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AUSTIN KILROY

The Football Career of Austin Kilroy in words and photographs, with detailed records of his achievements in the Rugby League game for Huddersfield

★

Compiled by **A. N. Gaulton**

in association with members
of the Huddersfield C. & A.C.
Supporters' Club Committee

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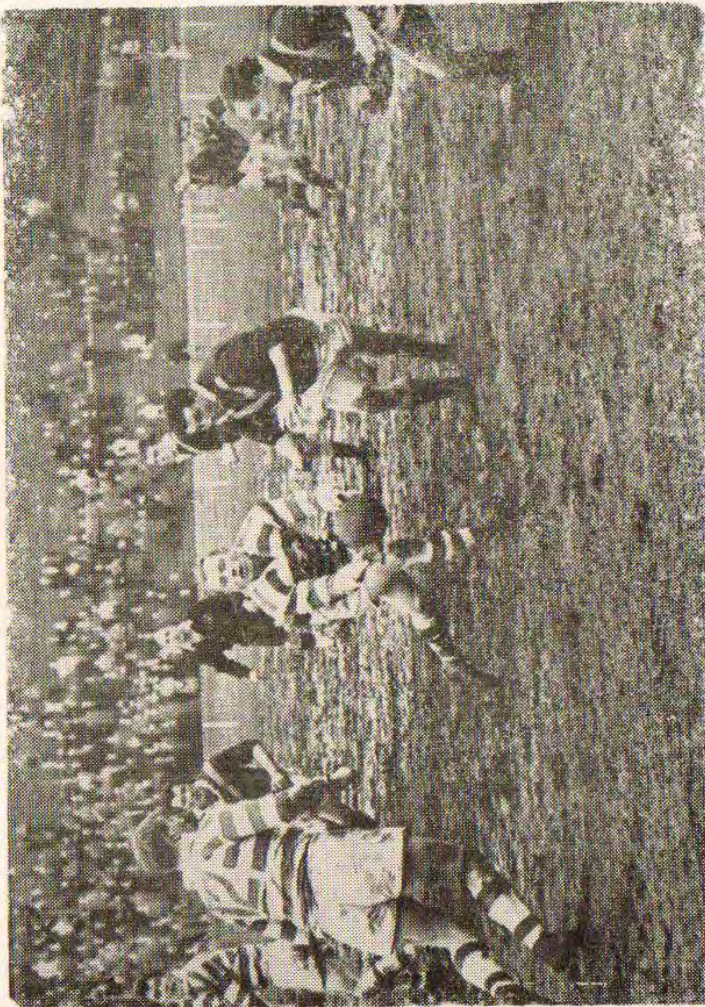
Foreword by

PETER CRABTREE

(Huddersfield C. & A.C.)

★

Published by the
Huddersfield C. & A.C. Supporters' Club



Austin closes in on a Wigan passing move when Huddersfield met the Lancastrians during February.

Foreword

Austin Kilroy joined Huddersfield in a "swop" which took Jimmy Cooper to Batley, and it gives me great pleasure to write this foreword — a job which could have been done earlier if only Austin had come to Fartown when he was first approached by our Football Committee. However, he decided to join Batley instead.

Throughout ten years of football at Fartown, Austin has won several medals, but we shall always remember his whole-hearted efforts during that memorable run which took us to Wembley and the Championship Final.

Starting as a centre, injuries and problems of increasing weight took him into the pack where he has proved his versatility on many occasions by playing in most of the forward positions. He still wears the No. 10 jersey with distinction.

An excellent ball-player, he has many times carved out openings for his colleagues from which tries have been scored.

As a Supporters' Club effort, this Brochure serves a double role. Firstly it pays tribute to a Fartowner, and secondly it gives everyone the opportunity of contributing to the Testimonial Fund and receiving a very interesting souvenir booklet.

In passing you forward into the pages of this brochure I would like to wish Austin a successful Testimonial, good health and happiness to himself and his wife in the years to come, and many more games in the Claret and Gold of Fartown.

PETER CRABTREE.

AUSTIN KILROY

With nearly twenty years of Rugby League playing experience behind him Austin Kilroy is well versed in the arts of our game. Last October he completed ten years as a Fartowner and has been awarded a well-deserved testimonial.

Young Kilroy started his career at the age of 11 in schools football with St. Mary's, Batley, during the 1946-47 season. Among his team-mates were two boys who were later, like Austin, to play in the senior game—Don Lockwood and Peter Armstead. The sports-master at that time was Mr. D. Brown who later became a senior referee.

St. Mary's had a successful side while Austin was with them and were Crossley Cup Winners in 1947-48. They beat Thornhill by 6 points to 2 and one of their tries was scored by Austin. Two years later he captained his school team when they won the Clifford Lodge Shield, defeating Victoria Modern School by 13 points to 7 after being seven points down at half-time.

At 12 years of age he had been a member of the inter-town schools team, and on leaving school he graduated to the St. Mary's under-16 team, with whom he played until he joined the Shaw Cross Boys' Club.

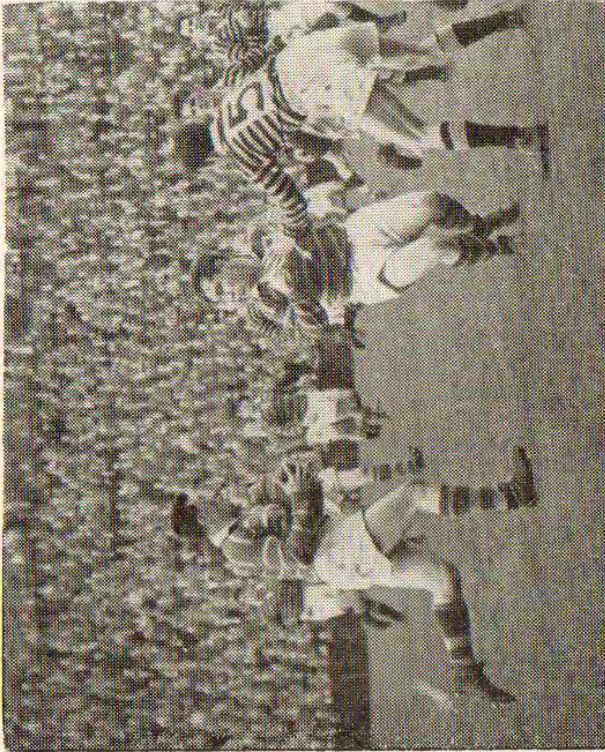
It is common knowledge among Rugby League followers that Shaw Cross has for years been one of the game's most prolific nurseries. Austin had been a regular member of the Dewsbury and Batley A. R. L. team before he joined them—on one occasion he scored a great try against Wigan and District at Central Park—and he continued to take the eye with some outstanding displays.

Among his team-mates in club and inter-league sides at this period were Mick Sullivan, Malcolm Waring, Joe Fryer, David Smith, Peter Armstead, Jack Briggs, Peter Frain, Derek Turner, Norman Wainwright, Brian Gabbitas, Joe Smith, Alan Lancaster, Stan Moysler, George Goodyear and Alan Lockwood—all of whom were later to join senior clubs.

With Shaw Cross, Austin rapidly developed into one of the best centres in the amateur game. His performances with his club and the under-18 representative team eventually won him international honours. He was chosen to play for England against Wales at Bristol under the auspices of the National Boys' Clubs.

Three of the English three-quarter line—Kilroy, Sullivan and Smith were Shaw Cross Boys and, incidentally, it is interesting to note that the captain of the Welsh team was a youngster called Billy Boston. It was a memorable occasion for Austin, but not a particularly happy one. He broke his collar bone during the first half and the game resulted in an easy victory for Wales.

Further international and District League honours followed, and by now—naturally enough—one or two senior clubs were keeping an eye on young Kilroy's progress. Huddersfield were among the clubs



Austin takes the ball on the burst from a Peter Ramsden pass in a 1957 game against York.

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who were interested, but when he did step up into senior football it was for his local club, Batley.

Austin was then eighteen years old, stood 5ft. 10ins., and weighed 12st. 7lbs. The season before he turned professional he had been selected in the England "shadow" side for the Amateur R. L. International against France.

He was a regular member of the senior side at Batley but only spent a couple of seasons at Mount Pleasant. In October, 1955, he was transferred to Huddersfield in an exchange deal which saw the Fartown loose forward, Jimmy Cooper, go to Batley.

Kilroy made his debut in the claret and gold jersey against York at Fartown on November 5th, 1955, when he played centre to Mick Sullivan. There was nothing sensational but he had a sound game and Huddersfield had a comfortable 10-0 victory. The teams were:

Huddersfield—Dyson; Wainwright, Haywood, Kilroy, Sullivan; Ramsden (capt.), Banks; Slevin, Wood, Bowden, Fairbank, Griffin, R. Thompson.

York—Hargreaves; Hamblett, Daish, G. Smith, B. Smith; Robinson, Riley (capt.); Moore, Illingworth, Yorke, Watts, O'Brien, Dooler.

Sullivan and Ramsden scored the tries and Dyson added two goals, Kilroy making a steady rather than a spectacular debut. One of the opposing wingmen that day was Brian Smith, who has recently been in charge of the Huddersfield "A" team.

Most of Austin's early games at Fartown were with the "A" team and it was not until season 1957-58 that he started appearing regularly with the seniors. This was a transitional period at Fartown and a difficult one in many ways.

The departure from the game of such players as Hunter, Cooper, Devery, Henderson and Pepperell had weakened the back division. They were difficult to replace—indeed some will say they never have been replaced—but nevertheless once Kilroy did establish himself in the first team he brought soundness and strength to the three-quarter line.

The Fartowners reached the 1957 Yorkshire Cup Final in which they defeated York at Headingley by 15 points to 8.

Austin had only played in one of the earlier rounds, at Wakefield, but he was in the team for the Final and he had the pleasure of scoring his side's first try. It was only his eighth game for the first team.

After a couple of seasons, increasing weight prompted the thought that he might well solve the loose forward problem which had never been satisfactorily settled since Dave Valentine's enforced retirement during the 1957-58 season. So Austin was tried in the number 14 jersey in an "A" team game against Hull at Fartown, and although the visitors won Kilroy scored two tries.

Back into the first team he went as a loose forward but his stay was only brief for in his fifth game, against Wakefield Trinity at Fartown, he had the misfortune to break a leg. That was in October, 1959, and he did not play again until February, 1961, when he turned out with the "A" team, scoring four tries in his first three games.

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He was not called upon for first team duty again for



another twelve months, but he took part in those exciting games towards the end of season 1961-62 when the Fartowners confounded all the critics by going to Wembley where they put up a brave, if unavailing, show against the powerful Wakefield Trinity team and then, a week later, winning the League Championship title against Trinity at Odsal.

Austin first came into the team during this run in the cup game at Castleford. He played at loose-forward that day but his other games during the rest of the season were in the second row. He didn't play at Wembley, but he had a place in the pack for the Championship Final at Bradford, and he was also a member of the Fartown team which played a couple

of games in Ireland at the end of that season.

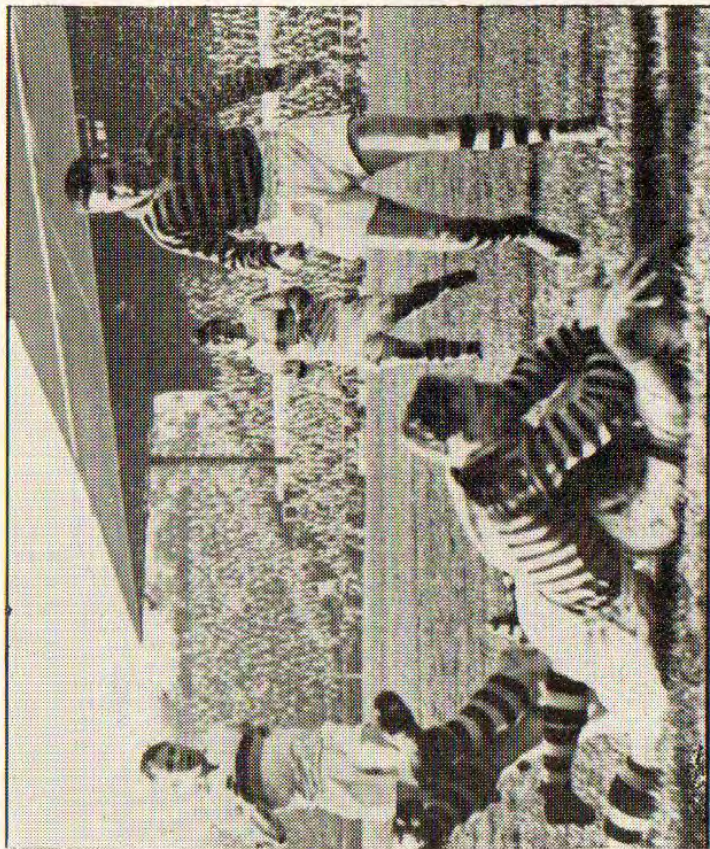
Having re-established himself in the team, Kilroy became a more-or-less regular member of the side, usually playing in the second row but occasionally appearing at loose forward or at open-side prop. His weight in the break-through and his speed over a short distance have been useful assets in clearing the line or launching an attack.

More recently he has taken over the role of forward ball distributor to good effect. No doubt his previous experience in the three-quarter line has stood him in good stead in this respect.

Mention has already been made of the powerful build he developed. When Huddersfield signed him from Batley, Austin weighed 13st. 2lbs. When he turned out again after recovering from his broken leg his weight had gone up to 14st. 13lbs. Nowadays he tips the scales at close on fifteen-and-a-half stones, but his mobility in the loose sometimes belies his weight.

Austin cannot pick out any particular game as being his outstanding one—he says he has enjoyed them all. He does naturally, however, have happy memories of the 1957 Yorkshire Cup and the 1962 R.L. Championship successes.

Asked which he has enjoyed most—playing as a forward or as a three-quarter?—he replies that he prefers being a forward as you



An important try. Austin scores in the 1957 Yorkshire Cup Final.

are in the game much more. But he is very glad that during his career circumstances have given him the opportunity and the experience of playing in practically every position on the field.

Austin Kilroy is not classed among the stars of our game. We doubt if his name comes up when the county and international selectors meet, for no representative honours have come his way in senior football. Nor was he among the likely candidates for a place in the recently-picked Tour Team to Australasia.

Yet Austin typifies many of the players in our game today. Whole-hearted in his efforts on the field, conscientious in his training, and a good club-man throughout his stay at Fartown—he deserves well of the club and its followers.

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Cup Victory. Austin (bottom right) helps to chair Dave Valentine and the Yorkshire Cup after the 1957 Final.

Press Comments

A lot of interest was taken in the debut of Austin Kilroy and it was an eminently satisfactory debut. Kilroy has filled out a bit since his Shawcross days. He has a nice build and he showed that he could tackle. — v. York, November, 1955.

★

Then came the Henderson try, for which he must thank a brilliant burst through the Wakefield ranks by Kilroy, whose speed took over his own team-mates and club committee by surprise. — Yorkshire Cup-tie at Wakefield, September, 1957.

★

Mick Sullivan must be rated the man of the match, seeing that he scored four tries, but next to him I'd put Austin Kilroy who scored the other try and put in some neat touches both on attack and defence. — v. Castleford, September, 1957.

★

Kilroy is one of the most improved players in the side this season and his withdrawal owing to an arm injury midway through the first half was a serious blow.

— v. Wakefield T., September, 1957.

★

Ramsden created a half-break and from his high pass Kilroy gathered and went inside Hargreaves. Half-held, Kilroy reached out over the line for the touch-down, and Dyson's goal sent Huddersfield five points in front.

— Yorkshire Cup Final v. York at Leeds, October, 1957.

★

On a ground where they have, in the past, sometimes been unpleasantly surprised Huddersfield ran riot. Spearhead in the scoring spree was Austin Kilroy, who crossed the line three times, his best performance in senior rugby.

— at Castleford, January, 1958.

★

The one player among the defeated Fartowners who can claim to have done a good job was Kilroy. His task was to blot out the Halifax danger man, Geoff Palmer, and he did it remarkably well. We saw very little of Palmer. But Kilroy was fighting a one-man battle.

— v. Halifax (R.L. Cup), February, 1958.

★

The thrust and directness of Smales and Kilroy eventually put Huddersfield on the winning track. Kilroy scored a first-half try, and his reliable work on defence and attack made him the man of the match and proved a great asset to his side.

— at Bradford, April, 1958.

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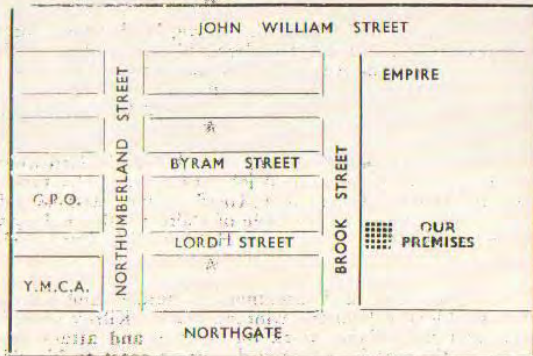
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— v. Wigan, April, 1958.

★

Player of the season is centre Austin Kilroy. No one has matched his consistently good — and sometimes brilliant — play and no other first-teamer is in the same class as a tackler.

— Review of 1957-58 season.

★

Kilroy showed his usual persistence, especially when scoring his try.

— v. Warrington, August, 1958.

★

Redfean scored three tries but was by no means the star forward. That honour went to Kilroy. Apart from his bad luck in being denied a score after his long run, he made a number of other efforts and generally played a lively game.

— at Odsal, August, 1962.

★

Both Kilroy and Bowman outpaced opposing three-quarters when they scored their tries.

— v. Bradford N. (h.), August, 1962.

★

Kilroy put the Oldham defence at panic stations with a great run in which he went half the length of the field.

— at Oldham, October, 1962.

★

Smales and Kilroy worked a slick back-pass to change the direction of an attack and the move ended with Stocks sending Green thundering over at the corner after a splendid combined move.

— v. Hull K.R., April, 1963.

★

Kilroy played very well in the second row and was easily the pick of the Huddersfield forwards.

— at the Boulevard, April, 1963.

★

Austin Kilroy, storming, barrel-chested Huddersfield loose forward spearheaded the Fartown shock troops to a great victory at Knowsley Road in a blistering battle of the packs. He was fearless in the loose and gave immaculate cover to Tommy Smales, combining beef and brains in the old style of his team boss, Dave Valentine.

— at St. Helens, August, 1963.

★

Kilroy was the best of the Huddersfield forwards, moving very smartly in the early part of the game.

— at Blackpool, October, 1964.



Going to Odsal for the 1962 Championship Final. Austin is to the forefront in the photo.

Kilroy plunged some ten or fifteen yards to score a try with a man hanging round his waist.

— v. Whitehaven, April, 1965.

★

Kilroy began acting Sleyin's old role of ball distributor and gained due reward for his efforts by slipping a little short pass for Dobson to take it on the burst, struggle through a tackle and score.

— at Salford, April, 1965.

★

Kilroy scored a delightful try, finishing at speed a move in which Senior made a lot of ground after being sent away by Hagan.

— v. Rochdale H., April, 1965.

★

After some rugged grafting inside the Swinton "25," Kilroy, near the line, gave a short pass to Heppleston, who plunged over.

— at Swinton, August, 1965.

★

In the second half Kilroy was brought on as substitute and it paid dividends because it was from his pass that Curry, ten minutes from the end, was up near a play-the-ball on the line to dash through and hurl himself over by the posts.

— at Odsal (Yorkshire Cup), September, 1965.

★

Huddersfield built on their lead with a grand try by Kilroy, who feinted to go one way and then turned the other to wrong-foot the full back and go over by the posts.

— v. Oldham, November, 1965.

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Austin Kilroy . . .

Was born on March 19th, 1935, at Batley.

Married Miss Ann McGowan, of Dewsbury, on September 30th, 1960.

Has one daughter, Helen, nearly three years old.

Is the son of a former Batley player, Tommy Kilroy.

Had an impressive junior representative record while playing for the Shaw Cross Boys' Club.

Joined Huddersfield on October 18th, 1955.

Made his "A" team debut against Bradford Northern "A" at Fartown and scored a try.

Made his first team debut against York at Fartown on November 5th.

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Personal Tribute

★

You don't find the name of Austin Kilroy in recent international match programmes. In fact it had not been appearing regularly in Fartown's claret and gold programmes until the last few seasons.

There are no rows of representative caps and boxes of trophy-winner's medals at Austin's home. Yet Austin Kilroy, in his way, is, and has been, of just as much value to Huddersfield over the past ten seasons as many a better-known and more-praised player.

Austin is one of those many "bread-and-butter" boys in Rugby League, one of the lads who soldier on week after week whether he is wanted for a first or second-team place and rarely getting the reward of a headline for his efforts.

Without these boys the stars would have no chance to shine because without them there would be no Rugby League teams.

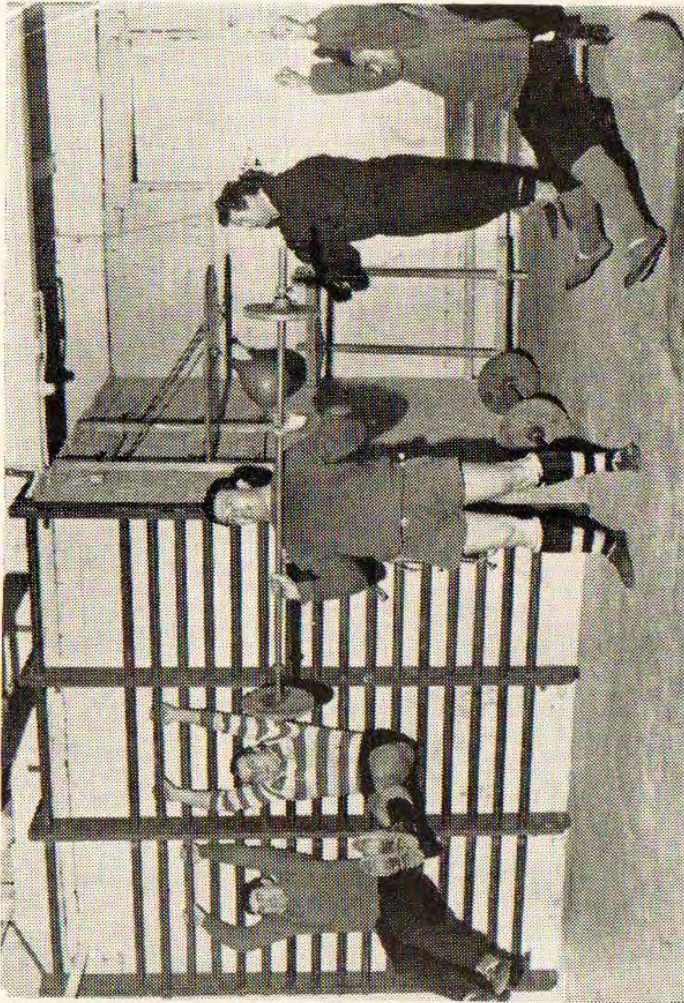
Austin joined Huddersfield from Batley more than ten years ago as a centre because that was the position he found himself in when he was persuaded at school to swop the Soccer he played then for Rugby League.

But I think that it is in the pack where he has really proved his worth. Brainy, ball-handling forwards are a must these days—but there are far too few of them and Huddersfield are fortunate to have a loyal lad like Kilroy on whom to call whenever they need a solid, 80-minute worker.

There have been many more illustrious names at Fartown than Austin Kilroy will ever be. But I doubt if any of them have ever given any more to the club, for Austin has given all he has and is still doing so.

That is why he deserves the thanks of all Fartown folk and fans, that is why I wish him the first-class testimonial his endeavours have merited.

JACK BENTLEY, "Daily Express".



Austin and some of his team-mates keep fit in the gymnasium.

AUSTIN KILROY'S FARTOWN PLAYING RECORDS

	First Team		"A" Team	
	App.	Tries	App.	Tr.
1955-56	5	—	3	4
1956-57	—	—	11	4
1957-58	26	14	2	—
1958-59	13	8	12	5
1959-60	5	—	3	2
1960-61	—	—	11	4
1961-62	8	—	15	6
1962-63	35	6	—	—
1963-64	26	4	2	2
1964-65	21	2	8	1
1965-66	33	2	4	—
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The committee of the H.C. & A.C. Supporters' Club express their thanks to the proprietors and sports staff of the "Huddersfield Examiner" for the loan of the blocks used in this Testimonial Brochure.

AUSTIN KILROY

I take this opportunity to add my own comment
In tribute to another Fartown 'ace'.
This time it's Austin Kilroy and to him the praise is sent.
Ten years he's served the Club and stood the pace.

He started as a "centre three" and was on Batley's books
When Huddersfield first took a look at him.
His displays then impressed them and he had the 'go far' looks,
In those days he was built, of course, more slim.

He made his debut on November Fifth, the records tell,
York were the Fartown visitors that day.
The game produced few 'fireworks', but Kilroy played quite well,
His wingman scored and we drew winning pay.

He made four more appearances that year from time to time,
But still, despite the promise he had shown,
He found the path to first grade football difficult to climb,
'Twas hard to make a first team place his own.

Another season passed but Austin did not get a break,
The season after got well under way,
And then his chance came—one that he was very quick to take,
He'd fourteen tries to his account next May.

New Zealander 'Pete' Henderson's last games in Fartown's side
Were made with Kilroy as his "centre-three".
Four tries in three games showed that Austin kept him well supplied
With scoring chances then, you'll all agree.

Another quite successful spell in Autumn 'Fifty Eight,
Then Kilroy had his troubles once again.
By then he'd gradually gained considerable weight,
He, as a forward, now began to train.

The season after Fartown's pack was causing much concern,
Loose forward was the major problem here,
So, after Bowman, Clarke and Colburn each had had a turn,
Kilroy became the fourth man to appear.

When one looks through the annals, a career to record,
Statistics can reveal the strangest things.
In Kilroy and Ken Bowman's case, in games with Castleford,
A very rare coincidence it brings.

Both scored, against the club in question, their first Fartown try,
Each played his hundredth game against them too!
Whilst Austin's milestones were achieved at Fartown, by and by,
Ken Bowman's were at Wheldon Road, that's true.

To carry this comparison a little further still,
When Huddersfield defeated York at Leeds
In Fifty Seven, both won their first cup medals by their skill,
And both scored tries to answer Fartown's needs.

When Huddersfield were champions in nineteen sixty-two,
He played at Odsal in the second row.
That day each of the Fartowners stuck to their task all through,
Revenge was sweet to soften Wembley's blow!

In recent times he's had a quite important part to play
As ball distributor in Fartown's pack.
His smart and timely stream of passes thrown out 'in the fray'
Hinge from his past experience as a back.

He's played over One Fifty games for Fartown from the start,
Thirty Six tries he has scored to date,
And now the time has come when we can play a little part,
To make sure that his benefit is great.

Brian Donaldson.

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I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Huddersfield Football Committee, my team-mates and the club's followers for the help they have given to me during my playing career at Fartown.

Also the members of the Supporters' Club, who have in so many ways helped to promote the efforts on behalf of my Testimonial Fund. Thank you everybody.

Yours sincerely,

AUSTIN KILROY.

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