

A PAGE OF FARTOWN RECORDS

Albert Rosenfeld still holds the record for the number of tries scored in a single season. He broke all previous records in season 1911-12 by registering 78 tries and two years later improved on this figure with 80 tries during 1913-14. Since then no other player has come within a dozen tries of "Rozzy's" record.

* * *

Ben Gronow also held the goal kicking record at one time. His 147 goals during 1914-15 were the most that had been kicked in one season up to that date. Ben had 150 goals in season 1919-20 but his record did not stand as long as "Rozzy's" has done—Jim Sullivan saw to that.

* * *

Huddersfield's all four cups season was 1914-15. They scored 1,269 points and yielded only 288 in 47 matches. Forty were won, five drawn and two lost. In the following full competitive season (1919-20) the Fartowners won three of the major trophies. They were beaten 3-2 by Hull at Leeds in the final for the fourth cup and it is worthy of note that for this match Huddersfield took the field without Wagstaff, Clark, Gronow, Rogers and Thomas, who were on their way to Australia, and Moorhouse, who was injured.

* * *

Douglas Clark played in three Northern Union cup finals, five League Championship finals and ten Yorkshire Challenge cup finals. In the 1913 league final against Wigan at Wakefield "Duggy" scored three tries.

* * *

Six Fartowners have played for the club over 400 times. They are Clark, Fiddes, Wagstaff, Gronow, Tiffany and H. Sherwood, but only Douglas Clark passed the 500 mark.

* * *

Fred Smart, Ernest Mills and Cyril Halliday are the only Fartowners who have gone through a full season without missing a single match.

* * *

Harold Wagstaff, the prince of centre-threequarters, was born on May 19th, 1891. He first played for Huddersfield at Bramley on November 10th, 1906, and his last first team match was at Oldham on March 23rd, 1925.



"Bob"



“Bob”

The up-to-date story covering the Rugby League football career of “Bob” Nicholson—Huddersfield — Cumberland county — English international and test forward—in words and photographs.

Compiled by

A. N. GAULTON

In association with members of H. C. & A. C. Supporters Committee

Foreword by

J. WOOD BEEVER

(Huddersfield C. & A. C.)

Published by

The Huddersfield C. & A. C. Supporters' Club

The publication of this souvenir booklet is a Supporters' Club effort in tribute to a worthy wearer of the "claret and gold." It places on record for all time his achievements in the Rugby League game. The net proceeds are devoted to the testimonial fund. Further copies of this booklet can be obtained from the Secretary, 1/3 post free.

We express thanks to the compilers, the photographers and contributors, also to our printers and their staff for their help and co-operation in making the publication of this souvenir booklet possible.

On behalf of the committee,

*Huddersfield C. & A. C. Supporters' Club,
Wilfred Stoker,*

Hon. Secretary.

20 Holly Road,

Thornton Lodge, Huddersfield.

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NETHERWOOD DALTON
Huddersfield

FOREWORD

When I was invited to write this foreword, it was with very great pleasure that I accepted. As a member of the football committee for a number of years it has been my privilege to meet our players under many different situations.

We are very fortunate at Fartown in having such a grand lot of chaps, and in "Bob" Nicholson we have a very worthy member of that team.

I am not going to mention here any of his achievements on the football field, they will be dealt with elsewhere in this booklet, but I am going to cover a lot of ground with a few words. "Bob" Nicholson is a great footballer, a grand fellow and a good clubman.

On occasions when my journeys have taken me to Cumberland, I have made it in my way to see his mother and father, when the welcome has always been of the warmest. I mention this because I know how proud they will be of this great honour that is being done to "Bob" by his club.

I should like to also wish good health and happiness to "Bob's" wife and little boy. Amongst other things he is a good husband and a very proud father.

And now to November 18th and the game with Leeds. May it be remembered for three things: a grand gate, a game of clever and clean football and as "Bob" Nicholson's testimonial match. "Good luck Bob!"

J. WOOD BEEVER,
Chairman of the football committee.

"Bob" Nicholson

"ONE OF THE BEST"

The story of a great and inspiring Rugby League forward

There must be something about the Fartown air that appeals to Cumbrian footballers or, conversely, perhaps there is something about Cumbrian footballers that appeals to those who are responsible for the destinies of the Huddersfield Cricket and Athletic Club. Whichever way round it is, there has certainly been a long succession of men from Cumberland in the Fartown teams, way back to the days of the last century.

One of the latest in the lengthy line is "Bob" Nicholson, who now takes his testimonial as a reward for services rendered to the game and to the club of his adoption. He has chosen the Leeds game at Fartown on Saturday, 18th November, 1950 as his testimonial match.

From "round" to "oval" ball

Like many other well-known rugby players, "Bob" played soccer as a schoolboy. He won several medals with the Whitehaven Central school team, his position in the side being at centre forward. A frequent opponent at this time was Jimmy Lewthwaite who was, in later years, to be a fellow-traveller in a trip around the world. "Bob" also gained considerable renown as a runner and this experience on the track was to stand him in good stead later on when he entered first-class Rugby League football.

His rugby career started with Hensingham and it was from this club that Huddersfield signed him before the war. In turning to Rugby League he was following in the footsteps of his father, who was formerly one of the best amateur forwards in Cumberland. Mr. Nicholson, senior, now keeps the Shakespeare Hotel at Whitehaven and is a director of the Whitehaven Rugby League club, which he represents on the Rugby League Council.

"Bob's" career at Fartown had a rather unique opening. He was signed on 21st March, 1939, yet did not make his first team debut until 7th October, 1944, when he played in a game at Wigan. War calls were the reason for this lengthy gap, of course.

After playing in a couple of reserve matches against Featherstone Rovers and Swinton at the beginning of the 1939-40 season, "Bob" went back home to Cumberland, where he was given permission to assist Hensingham again. The war was on and there were thoughts of other things than football in men's minds.

Nicholson the footballer, became Nicholson the aircraftsman. Opportunities for football were few, although he did play Rugby Union occasionally with his R.A.F. unit team. Being stationed in out-of-the-way spots he was given no chances of turning up at Fartown for an odd game or so.

Huddersfield had found a "Good 'un"

But when the chance did come, a move to Driffield in 1944, he took it with both hands. His display in that match at Central Park made the Wigan supporters rate him as the best forward they had seen for some time, while for the few Huddersfield enthusiasts who had accompanied their team there was the thought that here was a splendid proposition for the future.

Having had his first taste of senior Rugby League football, "Bob" went rapidly from strength to strength. After only seven first team matches he gained his first representative honour when he was selected for Cumberland against Yorkshire.

Within a few weeks an even greater honour had come his way. When the England team to meet Wales at Swansea in the first of the post-war internationals was chosen, "Bob" was among the England forwards. At that time he had only had the experience of ten first-class Rugby League matches. Wales beat England, but "Bob" scored his side's only try, and what is more he scored it in the very corner where his wife and parents were watching.

Tourist and highlights with Huddersfield

Then to crown this first memorable full season, the prize of a tour to Australia was awarded to him. His displays throughout that 1945-46 season fully upheld the great promise he had shown in his previous matches and he was being talked of as a tour "possible" very early on.

In the very first game he had played for Huddersfield "Bob" had been rated as the outstanding forward on the field. This was a tag that was to be frequently attached to him in the years that followed.

His great speed and his positional sense had a good deal to do with his success. There were few, if any, faster forwards playing Rugby League football at that time. Indeed, "Bob" could show a clean pair of heels to quite a few three-quarters as well in those days.

Those of us who were at Salford on 17th November, 1945, will not quickly forget the Nicholson try just before half-time. Huddersfield were behind when one of the Fartown centres, Ken Winkworth (now with Swinton), intercepted a Salford pass inside his own half and broke through. "Bob" was, as usual, up in support and in the right place for the pass.

When he got the ball, near the "25" line, "Bob" amazed everyone, particularly the Salford supporters, by outdistancing all pursuit and touching down under the posts. Considering that Alan Edwards, Hilton and Dagnan—none of them laggards on a football field—were among the Salford backs that afternoon, it will be seen that this was a remarkable try for a forward.

A great partnership

Incidents such as the above singled "Bob" out from the ordinary ruck of Rugby League forwards, but he was also doing his whack in the scrums. His second row partnership with "Bob" Robson was a very productive one and the "two Bobs," as they were popularly called, were winning the respect of all opposing teams.

They covered the field in attack and defence, and their propensity for being in the right place at the right time brought them many tries and advanced the Huddersfield cause considerably. By the end of the season the Fartowners were in the top four and they reached the championship final, only to be defeated by Wigan at Maine Road. Nicholson was on board H.M.S. Indomitable, *en route* for Australia, when the latter game was played.

Robson's Scottish birth did not give the pair much chance of showing their club value in representative matches. They did, however, pack down together in one important international fixture. This was the first post-war visit of a British Rugby League team to France and the game was played at the Parc des Princes, Paris, on 6th January, 1946.

The British side, which won by 19 points to 6, was as follows—M. Ryan (Wigan), E. Batten (Bradford N.), E. Ward (Bradford N.), A. J. Risman (Salford), A. Edwards (Salford), W. Davies (Bradford N.), T. McCue (Widnes), K. Gee (Wigan),

J. Egan (Wigan), F. W. Whitcombe (Bradford N.), R. Nicholson (Huddersfield), R. S. Robson (Huddersfield), I. A. Owens (Leeds). "Bob" recalls that the ground was frozen hard that day, and that the French Rugby Union people staged a counter-attraction on an adjoining ground. He scored one of his side's five tries.

"Bob" Nicholson was to accompany most of that team on a trip around the world a few months later but his "fellow—Bob" was denied this pleasure. Robson and Alan Edwards were the only two who did not gain a place in the tour team.

The great delight felt at Nicholson's selection for the 1946 tour was offset by the disappointment at the overlooking of "Bob" Robson. To Fartowners they went together as a pair, but the selectors thought differently.

Robson nearly did go at the last minute, as some of the forwards who had been chosen were still in the forces and there were doubts as to whether they would be released. The Scot was asked to hold himself in readiness to fill any last-minute gap, but the men originally selected were finally able to report themselves as available. An exasperating experience for Robson!

And so "Bob" Nicholson was Huddersfield's only representative on that 1946 tour "down-under." It is an amazing fact that on five successive tours there have only been two players from the Fartown club, the other one being Stanley Brogden, in 1932.

Lucky and unlucky "down under"

One of "Bob's" chief memories of Australia is of the unbounded generosity which met them from all sides. He was fortunate to have a letter of introduction from Douglas Clark to Frank Griffiths, who had toured England with the 1937-38 Australian team. Frank's place was a home-from-home for "Bob" and he spent many week-ends there along with "Les" White and George Curran.

Everywhere the tourists went it was the same. Receptions, parties and warm welcomes. Much of their travelling was done under primitive conditions, but the genuine gladness of the Australians at meeting them helped to efface the hardships. In each township visited every tourist was given a food parcel to

send to his folks back home. Little acts of kindness like these made a big impression on the British boys.

So far as the playing side of the tour was concerned "Bob" soon ran into trouble. Not through injury but illness. He played in the opening game against Southern Districts of New South Wales, scoring one of the tries, and then went down with pleurodynia, a rheumatic affection of the intercostal muscles of the chest. This kept him out of action for several weeks and lost him his chance of appearing in the tests.

He had been intent on getting into the England test side, but had to miss the early matches which would have enabled him to stake his claim. With "Bob," Trevor Foster and Harry Murphy on the sick-list (Murphy broke his collar-bone in his first game), "Les" White and "Doug" Phillips went through the Australian test series as England's second-row pair. It was ironical that the forwards should be the chief sufferers of illness and injury on that tour, for the selectors had sent an extra three-quarter at the expense of a forward.

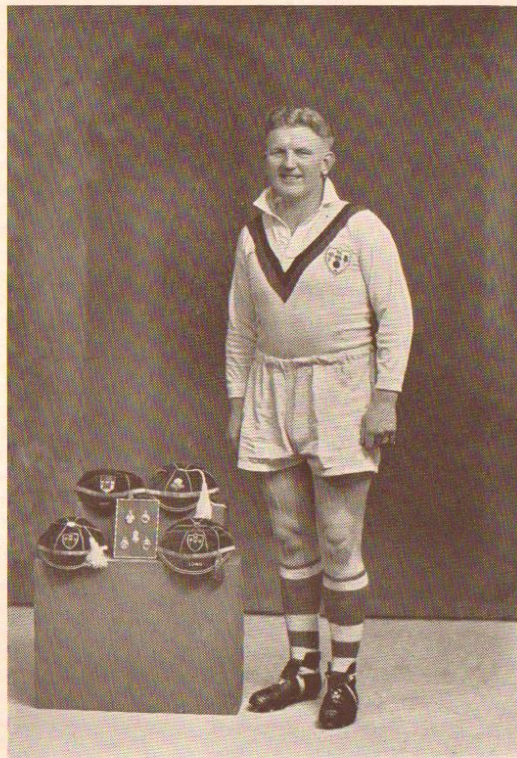
"Bob's" first match after the doctor declared him fit to resume was the one at Mackay in which the tourists ran up 94 points, their highest score of the tour. Twenty tries were scored but "Bob" must still not have been feeling quite up to the mark for he didn't score a single one of them! His fellow-Cumbrian, Jimmy Lewthwaite, had seven, however, and Ernest Ward landed 17 goals.

In between the matches the tourists did their share of sightseeing. They were taken around all the beauty spots and "Bob" will never forget Magnetic Island, Blue Mountain, Sydney Harbour Bridge and the springs at Rotorua in New Zealand. Of all the country they passed through on their travels, the sight of New Zealand from the air reminded "Bob" and his fellow-tourists most of home.

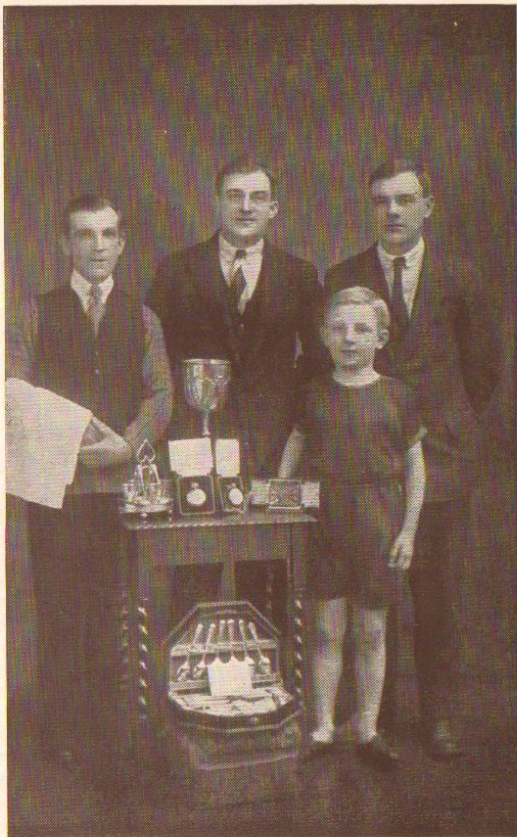
New Zealand and reflections

The New Zealand part of the tour enabled "Bob" to make up for his absence from so many of the games in Australia. Seven games were played in the Dominion and "Bob" turned out in six of them including the one and only test at Auckland. No other player had so many appearances in New Zealand.

That test was the only one of "Bob's" eleven matches during the tour in which he finished up on the losing side.



Bob Nicholls



"Young" Nicholson with "Trainer Jimmy,"
"Dad" and "Bill" Richardson

The following is a list of the games in which he played:

In Australia

- v. Southern Districts at Junee, won 36-4 (one try).
- v. Mackay at Mackay, won 94-0.
- v. Brisbane at Brisbane, won 21-15.
- v. Ipswich at Ipswich, won 29-12.
- v. Northern Districts at Grafton, won 53-8 (one try).

In New Zealand

- v. South Island at Christchurch, won 24-12.
- v. Maoris at Wellington, won 32-8.
- v. Auckland at Auckland, won 9-7 (one try).
- v. South Auckland at Huntly, won 42-12 (two tries).
- v. New Zealand (Test) at Auckland, lost 8-13.
- v. Auckland at Auckland, won 22-9.

The grounds which impressed "Bob" most in Australia were the Sydney cricket ground, the 'Gabba at Brisbane and, of the country districts, Grafton. In New Zealand the Wellington ground and Carlaw Park, Auckland, were the best. The tourists found a great contrast in the playing pitches, which were as hard as a rock in Australia, but very soft owing to rain in New Zealand.

"Bob" was no sailor

Apart from his illness in Australia "Bob" has only one unhappy memory of the 1946 tour. He is, unfortunately, a bad sailor and anyone who has suffered from sea-sickness will know what he went through on that long sea trip. He had had some warning of what he was up against when the Fartown team crossed the Channel on their French trip in March, 1946.

"Bob" had a bad time of it and was finally carried ashore at Dieppe by Alban Davies and Harold Whitehead. During the crossing he was up on deck with Jackie Burrow, a fellow-sufferer. "Bob" suddenly had to dive below, unnoticed by Jackie. When the pair met again Jackie said "I thought you'd jumped overboard, "Bob," and it seemed such a good idea that I nearly followed you!"

With that Channel experience in mind "Bob" expected the worst and although he tried every remedy known and unknown he was glad to reach dry land again both going out and coming home.

After a rough trip round Gibraltar "Bob" enjoyed the Mediterranean and Red Sea passage and earned his "certificate"

from Old Father Neptune at the "crossing the line" ceremony. He was beginning to congratulate himself as the ship approached Australia when, three days out, they ran into a violent storm. "Bob" was not alone with his troubles on that occasion!

The journey home was a similar story. There were calm spells which could be enjoyed and others which could not. "Bob" was able to appreciate the marvels of the Panama Canal, but for eight days afterwards he made only infrequent appearances on deck. The trip was lengthened by a strike at New York which caused the ship to be sent further up to Canada, much to "Bob's" dismay.

It was, therefore, a very thankful "Bob" Nicholson who reached Tilbury once again to find his wife awaiting him along with his father and mother. Yet, on looking back, "Bob" counts himself very fortunate in having had the opportunity of making the tour and in spite of everything he would not have missed it for anything in the world.

His experiences on the sea are in complete contrast to those in the air. The 1946 tour party made Rugby League history with their extensive use of air travel. The crossing of the Tasman, from Australia to New Zealand, took seven hours by Sunderland Flying Boat and "Bob" thoroughly enjoyed the trip. Similarly, he felt no ill effects from his "flips" during his war-time R.A.F. days. But he has only to think of a sea voyage and —!!

Home—to good news

With the Australian tour behind him and the long journey back home over, "Bob" found a very welcome surprise awaiting him. During his absence a house had been obtained for him, which was good news indeed for both "Bob" and his wife. He had felt unsettled while in "digs" and was of the opinion that it had affected his football.

His two principal jobs on reaching Huddersfield again were to get settled down in his new home and to get into training. There had been little facility for exercise on the crowded passenger ship which had brought the tourists back from New Zealand, consequently "Bob" had put some weight on. He found that he tipped the scales at close upon 15 stones, but he felt fit enough and eager to get back into harness.

His first match after returning from the tour was a Monday evening Yorkshire cup-tie against Hull Kingston Rovers at Fartown. This was the occasion when the Rovers provided a

shock in winning by 15 points to 10, and when "Jeff" Bawden had a try disallowed for stepping over the dead-ball line in an effort to get near the posts and so make sure of the conversion which would have levelled the scores.

Huddersfield were not among the honours that season but "Bob" kept on the fringe of the England international team, being selected as reserve to travel on three occasions. He also played for Cumberland.

From "second row" to "front row"

When the Fartowners went to Hunslet in October, "Bob" was moved up into the front row of the forwards in an emergency. Huddersfield lost, but their pack got much more of the ball than Hunslet did, and "Bob's" display suggested a further trial as a "prop." For the remainder of that season he played mainly in the front row. Then, in April, he broke a finger in his left hand while taking part in Norman Pugh's benefit match at Oldham. This brought the season to an abrupt end for him.

The new campaign of 1947-48 found him winning his place back in the England thirteen and showing some fine scoring form into the bargain. He had 18 tries altogether, 17 for Huddersfield and one for England. Three of them were scored in one match, no mean feat as he was playing "prop" forward at the time. The occasion was a visit by Castleford and was also "Pat" Devery's first game at Fartown. Since season 1912-13, when Douglas Clark scored 20 tries, no member of the Fartown pack had scored as many as 17 tries in one campaign.

"Bob" played in the front row for half of the 1947-48 season but following the signing of Jack Maiden and, later, "Mel" Meek he reverted to his old second row position. The top four was reached that season, Huddersfield's semi-final opponents being Warrington, who proved to be too good for the Fartowners at Wilderspool stadium.

Test match football in England

The "Kangaroos" were over here during season 1948-49 and it was a very eventful period for "Bob." He gained selection in all the three test matches, but was only able to play in two as a last-minute illness caused him to stand down from the last one. This was a great disappointment to him as he had been very keen to play in the complete series, in which England eventually won all the tests played.

However, as a consolation, he was called upon three times by England in the home internationals and also appeared in each of the three games played by Cumberland, who won the county championship. One of the England international matches that season—the one against France—was played at Wembley, so that “Bob” has had the honour of appearing at the Empire Stadium.

One record of which “Bob” was justly proud was that of playing four times against the 1948-49 “Kangaroos” and never being on the losing sides. The games were the first two tests, Cumberland and Huddersfield v. Australia. Had he been able to play in the third test the number would have been five.

A happy domestic event took place in the February, when “Bob’s” wife presented him with a son. Upon receipt of this news in Australia a Brisbane (Queensland) admirer of “Bob” promptly sent a little “claret and gold” bedecked dolly, with his best wishes to the child and its parents.

“Bob” was playing in the second row regularly during this season. One memorable game was that against Bradford Northern early on. A sadly depleted Huddersfield team just failed to beat a powerful Bradford thirteen at Fartown. “Bob” dropped a goal, his side’s only score and the first goal he had kicked in his career in senior Rugby League football. He had another three to his name by the end of the season.

Huddersfield were in the “top four” again by the time April came round and finished up with two splendid wins. The first was against Wigan at Central Park in the semi-final and then came the Maine Road final with Warrington providing worthy opposition. The latter will go down as one of the most thrilling of all the league finals and it was a great experience to have played in such a match. The Fartowners were very glad indeed to hear the final whistle on that occasion.

A propaganda tour in South Wales, in which Huddersfield and St. Helens played three exhibition games, came as a pleasant anti-climax to the excitement of Maine Road. It was a very enjoyable trip and rounded the season off nicely, although the hot summer weather did not make footballing very easy.

Of season 1949-50 “Bob” had great hopes that were to be doomed to disappointment. Another tour to Australia was on the horizon and with his experience of big matches and Australian footballers and conditions he seemed to have a very fair chance of repeating his 1946 visit “down-under.”



His first and only junior side

“Les” White and “Bob”





The 1946 Tourist Choir—Choirmaster "Ike"

Training at Brisbane



Huddersfield's 1948-49 Trophies

The
Yorkshire
League and
Rugby League,
Championship
Cups



Fartown
Team
1949-50





“Bob”—The Aircraftsman

Things did not work out that way, however. He struck a bad patch mid-way through the season and had a game or two with the reserves in an effort to regain his form. He was more like his old self on his return to the first team but by then it was too late.

We'll show 'em—by “Forgotten Men”

The tour team was selected without the name Nicholson being included nor, indeed, was any other Fartowner in it either. The severe drubbing which the “forgotten men” administered to Wigan a few days after the announcement of the tour names made no difference at all to that salient fact.

Yet another disappointment was in store for the Fartown players and their supporters. The top four was safely reached and Swinton were disposed of in the semi-final at Fartown. Then came the final at Maine Road against a Wigan team shorn of its tourists. As in the case of the Yorkshire Challenge Cup final earlier in the season, Huddersfield could do nothing right. The memories will still be painfully fresh in many minds so there is no need to dwell upon them here.

These disappointments are part and parcel of the lot of footballers and their followers. They are, perhaps, felt more keenly by the former than the latter, although it can be truthfully said that both take them to heart. Season 1949-50 had, at anyrate, provided “Bob” Nicholson with a complete contrast to the one that had gone before it.

“Bob” still has a future

We hope that it will be his turn, and that of his club, for another successful time in season 1950-51. Still only 29 years of age, “Bob” has a good few years of football left in him. He has already had most of the honours the game has to offer, having attained test status against Australia and New Zealand and having represented his county many times. Medals and caps have come his way plentifully, although there are still the Rugby League Challenge Cup and Yorkshire Challenge Cup winners' medals which have eluded him.

He has covered thousands of miles in order to play Rugby League football and has never lowered the high standard of sportsmanship which is expected of men who wear a “claret and gold” jersey. Blessed with a fine physique, “Bob” uses his strength fairly, and is not the type of player to take an unfair advantage of an opponent.

His football, and his conduct on and off the field, have brought him great popularity and, as already stated, many honours. Given freedom from injury he should add to the list and so reflect further credit on himself and on the Huddersfield club of which he is proud to be a playing member.

BOB NICHOLSON'S FARTOWN PLAYING RECORDS

FIRST TEAM

| Season | App. | Goals | Tries | Points |
|---------|------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1944-45 | 3 | — | — | — |
| 1945-46 | 22 | — | 9 | 27 |
| 1946-47 | 24 | — | 4 | 12 |
| 1947-48 | 36 | — | 17 | 51 |
| 1948-49 | 40 | 3 | 10 | 36 |
| 1949-50 | 33 | — | 3 | 9 |
| 1950-51 | 11 | — | 4 | 12 |
| | 169 | 3 | 47 | 147 |

SECOND TEAM

| Season | App. | Tries |
|---------|----------|----------|
| 1938-39 | 1 | — |
| 1939-40 | 2 | 1 |
| 1947-48 | 1 | 1 |
| 1949-50 | 2 | — |
| | 6 | 2 |

SEVEN-A-SIDE FOOTBALL

"Bob" has played in two competitions, those at Leigh in 1949 and 1950, scoring three tries in six games. Huddersfield were winning finalists on both occasions.

REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS

gained by
"Bob" Nicholson

Test matches

- v. New Zealand at Auckland, 10th August, 1946.
- v. Australia at Headingley, Leeds, 9th October, 1948.
- v. Australia at Swinton, 6th November, 1948.
- Was selected for the third test v. Australia at Odsal Stadium, Bradford, but had to stand down owing to illness.

For England

- v. Wales at Swansea, 24th November, 1945 (one try).
- v. France at Swinton, 23rd February, 1946.
- v. Wales at Wigan, 20th September, 1947.
- v. France at Marseilles, 11th April, 1948, (one try).
- v. France at Bordeaux, 28th November, 1948.
- v. Wales at Swansea, 5th February, 1949.
- v. France at Wembley Stadium, 12th March, 1949.
- Reserve to travel.*
- v. Wales at Swansea, 16th November, 1946.
- v. France at Bordeaux, 8th December, 1946.
- v. France at Leeds, 8th March (postponed to 17th May, 1947).
- v. France at Huddersfield, 25th October, 1947.
- v. Other Nationalities at Workington, 19th September, 1949

Rugby League touring team

1946—Australia and New Zealand.

Rugby League team in France

- v. French Rugby League at Paris, 6th January, 1946, (one try).

For Cumberland

- v. Yorkshire at Headingley, Leeds, 31st October, 1945.
- v. Lancashire at Workington, 26th January, 1946.
- v. Lancashire at Barrow, 4th January, 1947.
- v. Yorkshire at Headingley, Leeds, 22nd October, 1947.
- v. Lancashire at Workington, 15th May, 1948.
- v. Australia at Whitehaven, 13th October, 1948.
- v. Yorkshire at Workington, 6th April, 1949, (one try and one goal).
- v. Lancashire at Salford, 20th April, 1949, (one try).
- v. Yorkshire at Hull, 26th September, 1949.

PRESS CUTTINGS

There were no outstanding players in the Huddersfield back division, but Nicholson gave a grand display in the loose. He is the best forward seen at Wigan this season, and was very difficult to tackle.

(Wigan v. Huddersfield, 7th October, 1944).

What the Huddersfield forwards lacked in weight they made up for in speed, and there was especially good work by Nicholson, who was signed just before the war. He joined up cleverly with the three-quarters on one or two occasions, and more than pulled his weight in the loose.

(Huddersfield v. Hull, Yorkshire Cup 1st leg, 1st round, 21st October, 1944).

Nicholson was the outstanding forward; he enhanced his reputation by his spirited work in the loose; he was one of the fastest and liveliest forwards on the field, and often created good openings, but his backs failed to profit by his enterprise.

(Yorkshire v. Cumberland at Headingley, 31st October, 1945).

Nicholson on Saturday had a burst over fifty yards that would do credit to any wing-threequarter in the Rugby League. He showed that again when a hole had been made in the defence. If he had taken the ball another try would have been certain. Unhappily he missed it, and the ball bounced off his chest for the referee, quite wrongly, to whistle for a knock-on.

(Salford v. Huddersfield, 17th November, 1945).

A great part in the rally that completely swept the visitors off their feet was taken by Nicholson, who led in three grand bursts just before the change of ends. Ever up with the attack, he was a sore trouble to the defence.

(Huddersfield v. Hull, 1st December, 1945).

Once more Nicholson gave evidence of that amazing fitness which keeps him going like a steam engine the full eighty minutes. Wherever the battle was fiercest Nicholson was in it. It was a perfect display of forward work except for two ground kicks, both of which were too hard.

(Cumberland v. Lancashire at Workington, 26th January, 1946).



Against the Maoris 1946

“IN ACTION”

and Australia in second test at Swinton, 1949





Bringing home the Rugby League Championship Cup 1949

Introduced to the Mayor of Brisbane



Nicholson showed a fine burst of speed on one occasion when he overtook a Maori winger in full flight for the line with a clear field ahead and brought him down.

(Maoris v. English touring team, 31st July, 1946).

Nicholson picked up and ran from halfway to cross. Nicholson's speed was remarkable on such a ground and he left the opposition standing.

(Auckland v. English touring team, 3rd August, 1946).

Nicholson was to be noted when the ball was moving among the backs.

(York v. Huddersfield, 19th April, 1947).

Nicholson had two tries as the result of being on the spot at the right time.

(Barrow v. Huddersfield, 6th September, 1947).

The best forward on the field was "Bob" Nicholson whose three tries were a worthy reward for a grand display.

(Huddersfield v. Castleford, 11th October, 1947).

Able assistance came from Nicholson, who was also to the fore in many raids on the Australian line.

(England v. Australia (first test match) at Headingley, 9th October, 1948).

Nicholson was in his best international form.

(Cumberland v. Yorkshire at Workington, 6th April, 1949).

Nicholson stood out in the forwards with some strong runs.

(Huddersfield v. Warrington, 3rd September, 1949).

Nicholson always seems to do more grafting in the front row than the second, "Bob's" speed as a second row man is useful in the loose, but his weight and strength as a "prop" is even more valuable. Have we found the answer to the front row problem?

(Widnes v. Huddersfield, 10th December, 1949).

Nicholson's robust strength and ability to be where he was wanted did as much as anything to make the early breaches of the Salford defence.

(Salford v. Huddersfield, 26th August, 1950).

Personal Tributes to "Bob"

I consider it a pleasure to be afforded the opportunity of writing these few lines in appreciation of "Bob" Nicholson and his long and exemplary service to the "claret and gold" of Fartown.

I first had the pleasure of meeting "Bob" during his visit to Australia with the British Rugby League touring team in 1946 and our association was renewed when I came to Fartown in 1947, but this time as team mates.

My four years' association with "Bob" has left me with a very high regard for his sportsmanship and this, allied to his football ability, has gained him great popularity, not only with the spectators and his fellow players, but also with opposing players. He has been criticised, but what good player isn't and one need go no further for the proof of his ability than the fact that he has gained every possible honour in English Rugby League football, ranging from international to county representation. The outstanding feature of his career is that whether playing for his country, county or team, his enthusiasm is always the same.

It is the sincere wish of his fellow players and myself that he will receive a bumper benefit and we look forward to having the pleasure of his company both on the field and off for many years to come.

LIONEL COOPER.

It gives me great pleasure to be given this opportunity of writing a few lines on behalf of "Bob." I had the pleasure of knowing him before he came to Fartown as we both come from Hensingham. There the people are all very proud of him. He has every football honour in the Rugby League game and has reflected sporting credit on his home town. Besides being a great footballer "Bob" is a grand chap to have along in one's company. So here's wishing him many more seasons with the "claret and gold" and a bumper testimonial.

JEFF BAWDEN.

It is a pleasure to pay a personal compliment to Bob Nicholson.

He has all that makes a good Fartowner. Good living; conscientious in training; and above all a student of the game. So much so that he knows all his faults.

The best game I ever saw Bob play was in Marseilles in 1948 against France. His crash through and intelligent backing up won the day for England.

I know this letter is about "Bob" but I must mention his family. His mam and dad frequently make the journey to Fartown from Cumberland, and two grander people or greater sports have yet to enter Fartown gates.

Your popularity in the dressing room "Bob," will have all the boys and committee behind you in making November 18th a red letter day. All that remains to be done is for the sporting Fartown crowd to rally round and make this the biggest and best testimonial fund ever.

Yours as always,

ALEX FIDDES.

Some years ago Rugby League players comprised one of Cumberland's most renowned "exports." Since the advent of first the Workington Town club and then Whitehaven this traffic is petering out. But Cumbrians will always look back with pride on an impressive list of players who have joined famous clubs, and, in doing so, have achieved fame themselves.

One of Cumberland's outstanding football "exports" will be long remembered as "Bob" Nicholson. Born of honest-to-goodness Cumberland stock, he has achieved most of the honours the code can bestow on its players, and, I dare say, will be immeasurably proud of a recent recognition in this, his benefit year—his choice as captain of his native county in the county championship battles. It is a distinction sought by many Cumbrians, but gained by comparatively few.

Through it all "Bob" Nicholson has never lost his sense of proportion; he has remained modest and considerate for others, a credit alike to himself, his club, and his county. We in Cumberland salute him and hope that his testimonial will be in keeping with the loyal and long service he has given.

G. G. CARTER, *Editor of the "Whitehaven News."*

I am sure it is a pleasure for me to write a few lines of appreciation for such a great hearted player as "Bob" Nicholson, who has proved himself to be a loyal servant, not only for the Fartown club, but for his country and his county. His name will rank amongst the great forwards Cumberland have produced—Joe Ferguson, Douglas Clark, Martin Hodgson, Miller Strong, Joe Wright and a host of others.

We in Cumberland have the greatest respect for this player who has never failed to give of his best in the matches he has played for Cumberland. I had the pleasure of recommending "Bob" to Huddersfield when he was only eighteen years of age and saw him play his first and only trial match for the "A" team in 1939.

Had it not been for the persistency of "Bill" Cunningham and the late Harold Wagstaff, "Bob" Nicholson might never have worn the "claret and gold" jersey, for he only signed on the dotted line for the Huddersfield club at 10-45 p.m. and our train left at 11-15 p.m.

Yes, Huddersfield nearly missed the boat.

On the occasion of his richly merited testimonial, Cumberland salute a great forward, who has played for his club, his county and his country.

GEORGE PLUMMER,

Hon. Secretary, Cumberland County Rugby League Commission

"BOB" NICHOLSON . . .

Was born at Dearham on 22nd February, 1921.

First played for Huddersfield "A" team against Castleford "A" at Fartown on 22nd April, 1939.

At that time was 5 feet 9½ inches in height and scaled 12 stones 10 lb. His present day-weight is 14 stones 8½ lb.

Made his first team debut at Wigan, on 7th October, 1944.

Scored seventeen tries for Huddersfield during season 1947-48, a greater total than had been obtained by any Fartown forward for 35 years.

Scored three in one match when playing as a "prop" forward. Has scored 57 tries in 199 matches during his career in first-class Rugby League football.

Has toured France and Wales with the Fartowners and has been to Australia, New Zealand and France with England international teams.

IN AND AROUND THE DRESSING ROOM

An interview with "Bob" Nicholson

In the course of passing years I have been privileged to play in international, test and county games as well as hundreds of club matches, but to put a few thoughts into print is a new departure. I can say frankly that this prospect tends to put the "wind up" me to a greater extent than any match I remember. They do say that this game of writing is easy providing that you know your subject and write as you would talk. Preferably give me the hectic atmosphere of personal contact with an oval ball anytime.

Amateur critics

All players in the course of their careers tend to become something in the nature of a public institution. In no other profession is one subject to the criticisms and arguments of so many thousands. If you are one of the lucky players and things run smooth, this spare time vocation of playing Rugby League football gives one a real "kick out of life." It certainly has its "ups and downs!" If you should strike a bad patch—and always remember such a period comes to all footballers at some time or other—the critics on the stands and terraces soon tend to "froth at the mouth." Although they are an exception, I have known amateur critics try vociferously to give players on their "off days" the impression that they were no good, never had been any good and never would be any good. Luckily this minority, so prone to say that they "wouldn't pay you in washers" are quick to change their opinions when the run of the ball restores an individual's confidence and power. The good wishes of the majority more than compensate for the "hot air" engendered by the few.

"Bill" recommended Fartown

Huddersfield was one of five clubs interested in developing my future football career and they never knew that one of my track trainers in junior days, "Bill" Richardson, never wasted an opportunity to sing the praises of Huddersfield. Strange but true that "Bill" had never been to Huddersfield but he was a strong supporter of both Fartown and the Town clubs. His first job every Sunday morning was to see "How my Huddersfield teams have gone on."

Rough or Smooth

When I first came to Fartown they were telling in the dressing room the story of Douglas Clark and Ben Gronow. These two famous Fartowners were connected with the side they call "the team of all the talents" and we of another generation are still being told that we can never hope to equal that combination. They must have been good, but it was before my time, hence no arguments. It was said that before a match "Doug" and Ben" made it a practice to contact the opposing pack and ask the question "What's it going to be to-day, rough or smooth?" Tactics were decided according to the reply and so the story goes that in many matches when their opponents failed to give an answer, they were darned glad after a short spell to say "Let's have it smooth!"

Appeal for young prospects

I must be getting on in a football sense for this is my testimonial year. The end always comes with the passage of time although I have hopes of justifying my existence with the "claret and gold" for some years yet to come. Remember I am only 29 years of age and that is comparatively young for a forward. May I be privileged to say that many a promising youngster, new to the game, has been literally ruined by hasty and premature adverse criticism. As an "old timer" I appeal to you all to give the youngsters of the future a fair chance. If you on the terraces could be made to realise the psychological effect that you can have on play and players in their early days you would think before shouting. One spectator to my recollection enjoyed yelling "Who the 'ell ever thought you could play football." When players are seasoned, believe me, they can take it.

Good fellowship

One thing that plays a vital part in the blending and development of a successful side is the environment of the dressing room. In that atmosphere with its aroma of embrocation, the steam of the bath, the sweat of the game and the mixed dialects associated with present day cosmopolitan sides, the objective is essentially comradeship in the highest degree. I can say without fear of contradiction that no club can hope for a better team spirit both on and off the field than we have at Fartown.

It has remained constantly at top level ever since I joined the club. I know that many think that petty jealousy and "spots of trouble" follow when players are missing from the team sheet or compelled to play the part of "odd man out." That has not been my experience—disappointment yes, but grouching no. Not only at Fartown but also in representative games I have found in the dressing rooms a spirit of fun, understanding and good fellowship that is characteristic of the best things in life.

"Sign please!"

When we are changing into football kit, previous to the match, one of the things we all like to hear is that "there's another good gate to-day." It is always encouraging to know that you are drawing the crowds. One of the most cheerful features in recent years has been the very marked and encouraging increase in juvenile support. This should guarantee that Rugby League football in Huddersfield will never divert from the target which is—only the best in football execution and sportsmanship is good enough for the "claret and gold." Those club coloured scarves, sported by our young followers always give me a thrill. I am not saying that their urge to collect autographs cannot at times be a bit of a nuisance. You may think some of the players are inclined to get a bit "grumpy" when youngsters advance with books and pencils, but they must forgive us—we are sometimes a bit tired after a hard match. I shall never forget one young "chappie" who told me he could always "swap three forwards for an Australian."

Fartown ruminations

We have no particular rotation of coming out at Fartown, but last man always is Johnny Hunter, and he's the first man back too when we finish playing towards the Spaines Road end. My particular idiosyncrasy is to be first man into the bath, and last man out.

The majority of the boys can help with an impromptu turn in case of emergencies. "Pat" Daly takes top marks in straight singing. Valentine is the boy for stories, he has a wonderful repertoire of Scots anecdotes—but what we said about the Scottish bagpipes, when the Hawick Pipe Band paid us a recent visit is nobody's business. "Jock" Anderson and "Ike" Owens can also oblige when required.

The better and the best

Wild horses will not drag from me the names of the two players but I do remember one saying to the other; "If you were only half as good as you think you are, and I was only half as good as I'd like to be, we'd be a couple of real 'uns."

This one also is true. It happened in an important cup-tie when Huddersfield were playing at Oldham. One of the Oldham forwards had the misfortune to cut his head rather badly and in the absence of the home team's doctor, one travelling with Huddersfield went into the dressing room to patch the player up. Said the Oldham trainer "Will he be O.K. to go back now, doc?" The doctor in all sincerity said "No, he must lie down and keep quiet." As the doctor was leaving for the stand the forward asked "Say doctor where do you come from?" The answer was "Huddersfield" and the Oldham forward said "Well, we aren't having any o' that soo'art a thing, ah'm ruddy well going back."

£3,000 a year and a chauffeur

Another story from the dressing room that always causes me to smile concerns a certain Rugby Union player who had been highly recommended. Two members of the football committee were detailed to interview him. They arrived at the town, found the house, which to their great surprise, almost reminded them of one of the "stately homes of England." Plucking up courage they knocked at the door and asked if they could see Mr. so and so. The butler took them into the library and the elderly gentleman after asking their business said "Oh it's my son you are wanting to see, gentlemen." It was now too late to back out, and when the son did arrive the visitors were drinking whisky and soda with his dad, and determined to fulfil the instructions that they had received. To their request "What would you be prepared to accept to turn professional?" the son said, "Gentlemen, your pertinacity intrigues me. If you'll pay me the equivalent of my present income, I'm your man." "And what's that?" asked the Huddersfield representatives. "£3,000 a year, personal and exclusive use of a Rolls-Royce car and a chauffeur to drive it." There was no signing, but the story says that Huddersfield's two representatives sent the player

concerned a telegram of congratulation when he subsequently played for England.

Alec Fiddes—Parlez vous Francais?

I recall a visit to Paris with "Alec" in control. He had previous experience of the French capital. It was a warm day and the party decided that conditions called for a soft drink. So we took seats at a wayside cafe. Says Alec, "You chaps leave this to me, I'll give him the patter, Garcon, quatre fruits jeux." "Russ" and I looked at Alec and then at the waiter, whose expression indicated trouble ahead before our thirsts were quenched. We sighed with relief when he leaned over to Alec and said, in perfect English, "What do you want—four fruit juices?"

"Russ" incidentally has a pet aversion—he likes his eggs fried hard. This led to another spot of trouble at breakfast, for the eggs were soft and the young lady did not understand English. Gesticulating with our hands, we endeavoured to indicate that we wanted "Russ's" eggs turned over and fried both sides. "Ah! mais oui, monsieur," and away went the eggs. We had all finished breakfast when those eggs came back, evidently after considerable argument in the kitchen. Mademoiselle smiled sweetly. Instead of frying them on both sides, she had merely turned the eggs on the plate, with the soft unfried yoke to the bottom. Apparently, she was under the impression that "Russ" believed that there was some football magic attached to the turning of an egg in the kitchen. Any way, he had to be content with coffee and rolls for breakfast that morning. Poor stuff to play rugby football on!

To you all—"many thanks"

It was a lucky day for me when I came to Huddersfield. Not once have I regretted the decision to leave Cumberland and settle down amongst you. My football life has indeed been a pleasurable one. In the Rugby League game Fartown was my first love, and I trust and feel safe in predicting that it will also be my last. To the club officials and to every supporter of the "claret and gold" I take this chance to say "thank you." If on occasions I have failed to come up to your expectations it has not been for want of trying. I have always endeavoured to do my duty to the Fartown club. I must also acknowledge that the Fartown club has always done the right thing by me. Again—"Thank you all."