



MORPETH

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB LTD (1947)

BOOKLET



Presidents:

1947 - 54	G.F. Howell	1987 - 88	R. Scott
1954 - 56	W.L. Elsworth	1988 - 90	D. Pringle
1956 - 58	F.C. Galbraith	1990 - 92	H.V. Kennedy
1958 - 60	J.R. Hall	1992 - 94	G.W. Brown
1960 - 62	Dr. W McKellar	1994 - 96	R.N. Hall
1962 - 64	J.C. Whaley	1996 - 98	K.U. Fraser
1964 - 65	A.H. Tweddle	1998 - 00	W.G. Hewitt
1965 - 67	R.E. Appleby	2000 - 02	I. Pringle
1967 - 68	W.E. Laidlaw	2002 - 04	S.T.G. Duckworth
1968 - 70	A. Gordon	2004 - 06	D.T. Metcalfe
1970 - 71	W.S. Morgan	2006 - 08	C. E. Green
1971 - 73	W.O.F. Patterson	2008 - 10	M. Calder
1973 - 75	P.S. Driver	2010 - 12	M. Brunskill
1975 - 77	N. Wiseman	2012 - 14	J.Y. Price
1977 - 79	J.L. Robson	2014 - 16	P. Forsythe
1979	J.W. Storey	2016 - 18	J.A. Stafford
1979 - 81	D.R. Turnbull	2018 - 20	G. Stephenson
1981 - 83	A.C. Foreman	2020 - 22	R. Parkinson
1983 - 85	B. Dick	2022 - 24	R. S. Winter
1985 - 86	J. Elliott	2024 -	J. Richfield
1986 - 87	J. Wilson		

Past Hon. Life Members:

R.E. Appleby, J.E. Bewick, A.A. Brown, G.W. Brown, F Broughton, R Douglas,
S.T.G. Duckworth, B Hannay, J.R. Hepple, G.F. Howell, P.A. Jackson, G Keeley,
J.W. Middlemas, W.E. Laidlaw, B. Richardson.

Hon Secretaries

1947 - 1954	J.R. Hepple
1954 - 1977	W.E. Laidlaw
1977 - 1986	J. Wilson
1986 -	K.U. Fraser.

Hon Treasurers

1947 - 1965	R.E. Appleby
1965 - 1978	P.S. Driver
1978 - 1986	A.E. Woolhead
1986 - 1988	D. Crawford
1988 - 1996	J.P. Wright
1996 - 1998	G.A. Richer
1998 - 2000	R. Bramald
2000 - 2007	D. Crawford
2007 - 2018	M. Brunskill
2018 -	P. Weldon

Hon Fixture Secretaries

1947 - 1950	J.W. Middlemas
1950 - 1952	W.O.F. Patterson
1952 - 1953	T.C. Danskin
1953 - 1977	W.E. Laidlaw
1977 - 2024	W.G. Hewitt
2025 - now	part of Chair of Rugby's role

Club Captains

1947 - 53	W.E. Laidlaw	1979 - 80	I. Pringle	1999 - 01	D. W. Hutton
1953 - 54	D.P. Trousdale	1980 - 82	M. Calder	2001 - 05	J.A. Stafford
1954 - 55	J.E. Bewick	1982 - 84	K.U. Fraser	2005 - 06	D. W. Dickinson
1955 - 58	J.W. Mackay	1984 - 86	C. E. Green	2006 - 09	A. Rogers
1958 - 61	J.L. Robson	1986 - 87	M. Calder	2009 - 11	T. Wilkinson
1961 - 63	N. Wiseman	1987 - 88	A. Brown	2011 - 12	J. P. Forsythe
1963 - 64	R. Scott	1988 - 90	I. G. Pledger	2012 - 13	P.J. Mooney
1964 - 68	J. Wilson	1990 - 92	C. D. Lishman	2013 - 14	R.J.M. Morrison
1968 - 70	R.A. Lee	1992 - 93	I. E. Laidlaw	2014 - 23	C. Hill
1970 - 73	W.G. Hewitt	1993 - 94	M. I. Lishman	2023 -	J. C. Elliott
1973 - 76	D. Pringle	1994 - 98	R. Young		
1976 - 79	J.S. Leithead	1998 - 99	D.E. Clark		

Representatives to Northumberland RU Junior Clubs

1947 - 1952	J.R. Hepple	1952 - 1954	J.E. Bewick
-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------

Representatives to Northumberland RU Committee

1954 - 1965	R.E. Appleby	1983 - 1997	D.R. Turnbull	2005 - 2014	D. Pringle
1965 - 1975	W.E. Laidlaw	1997 - 1999	D. Pringle	2014 - 2019	R.N. Hall
1975 - 1983	A. Gordon	1999 - 2005	W.G. Hewitt	2019 -	D.Hutton

Northumberland RU County Presidents

1968/69	R.E. Appleby	2014/15	D. Pringle
1997/98	D.R. Turnbull	2015/16	K.U. Fraser

Northumberland RU County Treasurers

1964 - 1978	R.E. Appleby	1993 - 00	A.E. Woolhead
-------------	--------------	-----------	---------------

Canada RFU President

1974 - 76	P.C. Clarke
-----------	-------------

A Brief History of Seniors and Colts

- 1947 The Old Edwardians RFC was formed on 28th June 1947 as a junior member of Northumberland RFU with G.F. Howell as President, J.R. Hepple as Secretary & W.E 'Ted' Laidlaw as Captain.
- 1950 Club renamed Morpeth Old Edwardians on 5th May as an Old Edwardians RFC already in existence in Birmingham.
- 1951 P.V. Crooks becomes the Club's first international - England U19s XV.
- 1953/54 Move from the Grammar School to Grange House Field, Mitford Road.
- 1954 May 14th obtained senior playing status in Northumberland.
- 1956/57 Under 18s win County Club and Schools Competition.
- 1957/58 Successful season capped by reaching the first Senior Cup Final. Nigel Savage became first Senior County Player against British Police and represents England U19s. Under 18s win County Club and Schools Competition. Peter Clarke Captained British Columbia against the Australian touring side.
- 1958/59 R 'Bob' Scott became 1st Senior County Championship Player followed by JL Robson the following year.
- 1959/60 Under 18s win County Club & Schools Competition.
- 1960/61 David Learmonth represents England U19s.
- 1961/62 New Clubhouse opened.
- 1962/63 Club running five sides. Peter Skelton represents England U19s.
- 1963/64 Win Senior County 7s. Under 18s draw County Club and Schools Competition with Tynedale.
- 1964/65 Win Senior County 7s. Under 18s win County Club and Schools Competition.
- 1966/67 Celebrated 21st Anniversary with a County Presidents XV. Bob Towers represents England U19s. Win Senior County 7s.
- 1968/69 R.E. 'Ralph' Appleby first Morpeth member to be elected President of Northumberland Rugby Union.
- 1969/70 Reivers win 2nd team County Cup for the first time. Mike McKenzie gains Cambridge "Blue", plays in Final Scottish Trial and plays for North of England against South Africa.
- 1970 June 20th Club is renamed Morpeth Rugby Club.
- 1971/72 25th Anniversary celebration games against Yorkshire Luddites & strong International XV. Under 18s win County Club and Schools Competition.
- 1973/74 Under 18s win County Club and Schools Competition. Under 19s win County 7s.
- 1974/75 The National Knock-out season. Having beaten Cumbrian Cup holders Netherall, then East Midlands champions Stockwood Park, reached the semi-final against Rosslyn Park after defeating London Irish and Bath. Brian Keenleyside represents British Police. Under 18s win County Club and Schools Competition. Peter Clarke Canada RFU President - Peter played in the first ever 4 games for the Club in the 1947/48 season.
- 1975/76 Stags win 4th Team County Cup. Under the guidance of W.O.F 'Oxley' Patterson the new Clubhouse was opened. Martin Calder played for England Colts. Win Senior County 7s. Peter Clarke Canada RFU President.
- 1977/78 A record breaking season - 1st XV scoring 142 tries & 822 points in 37 games (4 point tries). Under 18s win County Club & Schools Competition.
- 1978/79 Alan McMillan plays in England Final Trial & is an England tourist to Japan and Fiji.
- 1979/80 A Club Stewardess is appointed. 4th XV beat the Stags in the Junior Shield Final.
- 1980/81 Win Senior County Plate 7s.
- 1983/84 The 1st XV play 40 games in a season.
- 1986/87 Alan Old, England International & British Lion plays for the Club. Nick Robinson gains Cambridge "Blue".
- 1987/88 The new League Structure begins in North East Division One. First match was a 9-7 win against Rotherham and a decade later Rotherham were a Premiership side. Duncan McCrae represents Scotland U18s.
- 1988/89 Duncan McCrae represents Scotland U19s. Win Senior County 7s. Win Senior County Plate 7s.
- 1989/90 Under 17s win County Cup. Stags win 3rd Team County Cup. Duncan McCrae represents Scotland U21s.
- 1990/91 The Club hosts a Senior County Championship match for the first time - against Staffordshire. The Club Shop opens. Under 17s win County Cup.
- 1991/92 Chris Lishman becomes the first Morpeth player to captain the Senior County XV in the Championship. Michael Dungait represents Scotland Under 18s & Under 19s.

1992/93	The season begins with a Colin Young International Memorial game. An International XV captained by British Lions Paul Ackford helps the club raise over £20,000 for Marrow Transplant 2000 Fund. Michael Dungait represents Scotland Under 19s. Keith Dungait represents Scottish Exiles U18s.
1993/94	Keith Dungait represents Scottish Exiles U19s. Michael Dungait represents Scottish Exiles U21s. Under 19s win County 7s.
1994/95	Will Munro represents Scottish Exiles U21s.
1995/96	The Club have 5 sides in County Cup finals - but no victories!
1997/98	50th Anniversary Season & first ever Senior County Cup victory. David Turnbull County President.
1998/99	Reivers win 2nd team County Cup. Under 17s win County Cup & County 7s. Under 18s joint County Cup Winners with Percy Park. Barry Hills represents North of England U18s.
1999/2000	Following a very generous donation and a tremendous amount of work the refurbishment of the Clubhouse was completed with a large new Clubhouse & new kitchen facilities.
2000/01	The rugby season cut short by the foot and mouth epidemic. There was no rugby at Grange House Field after February 3rd. Paul Mooney Captains England Clubs Under 18s. Jon Golding represents England Under 19s.
2001/02	1st XV win Senior Cup. Ian Dryburgh represents Scotland Under 18s. Nick Mather and Simon Barber represent England Colleges.
2002/03	Three County Trophies in the Clubhouse after 1st XV 01/02 success. Ian Dryburgh represents Scotland Under 19s & plays in Under 19s World Cup.
2003/04	1st XV one point away from promotion in League. First club in Northumberland to be awarded Community Rugby Seal of Approval. Ian Dryburgh represents Scotland Under 21s & plays in Under 21s World Cup. Reivers win 2nd team County Cup. Paul Mooney represents England Counties. Rory Morrison played Scotland Under 18s & Captained Scottish Exiles Under 18s.
2004/05	The Ted Laidlaw Suite officially opened to complete second stage of refurbishment of the new Clubhouse. Reivers win 2nd team County Cup. Toby Flood represents England Under 21s. Ian Dryburgh represents Scotland Under 21s.
2005/06	Three Junior County Cup finals contested by Reivers (winners of 2nd team County Cup), Edwardians and Stags. Edwardians were Northumberland County League 3A winners. Toby Flood represents England Under 21s.
2006/07	Toby Flood makes full England debut.
2007/08	1st XV win Senior County Cup & Stags win 4th team County Cup. Toby Flood appears in World Cup Final. Jon Golding makes England Saxons debut.
2008/09	New changing rooms opened in September by RFU President. Reivers win 2nd team County Cup.
2009/10	Club purchase of Grange House Field complex completed. Morpeth 7s ran for the first time.
2011/12	Completed purchase of Low Ford Field to extend playing estate. Stags win 4th team County Cup.
2012/13	Colts win County Cup. Morpeth Beer Festival ran for the first time. Colts win Kelso 7s. Under 17s win County 7s. David Dickinson represents England Counties.
2013/14	Colts win County Cup. Stags win 4th team County Cup & Coquet League. Opening of The 1975 Room and Gym. Under 18s win County 7s.
2014/15	1st XV promoted back to North One East. 1st XV break 1977/78 points record scoring 149 tries and 939 points in 28 games (5 point tries). Colts win County Cup. Stags win Coquet League. David Pringle County President. Match floodlights & new carpark facilities installed. Under 17s win County 7s. Under 18s win County 7s.
2015/16	A Club Steward is appointed following the Stewardess's retirement after 36 years of service. Ken Fraser County President. 1st XV win Senior County Cup. Tony Moody represents English & British Police. Reivers win 2nd team County Plate. Edwardians win 3rd team County Plate & Aln League. Stags win County Cup. Colts win County Cup & Durham & Northumberland League.
2016/17	Reivers win 2nd team County Cup & Candy Trophy. Edwardians win 3rd team County Plate. Colts win North East and Cumbria League. Tony Moody represents English & British Police. Under 17s win County 7s. Under 18s win County 7s Plate. Mighty Peth win Valencia 7s.
2017/18	Reivers win 2nd team County Cup, Candy 1 League & Candy Trophy. Stags win 4th team County Cup. Colts win County Plate & North East and Cumbria League. Tony Moody represents English and British Police. Under 18s win County 7s.
2018/19	1st XV win North One East League. Edwardians win Candy 2 League, 3rd team County Cup & Candy Bowl. Colts win County Plate. Under 18s win 7s County Plate. Tony Moody represents English and British Police. Phil Brantingham represents England Under 17s and 18s.

2019-20	1st XV win Senior County Cup for the 5th time. Rugby season cut short due to Covid 19 pandemic. There was no rugby at Grange House Field after 15th of March. Tony Moody represents English & British Police. Colts join Borders Semi-Junior League. Phil Brantingham represents England U18s.
2020/21	Phil Brantingham represents England U20s.
2021/22	Seventy Fifth playing season. Carl Hill Captain of Senior County XV. Josh Williams & Tony Moody represent English and British Police.
2022/23	Clubhouse refurbished. Josh Williams, Hus Yilmaz & Tony Moody represent English Police. Tony Moody represents British Police. Colts Runners Up in Borders Semi-Junior League & win Borders & County Cups. Morpeth Colts 7s ran for the first time. Carl Hill Club Captain for 9th season.
2023/24	Josh Williams represents English Police. Ranters win 4th team County Cup - Veterans. Reivers win County Plate Shield. Colts win Morpeth 7s.
2024/25	Reivers win County Senior Bowl Shield. Ryan Shaw represents North of England U20s. Jack Elliott Captain of Senior County XV.

A Brief History of Morpeth RFC Girls, Womens and Age Grade Sections

1958/59	Keith Lister represents England U15s.
Pre 1984	Youth Section trained & had occasional games with players playing school rugby for other Northumberland clubs.
1984/85	Youth Section Committee formed & coaches/managers appointed to all age groups.
1989/90	Under 16s win County Cup.
1996/97	Under 16s win County Cup. Chris Reynolds represents England Under 16s.
1997/98	Barry Hills represents England U16s.
2000/01	Girls Section formed.
2004/05	Sarah Yule represents England U19s Women.
2005/06	Womens Section play their first competitive game. Under 11s win County Cup.
2006/07	Rachael Fraser & Kate Hall represent England U19s Women. Under 12s win County Cup.
2007/08	Rachael Fraser selected for England U20s Women. Under 7s win County Cup.
2009/10	Rachel Roberts represents England U20s Women. Under 8s win County Cup.
2010/11	Under 9s win County Cup. Under 7s win County Plate.
2011/12	Under 10s win County Cup.
2012/13	Under 11s win County Cup & Land Rover Cup. Under 13s win County Cup. James Blackett & Philip Brantingham play in an Under 11s tournament in France for England representative side The Lambs.
2013/14	Under 12s win County Cup and Land Rover Cup. Under 14s win County Cup. Under 16s joint County Cup Winners with Tynedale.
2014/15	Under 13s win County Cup. Jessica Mae Young selected for Scotland U20s Women.
2015/16	Linzi Taylor selected for England U20s Women. Under 14s win County Cup. Under 13s win County Plate.
2016/17	Under 13s win County Plate. Under 15s win prestigious Tynedale Schools Festival.
2017/18	Under 15s Girls win County Cup.
2018/19	Under 15s Girls win County Cup and North of England Cup and progress to National Cup Semi-Final. Morpeth Girls Good Friday Festival ran for the first time.
2021/22	Amy Carr plays for Womens British Army. Sophie Lamont plays in Womens Varsity Final for Cambridge drawing 10-10. Under 15s win County Cup.
2022-23	Amy Carr represents the UK Armed Forces, in New Zealand, at the International Defence Rugby Competition - this ran the same time as the delayed Women's Rugby World Cup 2021. Amy Carr plays for Womens British Army. Emma Gerrard represents England U18s.
2023/24	Amy Carr represents UK Armed Forces. U12s win County Festival. U16s Girls win County Plate. Emma Gerrard represents England U19s. Amy Carr plays for Womens British Army.
2024/25	Amy Carr plays for Womens British Army. 5th Morpeth Girls Good Friday Festival held and 450 players took part.

Colts 2006 - 2025

Traditionally Colts were Under 19s but by the 2005-2006 season they had been a mixed group of Under 17s & Under 18s for some time. There were concerns nationally about the lack of players transitioning from Colts to senior rugby so in May 2006 a meeting was held at Percy Park to discuss the possibility of formal leagues for Colts and so the North East & Cumbria Colts Leagues were born.

Morpeth Colts at that time were going through a change in management and coaching staff with club stalwart Ian Pringle stepping down and handing the management reins over to Rob Parkinson who would be joined by coaches Loren Nardini and Tom Bramald.

At the Percy Park meeting the playing options were a Saturday League or one of two Sunday Leagues, with Morpeth opting to go into the Saturday League, a decision which has proved to be beneficial to the club. Playing on Saturdays, kicking off at the same time as the senior teams brought the Colts closer to the adult rugby of the club, making transition that much easier.

It soon became apparent that the Saturday League was the more reliable in terms of fixtures being fulfilled and the more competitive, Morpeth finished a credible second that season behind Blaydon, playing 17 winning 10 and losing 7.

Morpeth Colts also got to the final of the County Cup which that year was hosted by Ponteland, the opponents being Tynedale who ran out winners and would go on to dominate that competition over the following four seasons. Several of the senior Colts (Under 18s) did get the opportunity to play for some of the senior club sides that season with two of them, Liam Allen and David Calder later graduating to the senior 1st XV.

Interestingly David Calder came into Colts as a centre, but it was very soon picked up that he would make a better open-side flanker, which is exactly the position David later played in for the club 1st XV, he would not be the last Colt to benefit from a change of position at Colts level.

The 2007-2008 season kicked off with a rejuvenated Colts 7s County Cup tournament being hosted by Morpeth with six Under 17 teams and fourteen Under 18 teams in their respective competitions.

Both Morpeth teams gave a good account of themselves but were both defeated in their respective finals, U17s losing to Tynedale and U18s losing by 2 points to Ponteland.

The league kicked off with a win at home v Carlisle, that was probably the highlight of the first half of the season, with Morpeth Colts then going on a run of 7 league matches recording 6 losses and one draw taking them up to the 1st of December and wallowing at the bottom of the league.

Things seemed to turn around at that point with the Colts then going on to win the next 3 matches. One of those matches will always stick in the memory as one of the most impressive team performances seen by a Colts team before or since.

On a fair February fifteen Colts, representing the total availability, boarded the coach for an away trip to top of the league Carlisle who had not lost since that first match at Morpeth back in September. Of those 15 six of them, Jonny Stephenson, Michael Craigs, Liam Carmichael, Carl Parkinson, Simon Manley, and Richie Stephenson, later went on to play for Morpeth 1st XV with Liam later going on to play for National League 2 club Tynedale. One of the junior U17 Colts who played that day (Cameron Curry) would later go on to Captain National League 1 club Hull. 19-0 up at half time with tries from Parkinson, Craigs and Duthie and Richie Stephenson slotting two of his 3 conversions, Morpeth lost second row Beddard with a nasty cut below his right eye. In the spirit of the game Carlisle loaned Morpeth a player but the away team held firm and finished the match winning 19-10, this was the result which arguably prevented Carlisle from winning the league that season they finished second behind Penrith. Morpeth finished the season 5th out of a league of 8 teams.

In the County Cup that season the Colts were knocked out in the Quarter Final stage losing 5-0 at home to eventual cup winners Tynedale.

Morpeth did reach the final of the County Plate but sadly lost 9-6 to their 7s nemesis Ponteland.

The 2008-2009 season saw Tom Bramald leaving us to support the coaching team at Tynedale, at Morpeth, the Colts coaching team was bolstered by former Morpeth and Tynedale 1st XV scrum half Keith Dungait.

Up until this point numbers within the Colts squad had been good, unfortunately that season saw the start of a decline in numbers at Morpeth and a run of poor results led to two consecutive years of second bottom league positions.

We did however manage to again reach a County Plate Final v a Gosforth team featuring prop Fraser Balmain who would later go on to play his senior 1st XV debut season at Morpeth before going onto Loughborough University and signing for Premier League team Leicester, sadly Morpeth again fell short in a close match losing 8-5. Morpeth Colts would not play in another County final for another two seasons.

Despite the disappointing league, cup and plate runs, the Colts still managed to produce future 1st XV players Matty Dawson, Daniel Halliday, Ben Turner, Paul Wonders, Ollie Brewster, Greg Young, Adam Grieve, Alex Younger and Sam Hornby over this time of poor league and cup form and Jonny Arkle later went on to Captain the 1st XV at our neighbours in Ashington.

The start of the 2011-2012 season saw a resurgence in numbers with the now senior Colts being joined by a healthy number of talented junior Colts. It is interesting to note that yet again two players in the 2011-2012 senior Colts had a change of playing position, Craig Donnelly who came out of U16s as a centre was switched to playing open-side flanker and Ollie Tapscott in his second season as a colt was switched from fly half to second row. Both these players would go on to play senior 1st XV in their new positions, with Tapscott later going on to play for National League two side Leicester Lions, in the second row.

That season saw the Colts move up the league table finishing fourth out of a league of 8 teams and reaching a County Cup Final for the first time in 5 years, sadly losing 11-8 to Gosforth; this would be the last time Morpeth lost a match in the County Cup for the next 4 seasons. Colts skipper that year Andrew Telford would later be a regular in the Morpeth 1st XV.

That season the Colts were asked to compete in the Borders Cup after one of the Scottish sides had dropped out, then won their first match at home v Galashiels but lost the following week v Selkirk. With being able to turn out two full sides on those days, league matches were also fulfilled.

The 2012-2013 season got off to a bright start, numbers were again up, and the new batch of junior U17 Colts started with a bang winning the U17s 7s County Cup.

The Colts this season were stronger again throughout backs and forwards, they went on to finish 2nd in the league and were perhaps unfortunate not to win. The match that sticks in the memory was at home v league winners Billingham, a tough bruising encounter by two teams who neither asked for nor expected any quarter to be given, with Billingham coming out on top by one point winning 25-26. The Billingham coach afterwards congratulated our players saying it was the toughest match their Colts had faced in many a year.

The Colts again reached the final of the County Cup, this time the opposition was Alnwick, and the match was played at Morpeth, it was initially a tight affair with England Under 18s loose head prop, Aston Whitlow, causing our front row some problems in the scrums but once junior Colt Greg Henderson worked him out things were steadied in that department.

Our two half backs that day were Jack Elliott and Kieran Brown, two of the finest to have come through the Colts Section, they ran the show that day and with a try from wing Chase Evans and Brown slotting the conversion as well as the inevitable penalties Morpeth at last won a County Final 19-8.

That squad featured several future 1st XV players such as Ian Grieve, Nick Birch, Chris Stodhart, Callum Duncan, Jack Elliott, Chase Evans, Callum Lawn, Tom Manley, Alex Tait, and Robbie Stansfield. There would be several junior Colts that season who would also go on to feature in the 1st XV.

That season the Colts got their first invite to Kelso 7s, coaches Keith Dungait and Paul Jackson took a talented squad up to Kelso and to everyone's surprise and delight they won the tournament, with junior Colt Kieran Brown also winning the accolade of player of the tournament. That squad featured the following players:

Sam Lamont, Greg Henderson, Nick Birch, Tom Manley, Jack Elliott, Kieran Brown, Alex Tait, Chris Stodhart, Chase Evans, Callum Lawn.

The following day Berwick head of Youth, Dougie Hall, called Colts manager Rob Parkinson to inform him there would be an emergency meeting in the Borders later in the week, when asked why he replied "You were only there to make the numbers up, you weren't meant to win the bloody thing!"

The Colts would later receive invites to more 7's in the Borders but have not to date managed to win another one..yet..

The 2013-2014 season saw Keith Dungait leave the coaching staff to focus on his successful business, and Loren Nardini leave us after getting the opportunity to coach Whitley Bay Rockliff 1st XV, they both went with our best wishes and gratitude for their sterling work with the Colts.

They were replaced by Level 3 coach Joe Miller and Level 2 coach Davey Walker who had both been coaching Morpeth U16s alongside Stephen Rank and Willi Thompson.

This was a real coup for the Colts section with both these coaches having had experience coaching senior 1st XV teams and Davey bringing a level of playing experience not seen at Morpeth Colts for many years.

Yet again in the league, Morpeth finished 2nd and yet again probably could have won it, however this time it was neighbours Alnwick who went on to claim top spot.

This season saw Kieran Brown make his 1st XV debut whilst still a Colt in a match away to Drifffield, taking the field during the 2nd half and playing at fly half, Kieran continued to play fly half for the 1st XV for the next few months up until regular fly half Ben Hornby recovered from injury.

Morpeth Colts were again to reach the County Cup Final and play their League nemesis Alnwick at Percy Park in match which the young Mitford Road team completely dominated putting in a commanding performance and winning 33-10.

Half backs Cameron Walker and Kieran Brown were in control from the kickoff, and with scrum half Alex Ball coming on in the 2nd half, none of the momentum was lost.

The pack in this team was probably more dominant than the pack in the final the year before, with blind-side flanker Liam Scott the pick of the forwards.

Out of this team the following went on to play 1st XV rugby at Morpeth.

Prop Hus Yilmaz, flanker Matt Denton, half backs Cam Walker, Alex Ball and Kieran Brown, wings Jake McKay and Deven Rees, full back Adrian Jonas.

The following season 2014-2015 numbers were again steady, the squad got off to a good start, with Morpeth again hosting the Under 17s and Under 18s 7s and Morpeth Colts became the first to win both competitions with the Under 18s not conceding a try throughout the whole competition.

The Saturday league was again strong that season with Morpeth again finishing second behind Billingham. Matt Denton made his 1st XV debut that season whilst still a Colt and went on to be a regular in the 1st XV the following season.

The Colts again reached the County Cup Final and for the third year running our opponents were Alnwick, who also hosted the finals. The match that year was a much tighter affair and could have gone either way, but Morpeth dug in and ran out winners at 16-12.

Sadly, the match will be remembered for an injury to wing Caymen Nellis who dislocated his ankle, Caymen has not played rugby again since that day, a reminder of how cruel sport can sometimes be.

The 2015-2016 season got under way with the Under 17s winning the 7s Plate and the Under 18s retaining the 7s Cup, this was also the season that Morpeth Colts finally won the league. The Colts reached the County Cup Final for the fourth season in a row, after beating Alnwick in the Semi Final in a thriller with skipper Rory Smith slotting a difficult last-minute penalty to win the match. This year it was hosted by Blyth and the opponents were the much-fancied Percy Park, showing maturity beyond their years the young Morpeth Colts managed the game very well under the leadership of skipper Rory Smith, frustrating Percy Park at every turn, they ran out 11-3 winners.

From the Colts squad this season, the following went on to play senior 1st XV, Fraser Boldy, who ironically did not play in the Cup Final due to injury, Harry Thompson, and Miles Gavaghan.

The 2016-2017 season again saw a slight decline in the fortunes of the Colts and also a decline in the number of Colts teams in general wishing to play their rugby on Saturdays, with the majority of clubs in the North East & Cumbria opting to continue to play on Sundays, as a consequence of this the Saturday league this season only had five teams in it however Morpeth Colts did manage to retain the league title, finishing that season undefeated in the league, sadly the same could not be said of the County Cup with Morpeth losing away to Berwick in the Semi Final. Berwick would lose in the final v a rejuvenated Tynedale.

2017-2018 saw one of the smallest number of players move up from Under 16s to Colts, and with a small number of senior Colts we had one of the smallest squads since the 2009-2010 season.

Numbers in the Saturday League were up this season with 7 teams entered thanks to the return of Carlisle and the newcomers Egremont.

Morpeth Colts managed to complete the hat trick of League titles winning 9, losing 2 and drawing 1 game.

In the County Cup our Colts were defeated at the Quarter Final stage by Ponteland, the team they had beaten at that stage the previous season, however Ponteland would go on to win the Cup in a thrilling final v Tynedale. Meanwhile Morpeth reached the County Plate Final beating Percy Park in the final. Yet again this was a squad of Colts with players such as Captain Robbie Nash and Jake Jardine who went on to play senior 1st XV. It is worth mentioning that this squad had one of the finest centre partnerships seen in the Colts in the past 10 years with Joe Smart and Matty Dale (son of former 1st XV No.8 Ben Dale).

2018-2019 sadly saw another decline in teams playing in the Saturday League, Egremont did not return that season and Carlisle applied to join the Borders Semi Junior League. The Captain was Elliott Clark, son of former 1st XV prop and Club Captain Duncan Clark.

The Colts that season could not repeat the league successes of the last three years and finished second from bottom, they did however retain the County Plate, beating Berwick in the final, the skipper Elliott Clark would figure in the 1st XV the following season.

It was becoming clear that numbers of Colts teams wishing to play on Saturdays was on the decline in the North East & Cumbria and if as a club we wished to continue benefiting from playing our Colts on Saturdays things needed to change and we would have to seek Saturday rugby elsewhere.

Towards the end of the 2018-2019 season the decision was finally taken to approach the Borders Semi Junior League (BSJL) Committee and apply for inclusion in that league.

It is true that Morpeth Colts had already cultivated a good relationship with clubs in the Borders, they played regularly in four of their 7s tournaments and played pre-season friendlies with a couple of the Colts sides over the border. Indeed, the relationship with Morpeth Colts and the Borders clubs could be traced back years before to the time when Brian Keenleyside and Jimmy Pringle ran the Colts, this latter relationship was merely a re-kindling of old friendships, and so the BSJL Committee gladly accepted Morpeth Colts for the 2019-2020 season.

It cannot be stressed enough what a bold step it was going into the BSJL in 2019-2020, at that time the Colts Section numbers were lower than they had been for many a year with only 23 regular players and usually at most 20 of those ever being available on match days.

This new venture for the Colts saw them in a league of 11 teams, giving them 20 league matches for the season, sadly due to the Global Pandemic that struck, Morpeth and most other clubs did not quite complete their full allocation of fixtures with Morpeth managing 19 of their 20 matches, winning 9, losing 9, drawing 1 and finishing a credible 6th and above the other two English clubs in the league Tynedale and Carlisle.

The Colts did once again reach the County Cup Final and were due to play Percy Park however due to the Pandemic the final was never played.

The players themselves relished the challenge and enjoyed the regularity of fixtures so it is safe to say, Morpeth are settled in their new league.

Sadly, as well know, community rugby did not get played at all during the 2020-2021 season due to the Pandemic, the Colts did play a couple of matches in the extended season during May away to Darlington Mowden Park and then Alnwick and Ponteland recording 3 wins out of 3 and even managed to fit a tour into Kendal winning their as well finishing the season undefeated.

The 2021-22 season kicked off with an away trip to Peebles, sadly this resulted in a defeat, and this set the tone for the next five matches as well with Morpeth Colts losing their first six matches of the new season, although there were signs of improvement along the way.

Their first win of the season was recorded on a Friday night match away to Duns, this was followed by a home win v Carlisle, a bruising encounter with the young Morpethians showing some true grit and determination. Except for an away defeat to Tynedale, the Colts then went on a 9-match undefeated run, including a County Cup Semi Final win v Percy Park, the turnaround was remarkable.

They also reached the Border cup Semi Final losing narrowly to Hawick by two points. Hawick were a team who went this entire season undefeated, but it was Morpeth gave them their sternest test.

The Colts ended the league season finishing a very credible third and top of the 4 English teams.

In the Borders 7s tournaments, the Colts finished runners up at Kelso and lost narrowly to Tynedale in the Semis at Melrose.

Having reached the Final of the County Cup the Mitford Road Young Guns again faced Tynedale in what was a thrilling and fitting match for a Cup Final, sadly Morpeth again lost narrowly by two points to their County Cousins.

After a promising 21-22 season, the new intake of jnr Colts with the leadership of the previous season's jnr Colts who were now snr Colts, stepped up to the challenge of the 22-23 season in the Borders Semi Junior League. An away win to Carlisle set the tone for a run of matches with only one defeat away to Kelso. The other team setting the standard in the league was Peebles, who suffered their first defeat of the season in a League and Cup double header at Morpeth, the match was a thriller which went to the wire, Peebles were leading by 3 points right up to the final minute when Dan McConnell touched down for a try with about 30 seconds left on the clock, Harvey Gillie duly stepped up to add the extras giving Morpeth a crucial 28-24 win, putting them top of the league and into the Borders Cup semifinal. The Colts won their remaining league fixtures as did Peebles leaving them neck and neck and setting up a winner takes all league decider at The Gytes. The match was an end-to-end thrill fest with both teams contributing to an epic game, Peebles would score and then Morpeth would respond with a score of their own, sadly in the final 10 minutes Peebles scored a couple of tries giving them some space with the match ending 52-34 to the home team and Morpeth finishing a credible second in the league.

The following week Morpeth went on to beat Gala in the Cup Semi Final, they would face Kelso, the only other team to beat them in the league, in the Cup Final at Hawick. Happily, the outcome was very different, with Morpeth winning the match and lifting the Borders Cup for the first time in their history.

The following week the Colts were again in the County Cup Final, this time v Alnwick and this time running out comfortable winners, all in all one of the most successful Colts seasons for a few years.

In the Borders 7's the Colts finished runners up in the Kelso 7's after which they became known as Semi Final specialists, reaching every semifinal in all the other tournaments.

This season saw the inaugural Morpeth Colts 7s with an 8-team format involving teams from the BSJL as well as Northern Colts and a Young Farmers team. The home team were sadly (you guessed it) knocked out in the semifinal by the Young Farmers who finished runners up to a strong Kelso.

The Borders clubs were so impressed by the tournament that they voted to bring Morpeth's tournament into the Borders King of 7s series, the first English club to have been given that honour.

The 23-24 season saw a change in the format of the league which came about due to a change in the Scottish National Colts Cup. Each team played each other once between September and December, at which point the league was split into top six and bottom six. Teams in the top six played each other and with the bottom six doing the same. In the first half of the season Morpeth lost only one match in the league, away to last season's nemesis Peebles, this put us in a strong position coming into the 2nd half of the season with Peebles having lost two matches, sadly out of 5 matches in the top six, we won only one, with Peebles winning the league for the 2nd season running and Morpeth finishing 3rd behind Kelso.

The Colts had been knocked out of the County Cup in the Semi Final by eventual winners Novos and were knocked out of the Borders Cup in the Semi Final by eventual winners Kelso.

In the 7s against all odds the Colts finished runners up at Hawick, and reached a lot of semifinals again, up until our own 7's at Morpeth where they went on to win the trophy for the first time against a strong Hawick outfit, so the season ended on a high note.

The 24-25 season kicked off with one of the smallest squads we've had in several seasons, however to the players credit we fulfilled all our league and cup fixtures throughout the season, even though on occasion we had to borrow players from the opposition.

Our first match of the season was at home v Alnwick, with Morpeth Colts losing 12-14 and handing the Stratstone Trophy over for the first time in about 8 years, however it was only temporary as they won it back again later in the season in a Borders Cup match away at Alnwick.

Sadly, this season saw the Colts only win two matches in the league and finish 2nd bottom, but crucially the Colts section against the odds has survived smaller numbers and we look forward to better numbers in the 25-26 season. In the 7's the wins were few, but the pick of the bunch was the win v Jed Thistle, who at the time were top of the King of 7s table, at our own 7s in May, this ensured we finished top of the group, sadly losing out to Hawick in the semifinal.

In summary the policy within the Colts has always been one of development and transitioning players into senior rugby, alongside all those players that have gone on to play for the 1st XV, there are countless others who have figured and continue to figure in the Reivers, Edwardians and Stags, even our close neighbours Ashington have benefited from the strong Age Grade and Colts Sections at Morpeth, and that can only be good for the game in general.

Touring has always been an integral part of rugby, and at Morpeth it has always been thought to be an important part of a young rugby player's development.

From 2006, the management group set a target to give every Colt player the opportunity to tour.

The tours started small with a two-night tour to Edinburgh in April 2007. An entertaining match resulted in a defeat for the hosts, Currie. An enjoyable evening in the clubhouse after also involved a team from Preston Grasshoppers who happened to be touring the same weekend.

April 2009 saw us taking the Colts over the Pennines to Kendal for two nights, sadly the Colts lost a tough match against a strong Kendal. This match will always be remembered for a nasty injury to scrum half Connor Nichol which resulted in him spending a night in Lancaster Hospital. Connor recovered and went on to play rugby again, he currently plays at Ashington. Connor would miss the trip to "Go Ape" the day after the match which saw his teammates and coaches swinging through the trees in Whinlatter Forest.

The Colts again toured a year later in 2010, this time they stayed in a hostel on the shores of beautiful Loch Lomond and were joined by club old boy and former Colts coach Jimmy Pringle. The opponents on this tour were a club with links to Morpeth from years gone by, Glasgow Hutchieson Aloysians, formerly known as Glasgow Clarkston RFC. The beauty of having someone like Jimmy on tour is he has links far and wide outside of Morpeth and as soon we walked into that clubhouse there were people there who knew him, we were made to feel very welcome. Unfortunately, despite an entertaining match, the Colts were again unable to record a victory on tour.

The lads enjoyed a good third half in the clubhouse and a trip to another "Go Ape" the following day, which boasted the longest zip wire in the UK at that time.

Our next tour was in 2012, from this point it was decided to tour every two years so this would enable everyone to experience one tour either as junior or senior Colt.

This particular year saw us taking the Colts abroad for the first time, on a four-night tour to Ghent in Belgium, where we played two matches v Antwerp and Dendermonde. The tour got off to a bad start on the pitch with a loss v Antwerp, however the next day was a different story with the Colts playing two short 40-minute matches v Dendermonde whom they beat 67-0 and then a club from Sussex, 10-0.

Such was the success of this tour abroad; it was decided that this would be the format for tours going forward.

The 2014 tour saw the Colts travelling to Holland and staying in the beautiful city of Den Haag where they played two matches v Hilversum and Hookers RFC, finishing the tour undefeated. The best third half on this tour was at Hookers where many songs were sung by visitors and hosts, including a rendition of the South African National Anthem sang in Afrikaans by our very own Springbok Adrian Jonas.

In 2016 the Colts returned to Belgium, but this time stayed in Antwerp, at this time the head coach at Antwerp RFC was none other than former Morpeth 1st XV coach, Darren Cunningham. Darren had chosen that weekend to be on holiday in Spain!

Happily, v Antwerp this time around the Colts won, afterwards in the clubhouse the news came through that Morpeth 1st XV had also triumphed in the County Cup Final. The other thing we learnt that day from the Antwerp 1st XV Captain was that they had a back row move called a "Joe Miller" named after the Colts coach who had coached Darren Cunningham at Blyth.

The second match v Mechelen continued Morpeth's unbeaten run; it also saw a first on a Colts tour with Donald Aynsley piping the players off the coach with his newly acquired Northumbrian Pipes; with Donald being very much a novice this was not a pleasant experience for anyone within earshot!

2018 saw the Colts again touring to Holland and staying in Den Haag, the first encounter was a social tournament at Eemland RFC, ironically the first match was v Billingham Colts who just happened to be touring the same weekend. Morpeth Colts had already played them twice in the league that season, so this social tournament suddenly became very serious, thankfully the Northumbrians won that match and went on to win the tournament.

The following day in scorching sunshine, the Colts triumphed v a spirited Gouda after which both teams went for a cooling dip in the local canal.

Sadly 2018 was the Colts last tour abroad, due to the global pandemic. The 2020 tour did not happen, and the Colts settled for a tour to Kendal in May 2021, reversing the defeat of 2009.

Despite the disappointment of not being able to go abroad, the lads still had a lot of fun and thoroughly enjoyed

their touring experience, we look forward to being able to take our Colts abroad again soon.

The 2022 tour was again meant to go to Holland, but sadly due to that country still having some severe travel restrictions in place we had to change the destination to Cork in Ireland. This proved to be a challenging tour with some stiff opposition, the Colts lost their first match narrowly but won their second match. It's amazing how tiring and physically draining visiting local museums and sampling the local culture can be...

The usual touring coaching and management staff were joined on this tour by none other than Chairman of Rugby John Stafford, you may be mistaken to think that he is related in some way to Hilary Stafford's son Dan, but this is something John repeatedly denied throughout the tour.

All in all, a successful tour, enjoyed by everyone, and more importantly we got them all back unscathed, we look forward to the 2024 tour.

The 2024 tour saw revisiting a previous destination in Belgium, the beautiful City of Ghent, this was a strange tour in that we had difficulty finding accommodation in our preferred destination of Holland and had trouble finding any available opposition in Belgium which meant we stayed in Belgium but played all our matches in Holland.

Our first match was against Breda, which we narrowly lost, the home team were possibly aided by the referee inexplicably blowing the final whistle 10 minutes early.

Our second matchday was a series of matches against all English teams which were on tour as well, this was very well hosted by Roosendaal Rugby Club. The Colts played 4 matches, winning 3 of them. All in all, the players enjoyed the tour, returning to the bosom of their families refreshed and with some lasting memories.

As well as going on tour, Morpeth Colts have always been keen to host touring teams. We have had teams from as far away as the Western Cape of South Africa, but one touring team that has always stuck in the mind was Waunarlwydd RFC from Swansea who visited our club back in 2008. Their full back that day was junior Colt called Liam Williams who was by far their outstanding player, but he did incur the wrath of our very own Stewardess, Vi Mahaney, for some of his clubhouse antics - I have heard he went on to play at quite a decent level!

Rob Parkinson
Colts Manager 2006-



Morpeth RFC

Sponsorship Options 2025 - 2026

We are proud to offer the 'TED LAIDLAW SUITE' as a facility for **Match Day Sponsorship**. The suite has a comfortable seating area and bar together with a sweeping balcony which overlooks both pitches.

The cost of Match Sponsorship with facilities: £225 + VAT.

A variety of catering and bar options are available to suit your requirements. Sponsors will have their name on the board at the entrance to the club together with mention in the match programme, club website and can also put their company banners on display off the upstairs room balcony on the day.

Matchball Sponsor - £60 + VAT.

Pitchside Advertising. Perimeter Boards - £250 + VAT for 1st year & £180 + VAT thereafter.
Size - 2450mm x 610mm. (artwork in pdf format and any photos in high resolution jpeg)

Player Sponsorship - £120 + VAT.

This contribution helps towards the cost of players strips, equipment and training facilities. Sponsors will be named next to the players in the programme. It is perfectly acceptable for pairs to contribute.

Playing Shirt Sponsorship options available for all teams.

(company logo required in high resolution jpeg)

Programme Sponsor for the Season.

Full page - 148mm x 210mm (Portrait) - £180 + VAT.

Half page - 132mm x 94mm - (Landscape) £100 + VAT.

Quarter page - 64mm x 95mm (Portrait) - £65 + VAT.

(art work formats; Press Quality PDF, EPS, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Indesign, High Quality TIF or JPG)

For information about any of the above sponsorship, season ticket, or any form of membership, contact John Stafford on 07968 161085.

MRFC Members Season Tickets for 1st XV Games (up to 15 home games) @ £50.

Those who sponsor the Club, including sponsorship for any Morpeth RFC event to the value of £300 and over per season are eligible for 1 club social membership and can also apply annually, in a ballot, for England international tickets through the Club along with Club Members.

harpersigns

creating your image since 1954

Harvey Combe
Killingworth
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE12 6QQ

Tel: 0191 268 6394

www.harpersigns.co.uk
signs@harpersigns.co.uk