



# JANUARY 2008

## Stalwarts Receive Well-deserved Recognition

At the December Society Meeting, held at Broughton Park, the President, David Leslie, made presentations of a 35 year tankard was made to John Langslow, a 25 year tie to Barry Savage and 10year ties to Jim Johnston, Barrie King and Phil Knowles. Peter Hughes also snuck into the photo... to find out why, read on!



The meeting also saw the distribution of the Halbros kit to referees [by the look on his face, I think the Hon Treasurer has just realised the cost! (Ed)], and Andy Thompson provided a report on the excellent response to the "Kit Aid" appeal. (More photos on Page 4)

The main speaker for the evening's development topic was David Matthews (L&DRRS). David's presentation, forming part of the Continuous Referee Development Award and ELRA Referee Qualification, centred around a theme of "To Blow or Not". As there's probably no better exponent than David in this Art, an excellent session ensued.

(For active members, David's PowerPoint slides are enclosed in the monthly post-out)

## *Ultimate Accolade for M&DRURS & Lancashire RFU Stalwart*

The ultimate accolade for a sporting volunteer? That must be a fair interpretation of the Torch Trophy Trust Awards which are presented annually to the nominees put forward by sporting organisations across the country.

Which is why this year's recipient from Rugby Union, Lancashire's Peter Hughes, was in the company of elite sporting people from all parts of the spectrum when he collected his trophy from HRH The Duke of Kent in London recently (*pictured right*).

"It was a fabulous evening," said the Burnley RUFC, Manchester Referees' Society and RFU committee stalwart, who was joined at the function by his wife Sue and daughter Liz: "We all had a fantastic evening with 20 volunteers from 15 different sports receiving a certificate and lovely statuette from The Duke. It is in the form of the Olympic Torch and stands on an inscribed plinth.



"The atmosphere at the post-presentation reception was very relaxed with the famous trustees all mingling with the volunteers. I had a chance to chat with Bobby Charlton, who is the President of the Torch Trophy Trust, Christine Truman/Janes, who read out the citations, and the former England cricket captain Mike Denness. It was also good to catch up with Lancastrian Roger Uttley, who is the current Chairman of the Trust."

When the organisation was founded in 1962 by Commander Bill Collins, organiser of the Olympic Torch Relay when the games were held in London in 1948, the concept was to recognise individuals who have given exceptional voluntary service to their sport.

Twenty awards are presented each year, with governing bodies being invited to nominate people who they feel are qualified for this singular honour.

The 70-year-old retired dentist from Burnley, who was President of the Lancashire RFU in the 1996/97 season was an ideal candidate for the award, which will be presented to him by the Duke of Kent at a function at the Army and Navy Club.

A former player with Oldham and captain of Kersal, a stalwart of Calder Vale – now Burnley RFC – for 44 years, a former international referee and ex-President of the Manchester Society of Referees and a long-serving member of the England Rugby Football Schools Union, Peter Hughes has devoted countless hours in the service of Rugby Union at all levels. The Torch Trophy Trust Award was richly deserved recognition.

Peter commented, "We all had a fantastic evening with twenty Volunteers from fifteen different sports receiving a certificate and lovely statuette from the Duke of Kent. The atmosphere at the post-presentation reception was very relaxed ... It was also good to catch up with Lancastrian Roger Uttley who is the current Chairman of the Trust."

# NW Federation RURS Meeting

Newton-le-Willows RUFC Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> February @ 7.30

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**'2007 World Cup Reflections'**



**Tony Spreadbury**

World Cup Referee and Elite RFU Referee

# Annual Dinner

Tuesday February 12<sup>th</sup> 2008

at

Fylde RUFC

7.30 for 8.00

Excellent Speakers - Ray French & Jed Stone (*Comedian*)

£25.00 per Ticket

Ladies also welcome

Please contact Allan Townsend or David Leslie

Address etc., as per the Society Handbook



# MENTORS FOR JUNIOR REFEREES

There are now 35 Junior Referees on the database who have all passed the ELRA Level 1 & 2 Courses. As a result of the success of the courses, and the endeavours of the RFU Trainers, we are recruiting an increasing number of youngsters who are showing an interest in continuing with refereeing once they have passed the first two stages. It is important that these youngsters are monitored and encouraged as they referee matches at their school or their club on their way to achieve the Level 3 Course. A few of them will become Junior Associate Members, but the others will hopefully have had sufficient grounding and enjoyable experiences to encourage them to turn to refereeing once their playing days are over. Such is our recruitment policy; both in the short term and in the long term.



The Junior Referees' Scheme needs more volunteers to help our small band of willing Mentors. Such persons must have at least two years experience with the Society as a Referee or Adviser and be prepared to watch a young referee at a club or school near to their home. Allocation of Mentor to young referee would be done on a geographical basis. Watching would invariably be on a Saturday morning, or a Sunday morning, and would hopefully be at least once a month. There would be no need for report writing, with the exception of a simple form when observing the Level 3 Course match. Feedback would be verbal. Because of the ages involved, all helpers would have to be CRB cleared.

Manchester Referees' Society must invest in the future. If you can help, or would like any further information, please contact me on 01282 771120, or by e-mail at [ofpeh.higham@virgin.net](mailto:ofpeh.higham@virgin.net)

**Peter Hughes** *(Chairman NW Federation Junior Referee Scheme Task Group)*

## True believers still worship with King James version

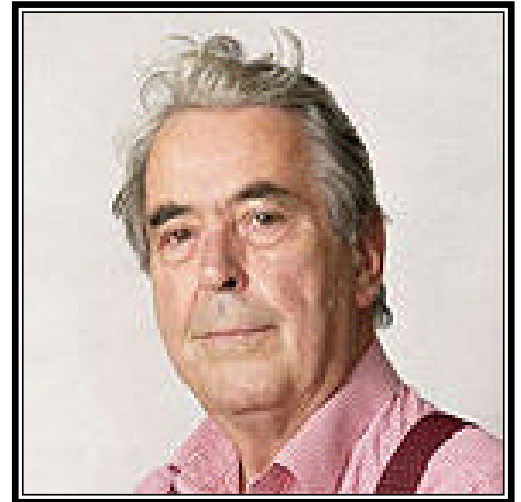
Remembering rugby's late, great Carwyn James - the sports coach whom all others have strived to emulate

by Frank Keating, *The Guardian*, January 8<sup>th</sup> 2008

Thursday marks, unbelievably, a quarter of a century since Carwyn James died of a heart-attack aged 54. Rugby football was his game, but his legacy survives as the philosopher-king of all sports' team coaches. You can come across inscrutable Chinese rowing coaches or earnest American basketball bods and they recognize any mention of him with solemn reverence and awestruck smile.

James was an unlikely one-off all right. A West Walian miner's son with a passion for cricket and snooker; a scholar who could translate Chekhov and Turgenev into Welsh, the Mabinogion into Russian and Dylan into Italian; a Plaid Cymru evangelist and Eisteddfod arch-druid who chain-smoked and drank gin and tonic; he played fly-half for Wales, coached Llanelli to four successive Welsh cups, and, epically, the 1971 British Lions to their (still) solitary series victory against New Zealand.

He also wrote a Guardian column. I spent the weekend fondly tweezer-ing out a few aperçus<sup>1</sup> from those now parchments, print-faded pieces. Rugby has seismically changed since his death, but his remarkable perspicience still shines. Here's a delectable dozen:



- ★ If I had my time again I'd be a soccer manager, not coach of a rugby club where half a dozen or more committeemen interfere with selection. As well, money now permeates rugby's administration. Rugby must always be our aristocratic heritage, never a trade.
- ★ The boring, unthinking coach continually preaches about mistakes. The creative coach invites his players to make mistakes. Adventure and error go together. I loved Lewis Jones's way - "I may concede two, but I'll score four!"
- ★ I have relished studying coaching methods at Manchester United - heresy in rugby union - and also rugby league at Wigan - even more heinous heresy. The transfer of skills from one ball game to another should forever occupy the mind of a responsible coach.
- ★ Mini-rugby too often substitutes fun for fear-of-error. It was created for youngsters with the best of intentions, but screaming mums, doting dads, and competitive coaches give it the image of a monster.
- ★ Most memorable tries are launched from deep positions; great counter-attack always has an element of the adventurer's daredevil desperation.
- ★ Successful man-management is no more than demanding your team's "cocky blighter" remains outrageously full of himself, and ensuring your morose grumbler can moan as much as he wants. Express yourselves, I tell my teams, not as you would at the office, but as you would at home.
- ★ However "brilliant", a young player must think and rethink his game many times over if he wants to graduate to a brilliant career. If he does not, it will be all too short, sharp and painful and (to round up Dylan) "we shall see the boy of summer in his ruin".
- ★ The most telling of any pre-match team-talk consists of just three words: "Think! Think! Think!"
- ★ This new midfield "crash-ball" is disaster - hunks of manhood with madness in their eyes, battering-ram bulldozers happy to be picked off on the gain-line by just-as-large hunks from the opposing side. For what? Just to do it all over again.

- ★ The laws need simplifying. The minor offence is, incredibly, still equal to the major. Referees strut and talk far too much; they must become less and less important.
- ★ Back play at speed is becoming a pathetic apology, an insult to those who have graced it for a century. Flat-footed forwards now stand at centre: I ask you! And crowds clap aimless kicks-ahead - and pay £12 for the privilege.
- ★ We are breeding robots. Is it the drudge and monotony of training sessions where everything's done by numbers? Fly-halves even call moves before the scrummage forms - "miss one", "dummy scissors", "high up-and-under" and so on - regardless of the quality of the emerging ball. Coaches treat players like puppets on a string.

I was reminded of Carwyn at the extraordinary gathering at Stradey Park for the funeral this winter of his beloved protégé Ray Gravell. Both would have laughed at my memory of Carwyn's memorial service, higher up the steep sheep-speckled mountainside above Llanelli in Cefneithin's whitewashed little Tabernacle. Late, I'd driven at full-pelt from London, only to find a huge throng of mourners around the already burstingly cram-full chapel. Desperate, I implored a kindly steward: "I've come all the way from the Guardian to report the service." Valiantly, he muscled me through the complaining multitude to the chapel elders' jam-packed front pew, insisting: "Make room for this man, he's very important - he's from the Ammanford Guardian!"

*<sup>1</sup> For those - like me! - who thought "what the...", it's the plural of "aperçu"... a revealing glimpse or insight. I thought it was just a Guardian misprint... (Ed.)*

## Bits 'n' Bobs

### Strap Line!

14 people sent in entries for the above, the entries were judged by the President, Paul Renton and Andy Taylorson, none of whom knew who the entrants were. They judged that the winning entry was "*Supporting rugby at all levels*", the winner was Graham Bancroft, whose prize was two tickets for the Annual Dinner.

### "Mea Culpa" (by Peter Hughes)

In last month's **MaDRefMag**, Peter omitted to say that Geoff Smith assessed Alain Rolland at Blackburn a few years ago. "There cannot be many assessors who have assessed an RWC Final Referee. Now I know why he reached such an elevated status."

### Web Site

Check it out!! ...Craig Soeters has been busy!

### Handbook Update N° 4

For Society Members, and Club Contacts only, the post-out contains a full update of this Season's changes to the Handbook.

### Law Book 2008

We have recently received the following correspondence...

*"The Experimental Law Variations (ELVs) are being piloted in various Unions around the world. A decision will be made at the April meeting of IRB EXCO in terms of which Laws will become ELVs internationally. With that in mind the 2008 Laws of the game will not be printed until May 2008. The 2007 Law book will therefore be the only provision through until mid 2008".*



# WHEN IT COMES TO CONCUSSION USE YOUR HEAD



THE MIND BODY

[www.rfu.com/health](http://www.rfu.com/health)

## SIGNS OF CONCUSSION EVERYONE SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR:

- Loss of consciousness or unresponsiveness (even temporarily)
- Balance problems, unsteadiness, clumsiness, slurred speech
- Appears dazed, stunned or confused
- Poor memory (of score, moves, opposition, events)
- Odd behaviour
- Significantly impaired playing ability

If a player has any of these symptoms then they should not return to play.

## FOLLOWING A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION:

- The player should not be left alone and should be monitored regularly
- Players must be seen by a doctor
- A player who has been concussed must not play for a minimum of three weeks (unless over 19 and cleared to do so by an approved doctor's competent in managing concussion) (see web link below for details)
- AND should not return to play or training until symptoms free
- AND should only return to play or training with medical clearance
- This applies to all clubs/leagues of sides a player belongs to and it is their parents responsibility to advise other clubs/schools of the concussion

When in doubt, sit them out. For further guidance and to get yourself a Pitch Side Concussion Assistant visit [www.rfu.com/health](http://www.rfu.com/health)