance and administrative committees until the eighties.

A large crowd gathered in the Clubhouse on Sunday, August 18th to honour Dusty Hare and to congratulate him on being selected for the recent British Lions Tour to New Zealand. Dusty presented his Lions Shirt and a rugby ball autographed by all the players who had travelled to New Zealand. This was well received by the members present and was followed by a celebratory barbecue.

All thoughts were now on Saturday, September 24th, the date of the 1st round of the John Player Cup, Newark having been drawn at home to Dudley Kingswinford, a club on the edge of the Black Country. The Newark 'spies' Ken Hunter, George Fergusson and David Taylor travelled to watch our opponents, to report back on their strengths and weaknesses. Unfortunately, our "master spies" did not immediately realise that Dudley had had to change their strip because of a colour clash and so they spent the first half watching and making copious notes on the wrong team! Only Phil Loftus, who had played for Bournemouth against Bristol, had any experience of Cup Rugby, so an extensive programme of training was initiated and videos taken of recent 1st XV games were watched.

On the day a large crowd assembled, extra beer had been ordered and senior officials of both Clubs were entertained to a pre-match lunch. Newark's splendid win was based, not for the first time, round the remarkable kicking talents of Alan King and the marauding, non-stop spoiling work of the Newark pack, in which flanker, Stan Hutchinson was outstanding with his covering and tackling.

Alan King scored Newark's first try and slotted over three penalties, two conversions and a dropped goal. Further tries came from winger, Ted Hine and Captain, Phil Loftus. Dudley Kingswinford replied with two penalties.

The previous season Newark had found difficulty in scoring tries, especially in local cup matches. So it was something of a relief to the local side that they scored three, silencing the critics who said that they only won matches because of the magical boot of Alan King.

It was a magical performance by the whole team, from solidarity of the pack, to the firm tackling of all of Newark back division. Sadly, shortly before 'no-side' called, Alan King suffered concussion and had to leave field to be replaced by Keith Fowler.

Final Score: Newark 28 Dudley Kingswinford 6

Newark XV: Tim Barker, Neil Loftus, Glyn Britten, Matt Spencer, Edward Hine, Alan King (rep. Keith Fowler), Nick Scott, George Crawford, Dave Townsend, Jim Peters, John Charlesworth, Kevin Priestley, Phil Loftus, Stan Hutchinson, David Saxelby.

The celebrations carried on late into the night, but missing was Alan King, who had to spend the weekend in the Lincoln County Hospital with concussion. The euphoria was quickly dampened when it was learned that our next opponents were to be Nottingham at Beeston on Saturday, 3rd December.

The euphoria of that day was recalled in the October Newsletter when President, Ken Hunter wrote:

THANKS!

September 24th now seems a long time ago, but this is the first Newsletter since and I feel I should use my space to express my sincere thanks to everyone who made the day such a success. I have seen many memorable games of Rugby at Newark and elsewhere, but this match I shall remember forever. For sheer guts, drive and commitment, it has to rate as one of the best performances I have ever seen. The tries were outstanding and it was fitting that Phil Loftus should score the third. The whole team raised their game thanks to Phil's leadership and, I am sure, were prepared to die for him!

My thanks go to all those members, their wives and their families and friends who helped in the organisation. Dudley Kingswinford have since written a very kind letter of congratulation, thanking us for our hospitality and wishing us further success. The Referee, George Seddon, was full of praise for the Club, its facilities and its organisation. I felt very proud of the Club and of the tremendous efforts made by so many people.

NOW LET'S DO IT AGAIN!

Ken Hunter.

Somehow the John Player Cup failed to throw up the shocks that its Football Association Cup counterpart has given us over the years, and December 3rd was no exception. The Nottingham side with international, Neil Mantell and future internationals in Simon Hodgkinson, Brian Moore and Gary Rees, completely overwhelmed Newark, winning by 34 - 3. The Newark side, with the exception of Bob Walker for Ted Hine, was the same as before, their only score being an Alan King penalty. Full-back, Tim Barker, could not emulate his father, John, by playing in a winning side against Nottingham.

During the Season David Saxelby and Alan (Stan) Hutchinson played for the Three Counties Under 23s and County Honours went to Phil Loftus, Stan Hutchinson, Dave Townsend, Jim Peters, Richard Cox, Tim Barker and Alan King. Giles Thomas, Jim Townsend and Stewart Codd played for the Three Counties Colts XV.

Congratulations were sent to former player, John Wells, who had been appointed Captain of the English Universities for their match against Scottish Universities. John was unfortunate to be injured on the eve of his Under 23 Cap against Spain during this Season. Dusty Hare became the most capped English full-back of all time and toured South Africa.

Although the floodlights had recently been renovated, it was thought that it was time for major extensions to the Clubhouse. With five or six sides turning out most weeks in the Newark colours, the facilities at times were often inadequate. Pulling the Clubhouse down and replacing it with a brick building was suggested, but turned down owing to the cost. A steering committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Brian Fisher and their deliberations were submitted to the General Committee.

"Raise the Roof." Ken Hunter writes:

Back in the seventies it was the rule, after the Friday night Committee Meetings, to sit round the corner of the bar and "put the world to rights". Among all the dreadful rubbish that was sometimes talked, there was an occasional grain of sense. I can remember George Jeffcott wondering about the possibility of dismantling Fisher's Folly piece by piece and replacing it with a more permanent structure.

Some ten years later I inherited the Presidency from Geoff Mollart at a time when the finances of the Club were in a healthy position. The Newark Agricultural Show was providing a steady income and the debts incurred to pay for the four extensions to the Club over the years were all but paid off. It seemed as good a time as any to remind the Committee of George's old idea. Brian Fisher chaired a feasibility committee, which came up with the suggestion that we retain the Clubhouse more or less as it was, but extend it and put a new roof over the whole building. Roger Swain, the Treasurer, was happy to investigate the finance required and so further studies were made. The advice of players and non-players was sought and we gradually pieced together our requirements; keep the Clubroom intact, build on a new dining room and kitchen (a must for our lady helpers), more changing rooms, a weight training room, restructured terracing and a unified appearance. Oh and there must be no loss of facilities while any work was carried out!

It was this last requirement that caused the most head-scratching. We had a design, but we could not see how to carry out the necessary improvements without demolishing half of what was there and without the consequent loss of matches, social functions and thereby revenue. David Pick, a vital member of the sub-committee, knew a firm who erected steel buildings. I knew a man, John Hayes, who had some dealings with steel roofs. They involved Geoff Mollart and, late one night I had a visitation from these three to discuss "a good idea." They had held a meeting with Denis Carr (the local steel erector) and thought they had solved the problem. Put a steel roof over the Club, build up new external breeze-block walls and fasten the old and new together. It would cost a lot of money, of course, perhaps £30,000 or so for the roof alone, and heavens knew what for the rest!

Roger Swain was not in the least dismayed and so an Extraordinary General Meeting was held to sell the idea to the membership. The members were in the main enthusiastic although there were some dissenting voices. It was decided to proceed and as in the days of Fisher's Folly, the doubters were among the hardest workers once the project got under way.

We knew that we were going to be short of money, full estimates came to around £70,000 and John Coles, Chairman of Finance, held a meeting to discuss ways of raising some extra revenue. It was at this meeting that Barry Thompson came up with the original name, "Raise the Roof." This was to be a challenge to all members to raise money by whatever means they could to enable the building to be finished.

This scheme was launched at the 65th Anniversary Celebration and Old Players' Re-union in December 1984 and was an astonishing success raising almost £12,000. Everyone took up the challenge and members and friends from the ages of two or three upwards took part. The fund-raising efforts, which people organised, were original and unbelievably successful, one day Barry should write a book.

"Raise the Roof" also became the call for physical involvement on the building and the efforts of the members were magnificent. Fortunately there were cameras around and the activities are now recorded forever in the dining room. I find it hard to believe that it all happened in such a short time. One of the proudest moments of my life was when I was presented with the plaque, Hunters' Hobby, (plural to record my wife, Jacki's great involvement) which is now fixed on the wall of the new dining room.

Who were Pick and the Plebs? Dave was the Pick, of course, he drew the plans, estimated the quantities (not always accurately), designed all manner of things and was a tower of strength.

Who were the Plebs? Every member of the Club who dug a hole, laid a brick, knocked down a wall or whatever. Led by the likes of Phil Loftus, John Hayes, Geoff Mollart and Peter Fleetwood there were scores of them. Thanks fellows! Great days.

The Players' Re-union held on December 10th 1984 was a great success, over 120 attending. Some of the veterans of the 1940s had not met for nearly forty years and it was the time for reminiscing, raking up old memories of matches played and outstanding performances greatly enhanced by the passage of time.

At a champagne reception in the evening Bill Hodges, a former Newark player, proposed a toast to the future success of both the Club and to the launching of the "Raise the Roof" campaign. He congratulated the 1st Team on winning the afternoon's match against Thorne.

It is impossible to recall all the money-making events of the campaign. The ladies made and sold jams and marmalade, there were coffee evenings, an Olde Tyme Music Hall, a Safari supper, a sale of bric-a-brac, a children's sponsored bike ride, lunches were held at various houses and a Ball was held in a marquee on the grounds. A cheque was received from Dusty Hare from the royalties from his biography. One of the funniest events was the competition to find the fastest dog owned by a Club member. The dogs had to run in lanes out on number 1 pitch and it proved that, whilst the owner might be the fastest on the pitch,

the dogs in many cases were not! The Minis and their parents also contributed by organising many events.

As Ken Hunter has said, Barry Thompson should have written a book recalling all these events and I do apologise to anybody whose event I have not mentioned, but memory, especially mine, plays funny tricks. Whilst members were busy fund-raising, the Brewery agreed a loan and a donation from the Sports Council, in appreciation of what was being done for the youth of the area, enabled the building to be completed earlier than we had anticipated.

The Topping-Out ceremony was completed when on Sunday, October 13th 1985, the President, Ken Hunter and Geoffrey Addison, the Three Counties Representative on the Rugby Union, were hoisted by crane to affix the Club's emblem to the front of the Clubhouse.

Never can a President have had so much to contend with. Although most of the work had been completed in the summer months, there was still plenty to be finished and this often meant that Ken and his team had to rush home mid-day Saturday and then race back to the ground in order to play or to receive the afternoon's visitors.

The Season 1984/85 we had a new Captain in Tim Barker, the first father and son to have held this honour. It was a mixed season in many ways. The training was excellent on occasions, poor on others. Many matches were lost by a single point, much to the despair of Coach, Terry Dillon, and losing the semi-final of the Notts Cup to Notts Moderns by 8 points to 6 dashed any hopes of a place in the John Player Cup. Playing results were disappointing and Tim Barker, in his speech at the Annual Dinner, said that the poor results on the field were mainly due to a lack of commitment. Shortage of players meant that we were often unable to field a fifth team.

Particular congratulations were given to David Townsend who represented Notts. Lincs. & Derbys. During the Season David Saxelby played for the Three Counties Under 23s and Stan Hutchinson played for the full County side. Dave Batterham. Cliff Dickens and Geoff Gawte played for Notts. Under 23s.

The Easter Tour saw a party venturing to pastures new when they visited Holland, winning 2 out of the 3 matches played. In April, members of the Club travelled to Twickenham to support Notts. Lincs. & Derbys. against Middlesex in the County Championship Final. It was a sad day for Brian Fisher, then President of the Three Counties, when he saw his team lose. Hooker, David Townsend, who had played in the semi-final, had to be content with a place on the substitute bench.

The AGM in 1985 honoured Brian Fisher electing him as a Life Member of the Club, Richard Ewens returned as Secretary and Rob Hughes commenced his seven years as Treasurer. Phil Loftus returned as Club Captain and Charlie Fehrs commenced his stint as Club Coach. Charlie issued the following statement, words, which applied then, still apply today.

"When I think of Rugby now, I feel that in the bowels of the game it has not changed all that much. The Trainer has become Coach. 2nd row - locks, lock - No. 8, wing forwards - flankers, but at the end of the day spectators and players alike continue to get much enjoyment and satisfaction from something which is very simple - putting a ball over a line or kicking it over a bar. Players still go out onto the field to do their best at whichever level they play. There are few players who go out to play badly, deliberately. In fact I find that most players have realistic notions of their playing abilities and know when they have done themselves justice or not contributed to the team cause. To my mind it is perhaps my most important task as Coach to the Club, to help ensure that the game at Newark remains rooted with players seeking to gain enjoyment and satisfaction from making the most of their abilities for the good of the team.

Most Rugby players quickly learn two things. (1) that other people depend on your performance and (2) that you must rely on fourteen other people, you cannot do it by yourself. When these lessons are learned there is not another game which can provide the intense feeling of belonging which is generated by fifteen men pulling together to achieve something. Some players will have more natural ability than others, some will be fitter, some stronger, some younger, some will be improving, some deteriorating, some will play first team, some fifths. All will be important because, without players, we do not have a game."

Captain, Phil Loftus, had to resign through injury and his place was taken by Nick Scott, but not before one Saturday, early September when Phil, Paul, Neil and Adrian all wore the Newark colours, the first time that four brothers had taken the field in their own games.

In September 1985 the selection committee received following letter:

"Dear Sirs,

Further to our recent conversation I have decided that prudence shall have to overcome sentiment and that, consequently, I have committed my last line-out offence. What with the abolition of double-banking, 'blind-side back rows' becoming flankers and no direct touch kicking out of the 25 (or should it be 22?) I am totally lost. Added to this the breathalyser and valuables bags half full of earrings and you must admit that things have changed.

Strangely enough, just as I have happy memories of keenly contested games against Paviours, Market Rasen and Thorne, I also look back with fond memories on trips to Rustons, Woodbeck and North Kesteven.

However, it would appear that I have seen-off all of my old cronies and, like them, should call it a day.

Please pass on my regards to your Committee, thank them for past favours and assure them that I have no intention of taking up either refereeing or coaching.

Very best wished for the Season.

Nick Maltby (1963-1984) (Positively)

Nick had been a great Captain and a great motivator of both players and of the various committees of which he was a member. His innovative ideas resulted in fund-raising revenue for the Club.

The Club was shocked to learn of the tragic death of George Crawford, a Newark prop who played in the John Player Cup win over Dudley Kingswinford. George, who was one of our RAF members, was in Germany travelling in the bus that was involved in a horrific crash. Each year since, a match has been played between Newark and RAF Support Command, the proceeds from which are donated to Groby Road Hospital, Leicester, where George's baby son had been treated.

In retrospect, whilst the Club were disappointed in losing in the earlier rounds of the Notts. Cup and not winning in the Pennant, many Clubs would envy the Newark 1985/86 Playing Record:

	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	32	24	0	8	574	294
2 nd XV	37	20	1	16	535	399
3 rd XV	28	20	0	8	560	234
4 th XV	27	17	0	10	519	302

Concluding his report at the AGM June 1986, Richard Ewens paid tribute to the retiring President, Ken Hunter, saying:

"Quite simply, he has been outstanding. His devotion to the Club and his commitment to the on-field and off-field matters has been without equal and it is without doubt that the Club would not be in the position it is today without Ken's presidential involvement for the last three years."

Season 1986/87 dawned with a new President in Peter Butler with Nick Scott continuing as Club Captain. Andy Cousins was 2nd Team Captain, Dickie Marshall 3rd Team and Mike Self 4th Team.

This was to be the last Season in which only John Player Pennant and Cup matches and friendly matches were played. League Rugby loomed on the horizon.

PLAYING COMMITTEE REPORT

Gentlemen, the 6th September rapidly approaches and the build-up to the Season has already started. The RFU has at last agreed to the formation of leagues, a move with which we at Newark wholeheartedly agree. It is our intention to gain a position in the highest possible league when they are introduced at the beginning of the 1987/88 Season. This depends on our playing records over the last three seasons plus the results from this coming season. We have a squad with the ability to lift the Three Counties Cup and gain entry to the John Player Cup - so lets "Go for it."

The highlight of the first part of the Season was on October 26th when Dusty Hare brought a strong team composed mainly of Leicester players, and including four Internationals to oppose Newark and officially to open the new facilities. The large crowd gathered saw an entertaining game, the visitors winning by 34 points to 22. Besides Dusty, John Wells, the former Newark player was a dominant figure in the pack and both were delighted when they scored against their old Club.

Later in the evening President, Peter Butler, invited Terry Mack, Regional Director of the Sports Council, to unveil the commemorative plaque. Terry Mack said that his organisation's financial support of the development was an investment "for the future of young sports enthusiasts."

Peter Butler in welcoming the guests and thanking the Sports Council and Newark and Sherwood District Council for their backing, said the occasion was another landmark in Newark's history.

Things were progressing satisfactorily on the playing front all teams turning in many good performances. January was a very frosty month and not many matches were played. On Saturday, March 14th a large crowd travelled to Beeston to watch the Nottinghamshire Cup Final, Paviours v. Newark. Newark had reached the final by convincingly beating East Retford and winning at Mellish in the semi-final. The win over Mellish was particularly satisfying, as they had complained over our higher ranking in the league system, which was to start the following season.

NEWARK 16 PAVIOURS 6

The kicking ability of Alan King and a magnificent all-round performance brought the Notts. Cup back to Kelham Road. Although the victory was secured largely by Alan King's boot that should not detract from the overall team performance which must rank amongst the Club's finest. Newark tore into the opposition from the opening whistle and, with both sides pumping raw adrenaline it was clear that penalties would be decisive. During the game Alan King kicked four penalties, Paviours replying with a converted try. The match was decided when Nick Scott broke through, gave a little dip and slipped the ball through for John Illott to score an unconverted try.

After the match, Coach Charlie Fehrs had a defiant message:

"We were mere pretenders before the game, but now it is our throne! We were looking to put Paviours under pressure by taking them on at strength in the scrums and the back row thus sowing the seeds of doubt. We did just that and our first half performance was one of the best that we have had at Newark. We got points on the board and then made them play rugby they weren't used to in the second half."

President, Peter Butler, described himself as the world's worst spectator.

"Everything was chewed up inside and when the final whistle went I felt absolute delight mixed with relief. This is the culmination of a very good season, which has gone well generally for all members of the Club."

Newark's winning team: John Illott, Neil Loftus, Stuart Pierce, Mick Lenton. David Batterham, Alan King, Nick Scott, Jim Townsend, David Townsend, Jim Peters, John King, Gareth Davies, Kevin Wilson, John Lees, David Saxelby.

All of the glory was not attributed to the 1st XV. On April 4th 1967, a large crowd travelled to Lincoln, hopefully to see the 2nd XV score their 1000th point of the Season. The team obliged by winning 37 points to 10, the points coming from tries by Stan Hutchinson (2), Bob Walker (2), Martin Applewhite and Russell Smith. Stan Hutchinson kicked 5 conversions for the side, which had been captained all season by Andy Cousins.

The next day the Club came down to earth when the 1st XV lost to Derby 22-10 in the semi-final of the Three Counties Cup. Despite a second minute try by Mick Lenton and two penalties by Alan King, failure to turn early domination into more points, cost Newark dear. Although disappointed skipper Nick Scott said that he was optimistic for the future.

"Six lads in our pack are under 25 and that unit has a lot of rugby in it. If we can keep them together we've got another heyday coming and it bodes well for the future."

At the AGM 1986/87 the following playing records were announced:

	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	35	36	3	6	801	263
2 nd XV	39	33	3	3	1069	309
3 rd XV	35	25	1	4	891	196
4 th XV	31	26	0	5	907	245
5 th XV	21	10	2	9	377	241

In his Annual Report, Richard Ewens stated:

"First and foremost it is very pleasing to report on the outstanding success that the Club has experienced on the field. One would certainly have to go back a long time to find a season that was so successful for the Club sides. Pride of place must go to the 1st XV's achievement in winning once again the Nottinghamshire Cup and the Nottinghamshire Pennant Competition. The 1st XV are now unbeaten by a Nottinghamshire side for eighteen months.

One of the features of this season has been the healthy competition for places. This situation has resulted in all the sides having enjoyed a successful season. Mention must be made of the 2nd XV, the first Newark side to have scored over 1000 in a season. One of the ironies of the season however, the only trophy to show for their efforts is the Tom Ollerhead Trophy, but for consistency and endeavour, their season will be long remembered. The 3^{rds}, 4^{ths} and 5^{ths} were also very successful, but these sides suffered through injury, non-availability and many cancellations by opposing sides."

Representative honours were achieved by Stan Hutchinson (Three Counties Squad), Alan King, Stan Hutchinson and David Saxelby (Nottinghamshire), Stuart Pierce and Jim Townsend (Three Counties Under 23s). At the meeting Alan King was elected Club Captain.

Conscious of the fact that the existing scrummaging machine was approaching its "sell by date" it was recommended that the Club purchase the best available machine on the market. This was to cost £4000 and was purchased by means of members' loans and by another round of fund raising events. Contributions came from players, including mini rugby members and their mums and dads.

This was to be the inaugural season of the Courage Leagues and sadly because of revised fixture lists, many of our traditional opponents could not now be entertained. Newark were placed in the Midlands League Division 2 (East) for the season. Some members thought we should be in a higher league, other Nottinghamshire Clubs thought we should be in a lower league!

The first league game was away to Wigston. Whilst waiting for the bus to come a well-known, red jacketed, sun-tan-faded- alikado, informed Stan Hutchinson that anybody scoring a hat-trick of tries would receive the match ball and a bottle of scotch, to which Stan replied, "In that case you won't find me passing to anyone!" He didn't and Stan must have been one of the first to benefit directly from the Courage sponsorship. He repeated this feat twice more during the season.

Later during the Season the 1st XV were presented with 57 cans of bitter for having beaten Loughborough 57 - 4. Part of the Courage deal includes a can of beer for any point scored in a league game when the total passes 50. Previously the RFU, wishing that all Clubs retain their amateur status, frowned on any award of this nature, being given for either a team or individual performance in a particular game, but sponsorship had changed their way of thinking.

Sponsorship now being allowed resulted in many home games being sponsored by friends of the Club. Advertising Boards were allowed on the ground and match programmes were produced.

Club Members were saddened to learn of the death of George Jeffcott. George was Club Captain 1951-52, President 1967-70 and elected an Honorary Life Member of the Club in 1973. He would be greatly missed.

Another former players' re-union was held and over 90 Old Boys turned up to view the recent refurbishment of the Club and to watch the 1st XV record their 4th win in the league, beating Lincoln 32-0 and preserving their 100% record. The 2nds remarkable playing record continued, but their thirty match unbroken winning run was finally halted when they narrowly lost to Vipers 2nds. During this run they defeated Chesterfield 2nds 117-0, another club record.

Once again Newark reached the final of the Nottinghamshire Cup, beating local rival, Southwell.

NEWARK 21 SOUTHWELL 6

"Newark picked up the Notts. Cup for the eighth time after an emphatic success against Southwell at Beeston.

Their excellent display of powerful controlled rugby enabled them to dominate the match throughout, but Southwell still deserve full credit for their committed performance. A strong wind wreaked havoc with several penalty kick attempts. Alan King opened the scoring with a penalty; thereafter tries came from David Batterham, Kevin Saxelby, Chris Jones and Glyn Britten - Stan Hutchinson converting the latter.

Newark Team: Chris Jones, David Batterham, Glyn Britten, Jock McKinnon, Kevin Saxelby, Alan King, John Illott, Jim Townsend, David Townsend, Jim Peters, John King, Gary Fearon, David Saxelby, John Lees, Stan Hutchinson.

In his after match comments Charlie Fehrs said,

"The game went almost as we had planned it and three of our tries came from set moves, so we're very pleased that what we had practised came off. This is the beginning now as far as we're concerned. We know we still have some difficult games ahead of us, but I think we can go all the way."

Approaching the last league match of the season Newark, unbeaten so far were confident of another win, but fell at the last hurdle, when Matlock were the victors by 13 points to 12. The Club, by winning nine out of ten matches, won the league and gained promotion for the following season.

Matlock were again the opposition when the Clubs contested the final of the Notts. Lincs. & Derbys K.O. Cup at Beeston on Sunday 24th April 1988.

NEWARK 20 MATLOCK 12

After only five minutes Newark were 8 points down but skipper, Alan King, kicked a penalty shortly before the interval. Constant pressure at the start of the second period brought its reward for Newark, tries coming from Alan King, Jock McKinnon and John King - Alan King converting one of these and kicking another penalty. Matlock had to be content with a late consolation try. Matlock having previously inflicted a late 13-12 league defeat on Newark, the Three Counties victory was all the sweeter, but Coach, Charlie Fehrs, said that revenge was the last thing on the players' minds on Sunday.

"We had a lot of confidence, but we knew that we had a job on our hands. We went out on the day feeling good both physically and mentally."

With qualification for the final meaning automatic entry to the John Player Cup competition, Newark are set for an exciting 1988-89 Season and Charlie Fehrs is in no doubt what the prestigious tournament will mean to the Club - loads of money! "Besides the money, it will give us good publicity in the rugby world and that is important. We are an ambitious Club."

Other teams were playing extremely well, the 2nd Team concluding their season by winning both the Tom Ollerhead Trophy and the Nottinghamshire Shield for the first time. This was a great effort when the number of players who were either injured or cup-tied, was taken into consideration.

The new scrummaging machine had certainly proved to be invaluable, as an item from the Club's Newsletter stated:

"Newark is the only team in the Three Counties to have its own Powerhouse scrummaging machine. Newark is probably the only Club with enough confidence in its membership to order a machine costing £4000 and then think about where the money is coming from! Is it worth it? Ask the old players who were present when Lincoln took flying lessons! Ask the Leighton Buzzard front row. (Did you know that they thought they were in for an easy afternoon when they saw our front row walk out onto the pitch?). Ask Andy Cousins how the 2nds beat Syston. I think the point is proven."

The loan appeal was going very well and general funds were boosted by car-boot sales, a travelling Circus making its headquarters for a week on our ground, and the local American Football team playing their home games at Kelham Road for several seasons. Building work was also continuing and buildings to house the scrummaging machine and the recently acquired tractor and mowing machine were completed.

At the AGM in 1988, Richard Ewens proudly presented the following playing record, commenting that we had enjoyed another tremendous season, probably the best in the Club's history.

	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	35	28	1	6	985	320
2 nd XV	40	37	1	2	1245	220
3 rd XV	36	23	0	13	693	283
4 th XV	27	14	0	12	372	291
5 th XV	19	10	1	8	269	283

Thanks were recorded to Captains Alan King, Andy Cousins, Dicky Marshall and Owen Mathias and to Hugh Daybell who had worked tirelessly to ensure that as many 5th XV matches as possible could be played.

John King played for Notts. Lincs. & Derbys and David Saxelby, Stan Hutchinson. John Lees, John King, Alan King, Dave Townsend, Jim Peters and Jim Townsend all played for Nottinghamshire.

In conclusion, Richard Ewens stated that the items of silverware which had been won during the season would take an awful lot of cleaning!

For the season 1988/89 Andy Simms, Russell Smith and David Wheeler were elected as 2nd, 3rd and 4th Team Captains respectively, the other Club Officers being re-elected.

It was a tough baptism for Newark as they commenced life in Midlands Division One. Playing away at Hereford in early September the visitors, playing against a heavier pack, lost by 9 points to 7.

September 17th saw a large crowd assembled to watch the Pilkington (formerly John Player) Cup Match, the visitors being the Cheshire Club, Winnington Park.

NEWARK 6 WINNINGTON PARK 12

"Winnington, who play their rugby in the Northern Area League, withstood the twenty minutes of concerted pressure as the home side surged forward from the start, and skipper, Alan King's 15th minute penalty was all Newark had to show for their efforts.

The visitors took the lead after minutes into the second half. Newark were pinned back by Winnington's heavier forwards and they went further ahead with a converted try 7 minutes from the end. Glyn Britten kicked a fine penalty to bring the score closer, but the six point margin at the end was enough to put Newark out.

Newark Team: Chris Jones, David Batterham, Glyn Britten, Jock McKinnon. Neil Coyne, Alan King, John Illott, Jim Townsend, Gareth Collins, Jim Peters, John King, Trevor Waude, Steve John, John Lees, Stan Hutchinson.

After the match, Coach, Charlie Fehrs, said

"We knew that it was going to be a tough start for us, but Hereford beat us by two points and we lost the cup match by six points, so there isn't a lot of difference between ourselves and the better sides that we're now facing. We are an ambitious Club and want to win this league and we'll be looking for better results in the future."

On Saturday, October 15th a serious injury occurred when a young player, John Lawrence, was injured in a 2nd XV game at Syston, when a scrum collapsed. John suffered a broken neck, which means that he has since been confined to a wheelchair with no movement in his arms and legs.

In February 1989, Newark were at Beeston once again to play Mansfield in the final of the Nottinghamshire Cup.

NEWARK 11 MANSFIELD 6

"Newark picked up the Notts. Cup for the 3rd successive season, repeating a feat first achieved 21 years ago. The Kelham Road Club dominated the Competition's first three years from 1966-69 and had won it on no fewer than eight occasions before Sunday's game. But no other Club has achieved the coveted hat-trick since the 60s until Newark wrapped it up in magnificent style against Mansfield.

The slender 11 - 6 margin belied the quality of Newark's performance as they overcame pre-match injury problems to crush Mansfield's stubborn challenge for the trophy. The sheer power of the forwards was evident as Newark dominated the scrums. The try was scored by John Ilott and two penalties by Glyn Britten completed the scoring.

Newark Team: Kenny Beaumont, Kevin Saxelby, Jock McKinnon, Stuart Pierce, David Batterham, Glyn Britten, John Ilott. Jim Townsend, Gareth Collins, Jim Peters, Trevor Waude, John King, John Lees, David Saxelby, Stan Hutchinson.

Coach, Charlie Fehrs was warm in his praise for David Saxelby who, owing to the illness of Alan King, assumed the mantle of Skipper.

"The conditions dictated that it was going to be a forward orientated game and all the Newark forwards were outstanding. The performance was a testament to the hard work done by the Club and all the team deserves praise. Better weather would have meant that we could have played a more open game,"

A special mention for Glyn Britten. We have all seen Glyn kick monster goals over the years, but the penalty he kicked against Thorne on Saturday February 11th is the longest kick anyone can remember seeing at Kelham Road, if not in the Three Counties. It was from inside his own 10 metre line and was re-measured by Peter Fleetwood and Jeff Coleman at 69 yards, 2 feet 6 inches. Well done Glyn. We shall remember that kick for the rest of our lives.

Sunday, April 30th saw the 1st XV travelling to Mellish Ground to contest the Notts. Lincs. & Derbys. Cup Final. By reaching the final Newark were assured a place in the 1989 Pilkington Cup.

NEWARK 6 MANSFIELD 7

Newark went into this match having already beaten Mansfield in both the League and Cup, but as both matches had been extremely close, they knew they were in for a close encounter.

A try in the last minute of the game snatched victory away from Newark and the excellent season came to an end. Leading throughout by 2 penalties from Alan King, Newark were subjected to heavy pressure by Mansfield and the pressure finally paid off - agonisingly for Newark - with literally the last move of the game when the Mansfield Captain burst through three tackles to secure victory.

The result was obviously a heart-breaking one for Coach, Charlie Fehrs, who was performing those duties for the last time after five glorious years.

At the AGM of 1989 Secretary, Richard Ewens presented his report:

	P	W	D	L	For	Against
1 st XV	38	28	0	10	838	456
2 nd XV	38	34	1	3	1020	251
3 rd XV	36	23	0	13	648	425
4 th XV	30	17	1	12	558	537
5 th XV	6	2	0	4	99	63

He said that the 1st XV had acquitted themselves well in Midlands Division 1, finishing in third place. The 2nd XV reclaimed the Tom Ollerhead Trophy and were runners-up in the Nottinghamshire Shield and for the third consecutive year passed the 1000 points mark and provided wonderful entertainment. The 3rd XV achieved the same record as in 1987/88 and the 4th XV improved on the previous year. Disappointingly, the 5th XV had very few games. The Club suffered from a very long injury list and this affected all the teams.

During the season we obtained the services of a physiotherapist and appointed a Bar Manager.

Representative honours were won by John King (Three Counties and Notts), Alan King, David Saxelby, Stan Hutchinson, Glyn Britten, Nick Scott and John Lees (Notts).

The thanks of the Club were given to the Captains, Allan King, Andy SIMMs, Russell Smith, and David Wheeler - all dedicated men.

Mention was made of the fact that Dusty Hare, after an illustrious career had finally decided to retire. Everyone knows the elation of scoring points and just think what the accumulation of 7,177 must feel like and how he must be admired for this.

Peter Butler writes:

In June 1986, I had the great privilege of being elected President, following on from Ken Hunter who had achieved so much for the Club, particularly "Raise the Roof". I was also fortunate to be President during three very successful years on the field and was also called upon to buy the President's Jug when all the Newark sides were successful. Charlie Fehrs was the great inspiration, who when asked about the highlight of one glorious season, the answer was, "Winning, winning, winning!"

A most enjoyable day was held in October 1987, when a second Old Players' Re-union was held and 90 former players attended a splendid lunch in the Clubhouse. The old players and the current players certainly provided a day to remember. The low part of my Presidency was for me to hear the bad news of the tragic accident to John Lawrence. However, the way the Club rallied to his support and the involvement of both players and supporters from hundreds of other clubs, was perhaps best summed-up by Max Boyce at the Charity Concert held in Nottingham, when he referred to the "Brotherhood of Rugby." Long may it continue both at Newark and Worldwide.

Rugby in the Eighties - Charlie Fehrs.

The Club entered the eighties by winning the Notts Cup in 1982 and the Three Counties Cup in 1983. The Club paraded the experience of Alan Swain, the precocious talent of John Wells and the emerging gifts of Alan King, Dave Townsend, David Saxelby and Stan Hutchinson, all Three County players of the future. The side under the inspiring leadership of Phil Loftus produced what is arguably the best ever performance by a Newark team in beating Dudley Kingswinford in the superb John Player Cup-tie at Kelham Road, in September 1983.

Tim Barker had the difficult task in 1985/86 of maintaining the standards with a young team, shorn of experience, a task he carried out with energy and dignity. In 1986, Nick Scott's team ushered in a new dawn by winning the Club's first ever John Player Pennant and laying the foundations for a triumphant period in local rugby. He was fortunate to have the support and wisdom of such perceptive captains in the lower sides, as Duncan Thorpe, Tom Pykett, Dickie Marshall and Mike Self. Indeed the second team from 1984 - 1989 played a brand of rugby which had John Pykett purring with pleasure, as they broke record after record in the points scoring department. Many will remember Andy Cousin's side demolishing Chesterfield on a dark and dank Saturday by more than 100 points. The 3rd, 4th and 5th Teams enjoyed their rugby in a similar vein, simultaneously telling the selection committee the errors of their ways! Tours to the Continent were organised and selection under "Spanky" Macfarlane was a pleasure.

In a remarkable game against Paviours, Nick Scott's 1st XV regained the Notts. Cup not to lose it until the eighties had departed. Alan King retained the cup in 1988 and the Three Counties Cup followed. In 1989 the Notts Cup was retained and we were runners-up in the Three Counties Cup. Participation in the Pilkington Cup in the last two years projected the Club onto the national scene.

For the 1st XV Rugby became a much more serious affair with the inception of the Courage Leagues. Newark's placement in Midlands 2 (East) proved to be the right sort of challenge and the team got its act together to march straight into Midlands 1. The Club was building on a successful base and new players of the calibre of Gareth Collins, Paul Morgan, Nick Allen, Steve Price and Kenny Beaumont were attracted into the fold. Perhaps the true indicator of the status lies in the success of our young sides where so many members beavered away, honing the skills of players who would bring success in the next decade.

All good things come to an end and I had the privilege of working with good players, the friendship of Club Members, the support of fine Presidents and a perceptive committee. I looked forward eagerly to the future and with pride.

At the Committee Meeting February 1989 the President, Peter Butler announced that,

"The Club will dedicate a year to special fund-raising for John Lawrence and we will raise every penny we can and do everything possible to give John the best possible quality of life for the future."

A sub-committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Brian Fisher. Brian's sub-committee would:

- a) Identify the problems
- b) Find solutions
- c) Identify the resources both human and financial and harness those resources to the maximum.

The Appeal was orchestrated under the presidency of 'Dusty' Hare M.B.E.

Honorary Vice Presidents:

Bill Beaumont O.B.E.
England & British Lions Captain 1980

Phil Bennett O.B.E.
Wales & British Lions Captain 1977

Finlay Calder Esq.,
Scotland & British Lions Captain 1989

Willie John McBride M.B.E.
Ireland & British Lions Captain 1974

It is not possible to itemise all the fund raising events that were held during the twelve months. Whilst a large number of events involved Newark and many other clubs, the whole population of both Newark and the surrounding district, saddened by the accident to John, organised many events, both large and small.

Announcing the results of the Appeal, £140,000, Brian Fisher admitted that he watched in amazement as the money came in.

"I do believe that this Appeal has probably raised more money for an injured rugby player than any other in the history of the game. There has been a tremendous local response.

I think the number one reason for this is that the people of Newark and District have identified with John. He's a local lad and that's something they've related to. Although a large amount of money has come from the Rugby related fraternity, I have obtained as much pleasure and satisfaction out of receiving letters from children in Infant Schools, local firms, public houses, individuals and Miners' Welfares, who have still managed to send us a cheque."

That pleasure was mirrored by John and his parents, Alan and Betty

"We all want to thank everybody who helped, they have been tremendous. The world is full of people with such big hearts."

The Season 1989/90 saw many changes. Bob Benbow was elected President at the A.G.M. and paid tribute to the work of Peter Butler and Charlie Fehrs. Edward Hine became Secretary and David Saxelby Club Captain. Tribute was also paid to the retiring Secretary, Richard Ewens who had been at the helm for eight of the last ten years.

Immediately the Club was into competitive rugby when on September 16th, the first round of the Pilkington Cup was played away at Old Leamingtonians.

Old Leamingtonians 10 Newark 20

The following brief report is condensed from a Warwickshire Evening Paper.

On the evidence of the second half performance, the Nottinghamshire visitors did, in the opening half, take the home side somewhat for granted. As a consequence the interval scoreline was a level 7 - 7 and Newark were lucky to turn round still maintaining the status quo.

If Newark's guile - which they did not lack exploited some Leamingtonians' innocence - who was to blame them. From a penalty tap, and before the home defence could organise, winger Martin Applewhite scored in the corner and canny stand-off, Alan King, manoeuvred the space to drop a good goal. The home side soon replied with a try and a penalty goal.

Half time entertainment was provided by Newark Skipper, Saxelby, berating his Newark colleagues and it certainly hit home where he wanted it and soon after the restart Newark's umpteenth penalty was earned. Flanker. Stan Hutchinson was elected to aim for the posts and his mammoth kick was judged to perfection. Two more successful penalties were kicked by Alan King and the scoring was completed when centre, Stuart Pierce, scored an unconverted try. Leamingtonians replied with another penalty goal.

Newark: Kenny Beaumont, Ted Hine, Stuart Pierce, Chris Jones, Martin Applewhite, Alan King, Paul Morgan, Jim Townsend, Gareth Collins, Mark Brown, John King, Kevin Priestley, Stan Hutchinson, Jon Lees, David Saxelby.

As can be seen from the team line-up, several newcomers had joined the Club and had quickly made their presence felt. In winning three of the four opening matches in the League Programme, Newark were hopeful that promotion would be a possibility, but all eyes were focussed on November 4th when Fylde were to be the visitors in the 2nd Round of the Pilkington Cup.

Newark 12 Fylde 28

Newark's forwards gave a magnificent display to leave the Club and the supporters plenty to cheer about as they went out of the Pilkington Cup with their heads held high. It was a splendid performance against opposition two Leagues higher in the Courage structure.

In the end it was the excellence and experience of the Fylde backs which proved to be the difference between the two teams.

A magnificent rainbow appeared above the ground mid-way through the first half, but it was obvious that any crock of gold for Newark would depend on that forward dominance. They provided enough possession, but unfortunately failed to make the most of it on a day when the backs more than met their match. The half-time score was 18 - 6 with Alan King kicking two penalties.

The biggest cheer came in the final minutes, however, when Newark's efforts were rewarded with a try by Jon Lees. It was no more than Newark deserved and Alan King converted from out on the touch-line to add the final touch of defiance.

As Skipper, David Saxelby said after the game,

"We learned a lot today, but it also showed that we still have a lot to learn. That is what playing against sides like that is all about."

Newark team: Chris Jones, David Batterham, Steve Mathias, Martin Applewhite, Alan King, Jim Townsend, Steve Price, Paul Morgan, Barry Newton, Gareth Collins, Jim Peters, John King, Stan Hutchinson, Jon Lees, David Saxelby.

1989 was the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the Club and the 25th Anniversary of the opening of "Fisher's Folly", our Clubhouse. When asked how he would like the events to be commemorated, Brian Fisher thought that a dinner in the Clubhouse would be appropriate and so on December 1st 110 people sat down to eat and to bring back so many happy memories of our Club. This, the first dinner ever to be held at the Club, was very successful and has since been the venue for our Annual event.

The friendly match against Scunthorpe on December 16th was held in the presence of over 70 former players and they were delighted when Newark won by 29 points to 12.

Roger Whittaker was appointed to be the Club Coach in February. This appointment meant that for the first time we had a Coach who had not played any of his rugby for Newark, but who was no stranger as he had scored the winning try for Mellish against us in one of the 70s Notts. Cup Finals.

Sadly, the Club heard of the death of Peter Fleetwood who had been forced to retire owing to ill-health from his position as Groundsman to the Club. Peter had been in this position for over 14 years and had been a great help with his aid and advice during the refurbishment of the Club. We were lucky to obtain the services of Geoff Collins, a man like Peter, able to tackle any duty he is asked to perform.

Unfortunately, owing to numerous injuries - several of a lengthy duration - all the teams could not perform to the best of their abilities and important matches were lost. Newark did not retain the Notts. Cup losing to Moderns in extra time by 28 points to 25. The second team lost by 9 points to 8 against Moderns in the Second Team Shield, but beat Kesteven by 32 points to 9 to retain the Tom Ollerhead Trophy.

As a way of relaxing from the League and Cup matches, members of all the sides spent a relaxing Easter in Guernsey where they won several of the matches they played. Perhaps the Guernsey trip was not an ideal preparation for the Three Counties Cup Final at the Mellish ground on Sunday, April 22nd, but the Newark XV did themselves proud.

Newark 32 Chesterfield 10

Stan Hutchinson scored two tries in the last ten minutes to seal a tremendous team display to beat a plucky Chesterfield

Looking more sound defensively than for some time and again dominating in the pack, Newark were held to 6 - 6 at the interval and led 15 - 10 with a quarter of an hour left in a match, which was great to watch for the neutral spectators. But the supporters of both sides could only really stop biting their nails when Stan Hutchinson's double strike pushed the score beyond Chesterfield's reach.

The underdogs from Notts, Lincs, and Derbys. Div 1 pushed Newark all the way with their willingness to run the ball, but it was the class and experience that told in the end.

Newark led with two Alan King penalties in the first half-hour. Steve Mathias's left boot curled over another penalty in the second period of the second half and he then added a try to his tally. Alan King converted a penalty to stretch the score, Skipper, David Saxelby hustled his way over for a try and then Stan Hutchinson put the seal on things.

Newark: Kenny Beaumont, David Batterham, Steve Mathias, Steve Price, Martin Applewhite, Alan King, Paul Morgan, Jim Townsend, Gareth Collins, Jim Peters, John King, Trevor Waude, Stan Hutchinson, Jon Lees, David Saxelby.

Giving his report, at the AGM in June 1990 President, Bob Benbow said:

"Rugby is a team game and our results both on and off the field have been achieved by a very worthy team effort. The players are enthusiastic with good results achieved at all levels. We have the support of an excellent administration team. The ladies deserve a special mention for providing the visitors' teas each Saturday and lunches for more important games."

The Chairman of the Playing Committee in his report said,

"Over thirty players were used at first team level reflecting the number of injuries we had to contend with and the strong competition for places. I have the feeling that as well as we did, many players in more reflective moments will agree that we might have achieved more if we were more positive at certain times during the season.

The following players played for the Three Counties: David Saxelby, Gareth Collins and Alan King.

The following players represented Nottinghamshire: David Saxelby, Alan King, Jon Lees, Jim Peters, John King, Stan Hutchinson, Nick Allen and John Ilott.

The 2nd XV under Kevin Priestley had a mixed season due mainly to being unable to field a settled side because of injuries. The 3rd, 4th and 5th Teams under Bob Thomas, David Wheeler and Chris White respectively had enjoyable seasons. Again, the inability to field settled sides has made life difficult and restricted their playing potential. I am pleased with the number of younger players who have moved through the sides and who have made a strong contribution at a higher level. It is important that these young players train regularly so that they "get noticed" and benefit from working with more experienced players."

In his report Secretary, Ted Hine, said,

"As last year we finished third in our League. Looking back briefly on the 1980s we can all take satisfaction from our record. The finances of the Club are in a healthy position and we thank Rob Hughes for his untiring efforts. We have an excellent Clubhouse and facilities and we thank Tony Rose and Newark Storage for sponsorship and generous support. Progress on the field must be matched off it and in both respects I believe the Club is well positioned. We have started the new decade on a high note and it is down to us to make sure that this continues."

A FEW DAYS IN THE LIFE OF A PRESIDENT

Bob Benbow

"Wednesday, 7.30 p.m. Match under lights. Report 7pm, drink at the bar, watch the game, buy a jug later and chat to the players (in that order). There's usually a game on at whatever level and twice during the Season a Three Counties' Match.

Friday 8pm. Committee. About twenty items on the agenda. Great emphasis is paid these days to the playing side and development and to the finance, sponsorship, advertising, ground maintenance, lettings etc. Finish about 10.30pm. - if we get a move on!

Saturday, 12.30 p.m. Arrive in good time to meet the Visitors. If it's a League Match Jacki Hunter and her helpers will provide a lunch for about thirty or so, more if it's sponsored. A few words with them and then after the game it's Jug Buying time again.

Sunday 11 a.m. A Colts game or Mini Rugby, with attendance of parents. The future players of the club and representation is very important. A quiet drink at the bar afterwards and then home - if I've still got one!

A great Club and a great honour for me! I'm even thinking of playing again, if only to be in on the Jug!"

The Season had not really got under way when the 1st XV travelled to Morley for the 1st Round of the Pilkington Cup.

Morley 9 Newark 3

Favourites, Morley, achieved the expected against Newark, but it was the visitors who provided the surprises at Morley. Few who were there will forget the sight of the Morley front row being lifted high in the air as the Newark scrum pushed them back 15 yards, and if Newark could have matched their National Three opponents in the loose, it could have been a different story.

Morley's physical approach to the game was also a telling factor and as the Newark Skipper put it, "They played the referee better than we did," and Morley's overall experience of playing at a higher level was clearly the difference between the two teams.

Debutante, Simon Roberts, kicked a long-range penalty for Newark, that being the only score for the visitors. Morley looked relieved when the final whistle was blown. Newark Coach, Roger Whittaker, praised the Newark team saying that he felt proud of their performance.

Newark: Nick Allen, Chris Jones, Steve Price, Steve Mathias, Lee Cotton, Simon Roberts, Mike Wilson, Chris McLaren, Gareth Collins, Jim Townsend, Barry Newton, Trevor Waude, David Saxelby, Jon Lees, Stan Hutchinson. Replacement: Nick Scott for Mike Wilson.

To help fund the extra expenditure that League Rugby required the President, Bob Benbow, started a "200 Club" which was launched on 27th September 1990. On this evening Jeff Coleman presented to the Club the new walls and steel gates at the entrance to the ground. This entrance-way was to mark Jeff's fiftieth year with the Club and it was also dedicated, "To those who sadly are no longer with us, but whose hard work and dedication has resulted in the excellent Club that we now have."

The League season had started well and in November the Club was sitting at the top of Midlands Division 1. Again many injuries to key players soon began to take its toll with several of these players having to be side-lined for the rest of the season. Without sufficient coverage in certain positions, particularly in the second row and the lack of success in the line-out wrecked the hard work that had been put in in recent matches. With two defeats in these League games, promotion was once again denied.

The Three Counties honoured David Saxelby by appointing him Captain of the side.

The 2nd XV, still playing attractive rugby, retained the Tom Ollerhead Trophy and were successful in the final of the Nottinghamshire Shield, beating Paviours by 20 points to 12.

Although losing in the earlier rounds of the Three Counties Cup, Newark once more scooped the Notts. Cup.

Newark 9 Mansfield 8

David Saxelby finished on a winning note in his last match as Captain of Newark Rugby Club by guiding his side to a tense 9 - 8 win against Mansfield. Receiving the Cup David said,

"This was our last chance to win a trophy at 1st XV level this season and to have finished without any silverware after our recent successes would have been very disappointing."

The points were scored by Andy Rimmer putting over two penalties and Steve Mathias one. Newark kept faith with the side that had performed so well in recent weeks although it meant leaving some regulars on the sidelines.

Coach, Roger Whittaker, said he felt that the youngsters deserved some of the glory and he was delighted with their efforts.

In his report at the AGM, June 1991, retiring President, Bob Benbow said,

"It has been a privilege for me to have served as the Club's President for the last two years and I am grateful to all those who have supported me. The Club rightly sets a very high standard for itself and where results are not achieved then disappointments occur. The 1st XV did not fulfil its early season promise due to serious injuries to key players, but it did after all finish equal 3rd in Midlands Division 1.

We should always remember that we are the town side of Newark-on-Trent and will have to encourage a wider interest in what happens at Kelham Road.

In his playing report Charlie Fehrs reported that the following players had represented Notts. Lincs and Derbys: David Saxelby (Captain), Simon Roberts, Mike Wilson and Steve Mathias.

The 2nd XV were congratulated as under the fine leadership of Nick Scott they overcame a difficult start to the season. The 3rds and 4ths had suffered terribly from the severe injury problems we experienced throughout the season. "Both teams struggled manfully to perform with very unsettled sides and I would commend to you the leadership and commitment of Captains Phil Loftus and Billy Barker. They got their players behind them and attracted a loyalty which served the Club well throughout the season."

Richard Ewens was elected to be President and Jon Lees as Club Captain, the remainder of the officials being re-elected.

Always on the look-out for new fund-raising events, Geoff Mollart organised a very successful "Duck Race" which resulted in a net profit of £1,850 and the 200 Club, the brain-child of Bob Benbow, raised £4,000.

In July 1991 we heard of the death of John Barker. John was Captain of the Club in the 1949-50 season, President of the County Union in 1970 and President of Newark from 1975 to 1979. He would be greatly missed.

Our contribution to the World Cup 1991
Friday 30th August
(Taken from the Newsletter August 1991)

Like an Olympic torch, a Rugby ball left Rugby School in June on its journey through England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and France, before arriving at Twickenham for the opening ceremony on 3rd October. The ball will be in the Three Counties for just 1 ½ hours. It will be flown from Lincoln and will meet up with the World Cup Road Show on our ground. Prior to the ball's arrival there will be coaching and playing displays by mini and youth teams. At midday there will be a game to celebrate "One hundred Years of Rugby at Newark." A Newark side playing, it is hoped, in period costume comprising long shorts, hooped shorts and handlebar moustaches, will take on a team drawn from surrounding clubs. Civic dignitaries and invited guests will be in attendance for what will be an historic day for our Club. Publicity for the World Cup is centred on schoolboys as they are the lifeblood of the game.

A large crowd had assembled on a sunny day to await the arrival of the helicopter and the slickly organised day smoothly clicked into gear. The day started at Hessle Rugby Club at the side of the Humber Bridge where Dusty Hare collected the official World Cup Ball, as the chosen representative of the Three Counties Rugby Union. Dusty was accompanied on his travels by Jeffrey Addison, Three Counties Representative on the R.F.U. and several other rugby personalities.

"It was a super day", said Dusty. "It was a great honour for me to represent the Three Counties, as my first 1st Class Game was when I played for them. So I was very pleased to be asked to play my part in the celebrations."

Events began with a mini and junior coaching session, the arrival of the helicopter, and an official tree planting ceremony, conducted by Councillor Hector Whelan, Chairman of Newark and Sherwood District Council supported by the Mayor of Newark, Councillor Chris Grant and Club President, Richard Ewens.

Raffles were held to win one of the Commemorative Balls produced by Twickenham to mark England's triumph in the Grand Slam, 1991 and to win the chance to enjoy a helicopter ride over Newark.

The Newark President's XV versus a Notts and Lincs side played a shortened game to celebrate the World Cup as well as 100 years of Rugby in Newark. The Newark players, resplendent in 1891 style knee-length shorts made especially for the occasion, found the shorts a definite draw-back.

Following the match, a buffet lunch concluded the Newark events, after waving the helicopter goodbye on the next stage of its travels. This was an action day enjoyed by all.

"It was a special day for all the members of the mini and junior section of the Club," said President, Richard Ewens.

The World Cup taking precedence, the League Season did not start until November 16th. The fellowship of the World Cup is perhaps better summarised when thirty-five members of the New Zealand supporters came to the Club, a mixed party with only one thing in common, the spirit of Rugby Union. They went away with memories of Newark R.U.F.C. its members, its camaraderie and its superb hospitality. Some good food, a little drink and the exchange of mementoes were all order of the evening. The Club was challenged to a drinking competition and the New Zealand entrant lost out to a local hero (who shall remain nameless). I can confirm that we did England proud.

The "Big Screen" World Cup Action provided as a service from the outset of the tournament was a real winner. Who would have thought that well over a hundred people watching the final on television could have felt or created the atmosphere that was generated that afternoon in the Clubroom.

Conscious of the fact that a tighter rein had to be held over the Club's finances, a management committee was instigated with budgets allocated to the Playing and Facilities (Building and Ground) Committees, whilst the Revenue Committee had to ensure that the social side of the Club helped to provide the necessary income. These sub-committees meeting regularly, helped to ensure that problems, large and small could be dealt with quickly.

Losing 3 out of the 4 opening League matches, Newark looked to be heading for the relegation zone, but spirited performances after Christmas reversed the pattern and we eventually finished fifth. The number of long term injuries sustained was very worrying, disrupting the pattern of play throughout all sides. The match at Stoke highlighted the problems. Before the match Skipper, Jon Lees said,

"This is the big one and we will need to get everything right. It's going to be a real test for us. If we win this one we are capable of beating anyone, but if we lose tomorrow it may be a way of telling us that we're not good enough. The match will be a good gauge of our capabilities."

The Stoke side had the last word, beating Newark by 38 points to 7!

Newark had a big question to resolve over the coming months and that was whether or not they should go further afield in an attempt to recruit and build a side capable of winning promotion. It was a highly controversial matter in a Club historically based mostly on local players and traditions. After a lot of thought and discussion it was decided that if there was to be any recruitment drive it should be of a local nature.

International Rugby came to Newark for the first time on Saturday 11th April, when the Club hosted the England Under 16 B International against Italy. England winning by 19 points to 10.

"The fixture is in recognition of the Newark Club's standing in the Three Counties, the quality of their facilities and the successful staging of Three Counties representative matches in the past."

For the fortunate spectators it was a day to savour especially when the teams lined up to hear the National Anthems played. But behind the scenes there was a worried man.

"I take it you will be able to play the Anthems?" enquired the P.R. Man from Twickenham.

"No problem!" said Ken Hunter.

With the two tapes sorted out, his next problem was how to play them through the Club's P.A. System, but eventually this problem was overcome with a simple adjustment to his wife's Walkman!

The next day the Club travelled to Beeston to play Mansfield in the Nottinghamshire Cup Final. Newark had beaten Mansfield in the League, but lost to them in the early rounds of the Three Counties Cup and so the stage was set for the decider.

Newark 21 Mansfield 4

Newark Rugby Club maintained their stranglehold on Notts Cup to ensure that they finished among the silverware.

With their League promotion hopes dashed and an early exit from the Three Counties Cup, the Kelham Road outfit were fired up from the start and looked determined to salvage something from a comparatively disappointing campaign.

Tim Barker successfully converted two penalty goals in the opening quarter and an impressive John King then added a try on the half-hour when he caught the ball at a line-out and crashed over. Glyn Britten converted in some style against a strong cross-wind and Newark's name was on the Cup. Mansfield replied with a try, but Tim Barker's penalty put paid to any hopes of a revival. Pete Moorby added a further try, converted by Tim Barker to wrap up a fine performance. This win gave Newark their fifth Notts Cup triumph in the last six seasons.

Newark: Andy Rimmer, David Batterham, Glyn Britten, Mike Lenton. Martin Applewhite, Tim Barker, Mike Wilson, Simon Garbutt, Matt Trafford, Chris McLaren, John King, Gary Fearon, Peter Moorby, Jon Lees, David Saxelby.

Celebrations were held on the 28th April when a match was held to mark the 100 years of Rugby in Newark. This game played between the original opponents Newark and Nottingham was staged before a large crowd which included Miss Kathleen Ringrose, the 92 year old daughter of Dr. Ernest Ringrose, the pioneer of Rugby in Newark and a player in the Newark team in that first game. Prior to the match, the Mayor and Mayoress of Newark, Councillor and Mrs. C. Grant, entertained many local and club dignitaries to an 'at home' in Newark Town Hall.

Before the main event - which was supported by Newark Town Council - the large crowd was entertained by a series of matches between the Newark Minis and local opponents. Nottingham honoured the occasion with a strong side, with regular replacements, and at one time they were fielding no fewer than six internationals. This strong side overwhelmed the locals winning by 42 points to 9, thus avenging the defeat in 1891.

Skipper, Jon Lees, although disappointed with the result said,

"The organisation was superb on a fantastic night for the Club."

During the latter part of the season Roger Whittaker resigned as Club Coach being replaced by Steve Goodman. Speaking at said, the AGM of June 1992, President, Richard Ewens said,

"Some disappointment has been expressed of some of our results, be that as it may, this should not detract from the outstanding commitment of our players. Clubs have to run fast to stand still and it is only those clubs which can build on the experience gained that will continue to make progress - and that is certainly within our reach. The Club has been able to show to the general public what the members have already known - that it is a first class sports organisation with ambition, which is matched by its potential."

History was made at this AGM when Jacki Hunter was elected as Vice-President - the first woman to achieve this honour.

In his report, Secretary, Ted Hine, outlined Jacki's many contributions to the Club and said,

"I doubt whether in the whole history of the Club anyone has been more deserving of a Vice-Presidency and I am glad that this oversight has been rectified this year."

In his report, Financial Chairman, John Coles said

"The Playing and Facility Committees' budgets have had to be curtailed severely in order to balance the books. With the recession it is proving more difficult to raise revenue and Rob Hughes, the Treasurer, believes that it is very important that we do not spend more money than we make. With this in mind the Club cannot undertake any major structural alterations or an expensive recruitment campaign."

For the first time a catering manager had had to be appointed to comply with the new Hygiene Regulations as the majority of our lady volunteers did not have the necessary certificate. Tribute should be paid to the many ladies who had so selflessly carried out these duties since the 1950 season. It was a sad break with tradition.

The Season 1992-3 is best summed-up as a disastrous year in the playing fortunes of the Club. Several senior players had retired and the usual horrendous injury list, meant that at times the majority of the forwards were inexperienced and lighter in weight than their opponents. It had always been the policy of the Playing Committee to select from the squad, players who had shown promise and play them in non-league games. The weight difference meant that the pack was sometimes pushed all over the field with the backs seldom seeing a lot of the ball. Losing 7 out, of the first 8 League matches meant that our position in the League was very precarious. The lack of experienced players through, retirement, head hunting and injury was felt throughout all the other sides and even though we were regularly turning out a 5th team, some of the results do not make for pleasant reading. The commitment was there, the attendance at training was good, the crowds at the home matches were excellent, but the end of the Season saw the Club relegated to a lower division.

The recession, which had hit the Club's finances, meant that there was little movement of players in the labour market and the closure of several more R.A.F. Stations meant that this source of recruitment had virtually dried up.

Members of the Club were very disappointed to see the Club relegated. We finished third from the bottom of the League. At the beginning of the Season only two clubs were to be relegated, however, without informing any of the clubs, the R.F.U. altered the guidelines during the season and three Clubs were to be relegated. A Special General Meeting was held in the close-season to consider an appeal, but it was decided that as the Club would incur legal costs, no further action would be taken.

The social events continued to be well attended and the Club were fortunate to purchase a second-hand set of floodlights to erect on the Number Two pitch after planning permission had been obtained.

Speaking, at the 1993 AGM in June 1993, Secretary, Ted Hine said,

"This last Season was always going to be difficult as the inevitable re-building of the team took place. The average age of the team must have been six or seven years less than the previous Season and the lack of experience was exposed when the first League Matches were being played. Hardly surprising in the circumstances, but this was compounded by the strength of our fixture list which meant that it was difficult for our team to find form.

Looking to the future I think that next year we will have a more secure financial basis, thanks to sensible budgets and the tight financial control of the sub-committee Chairmen. But the success of the Club is all about playing rugby and the success of next season will be based on what happens between the posts."

Tributes were paid to Rob Hughes who was retiring after seven years from the position of Treasurer and to retiring Captain, Jon Lees. Paul Strudwick was elected to be Treasurer and Nigel Edley as Club Captain.

The income from subscriptions, the sponsorship from Newark Storage and match sponsors were adequate, but revenue from social events began to fall. This was compounded by the large number of Saturdays when all the teams were playing away, resulting in a loss of income. A more realistic fixture list was required.

Conscious of the fact that on July 26th 1994 the Club would be celebrating its 75th Anniversary, a sub-committee under the Chairmanship of Alec Binnie was formed. The aim was to raise money for the refurbishment of the Clubroom and any other internal facilities that were required. The target was £7,500 being £100 pounds for each year of the Club's existence.

During the Season, various events were held including a Fashion Show at Kelham Hall, an auction of pledges, a millionaires' night and many others. The campaign concluded with a Dinner Dance at the Newark Showground where it was announced that over £8,000 had been raised. Some of the money had been ear-marked for new furniture in the Clubhouse and towards the cost of erecting a ramp to enable disabled people to gain access to the Club. Sadly owing to League and Cup commitments the Club were unable to arrange a fixture to commemorate the Anniversary.

In October a match was played between a Newark and a Mansfield side. The fixture was held on behalf of the dependants of the three miners who had recently been killed at the nearby Bilsthorpe Colliery. Both sides included International and other star players and a crowd estimated at nearly 3,000 contributed £4000 to the appeal.

Some seasons previously it was decided that the Club should have a stronger fixture list, with a preference to playing more Yorkshire Clubs. The upshot of this was that during September the 1st XV was hammered on at least three occasions and the match against Sandal resulted in a record defeat, Sandal winning by 73 points to 3. Shortage of players meant that we were unable to field a 4th XV and the junior sides were suffering some heavy defeats. Various combinations were tried, but with such limited resources, there was no great improvement. Christmas came with the Club languishing towards the bottom of the League.

Work was progressing on the final stages of the erection of the floodlights on pitch Number Two. These were switched on early in January when the 2nd XV entertained North Kesteven Old Boys. This fixture, played in memory of the late Tom Coates, a tireless worker for both Clubs, saw the Newark sides narrowly defeated - the first time in twelve encounters. January also saw another Club record set when the 4th XV defeated Ashbourne 4th XV by 133 - 0. President, Richard Ewens, who was refereeing this match, was concerned as he was running out of space on his scoresheet!

Gradually the 1st XV started to win some matches in the League, playing with more enthusiasm and a late flurry saw them safely in the mid-position of the table. Both the Nottinghamshire and the Three Counties Cups saw Newark bow out of these competitions.

Writing in the Club's Newsletter of April 1994 Richard Ewens reported,

"Looking forward to the future, a major step forward has recently been taken, we have now been successful in purchasing - with the aid of Grant facilities from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts - eleven acres of land adjacent to the Ground. The development for sporting facilities for the Club is now enormous. Proper and careful decision making will now need to be put into place to develop the land and the existing ground as a major sporting facility for Newark and the surrounding area. The key to this was the acquisition of the land and that first objective has been achieved. We will now be fully committed to enhancing Newark facilities, even more than they are now.

The final whistle blew on the 28th April when Newark hosted the Three Counties Cup Final and ended 75 years in the playing life of Newark R.U.F.C.

In his retirement address at the AGM in June 1994, Richard Ewens said,

"May 1 take this opportunity of offering my personal thanks to those members - playing, non-playing, Vice Presidents, Patrons, Committee Members - everyone who has made my Presidential term such an enjoyable one. I have always said that it is a very great privilege to be the President of Newark Rugby Club and my three-year term has flown by. Whilst it is a very time-consuming position, it has at all times been an enjoyable one, made even more so by the support and encouragement of so many people. Everyone's help in making Newark Rugby Club what it is and indeed, what it can be, is very much to be encouraged."

Reviewing the Season the 1st XV manager said,

"The outlook for next Season is clear. If Newark players are prepared to get down to some hard pre-season training and the general commitment level is raised, the prospects are good."

David Taylor was elected President of the Club.

Jenny Marshall became the second woman Vice-President of the Club in particular for her enormous contribution to the mini-rugby section.

As part of the 75th Anniversary celebrations the Annual General Meeting honoured Jeff Coleman, Dusty Hare and Ken Hunter by electing them to be Honorary Life Members of the Club.

A.J.C.

1994

Footnote:

Lt.Col. Sam Derry, Vice-President and Trustee died December 1966.

George Pollard, Honorary Life Member and Trustee died April 1997.

George Richardson, Groundsman, died November 1997.

Jeff Coleman, Honorary Life Member and the author of

"Newark Rugby Union Football Club - The First Seventy Five Years"

whose contribution to Newark Rugby Club was unparalleled, died December 1998.