

William Henry Humphreys



Born 1859 in Hartlepool.

Died in a nursing home in York in 1934.

Originally a Commercial Clerk who then qualified as a Civil Engineer working with the Hartlepool Gas and Water Board for 20 years before moving to York in 1898 where he was a Waterworks Manager.

His forbears were interesting people with his grandfather being the Master (Thomas) Humphreys of Barnard Castle who was a watch and clock maker. He was the inspiration for a number of stories in Charles Dickens books and it is noted that Dickens would stop and check his watch by the Humphreys clock in the shop window when he was staying in Barnard Castle collecting material for Nicholas Nickleby. William's father followed him

into the business and later moved to 'Old' Hartlepool where there is evidence of a winding up sale which is to be found in the Museum of Hartlepool.

William had a varied playing career initially captaining West Hartlepool's second XV the Wanderers in 1881 before becoming the Captain of the 1st XV in 1884 – 85

His refereeing career was interesting - between January and April 1893 he refereed the County Final between Yorkshire and Middlesex with the President of the RFU running one touch and the Yorkshire President running the other touch. He was also invited to referee the Yorkshire Cup Final between Halifax and Batley. His two international matches of that year were Scotland v Wales (4/2/1893) and Wales v Ireland. It appears that he went down well with the Welsh who were the only international team using four threequarters at that time when the norm was to field nine forwards in the scrum and three threequarters. This does not appear to have fazed William and Wales won both matches. The victory over Ireland at Llanelli brought the Principality its first Triple Crown.

There is information in a copy of The Hartlepool Mail that in 1893 he was involved in setting up of a joint Durham/Northumberland Referees Society. The meeting was held in Sunderland and Mr Cail of Northumberland who was also the President of the RFU was present with William and C W Mountford representing Durham whilst H Welford and J Thompson represented Northumberland. Mr H Boddy of Hartlepool was elected Secretary. In January 1894 he became County Secretary after Arthur Hill from Hartlepool Rovers who may have resigned on principle. (Will Oakes also resigned as Senior Vice President). He was serving as secretary when the great schism of 1895 and the Northern Union was formed.

One of his last games for Durham Society may have been a game in which the Barbarians played in South Shields in 1898 where it is reported that he was hooted on the field and mobbed at the end.

The photos of William show him leaning on a wall 'posed insouciance'. Others his signature and amendments for the posters of 1896 rules and 1897 poster used by the County to support referees.

The third photo indicates that referees were allowed to charge 3rd Class rail fare for their expenses and that the Referees headquarters were in Sunderland. Interesting to note that on the formation of a separate Durham Society in 1895 that it was agreed that in addition to being able to claim 3rd class rail fare and 2/6d for a hotel other expenses in addition were to be allowed.

Information on international games refereed

Wales vs Scotland 4 Feb 1893

Firstly, the Ref was originally down as W H Vassall, but Mr Humphreys took the game. Touch judges D Morton, President, Scottish Union, W Wilkins Treasurer Welsh Union

Score Wales won 1p 3 tries (9ts) to 0

The teams.

Scotland A W Cameron Watsonians, J J Gowans, Cambridge Univ, G McGregor London Scottish, D D Robertson Cambridge Univ, W Wotherspoon West, R C Greig Glasgow Acc, J N Millar West, G T Nellson West, T L Hendry Clydesdale, H F Menzies West, H O Leggatt Watsonians, A Dalgleish Gala, W R Gibson R H S, W B Cownie West

Wales A J Bancroft Swansea, N Biggs Cardiff, Bert Gould Newport, A J Gould, McCutcheon Oldham, F C Parfitt Newport, P Phillips Newport, Hannen Newport, Graham Newport, A F Hill Cardiff & Captain, Watts Newport, Day Newport, C B Nichol Cambridge Univ, F Mills Swansea, Boucher Newport

Wales vs Ireland 11th March 1893

Wales 2 – 0 Ireland

Date: 11 March, 1893

Venue: Stradey Park

Competition: Home Nations

Att: 20,000

One of the most significant and famous days in Welsh rugby history, with this win Wales own the Triple Crown and the Home Nations title for the first time. A try by Bert Gould, partnering his brother Arthur in the centre, scored the only points of the game with a try. Wales triumphed using the four three-quarter system, a move that was copied by the rest of the world in the not too distant future.

Wales: Billy Bancroft; Norman Biggs, Arthur Gould (captain), Bert Gould, Billy McCutcheon; Percy Phillips, Fred Parfitt; Frank Mills, Charles Nicholl, Tom Graham, Frank Hill, Jim Hannan, David Samuel, Arthur Boucher, Wallace Watts
Scorer: Try: GH Gould

Ireland: William Sparrow; Rob Dunlop, Sam Lee (captain), William Gardiner; Walter Brown, Fred Davies; Bryan O'Brien, Rob Johnston, Herbert Forrest, Arthur Wallis, Harry Lindsay, Rob Hamilton, Coe Clinch, Rob Stevenson, Charles Rooke

Referee: WH Humphreys (England)

Rules in connection with the
SOCIETY OF REFEREES.

DURHAM AND NORTHUMBERLAND.

1 That the Name of the Society shall be the "Northumberland and Durham Society of Referees," and that its Headquarters be in Sunderland.

2 That the Sub-Committee consist of the President of the two Counties and three Members of each County Committee, with power to add (not more than two each from Durham and Northumberland) to their number, and elect from themselves an Honorary Secretary.

3 That a Referee be allowed Third Class Railway Fare and all legitimate out-of-pocket expenses, which must be paid to him at the time of the match, otherwise the Referee must report same to the Joint Sub-Committee.

4 That any Club, in either County, requiring the services of a Referee must apply to the Hon. Secretary of this Sub-Committee, not later than fourteen days previous to the match for which he is required, the Hon. Secretary thereupon appoint one.

4/ 5 Any Club not applying for a Referee within the time stated in rule 4, and wishing the Sub-Committee to appoint one, must enclose 5/- with their application.

6 That the powers, to be exercised by the Joint Sub-Committee, which have been so delegated to them by the County Committees of each County, shall be

(a) The appointment of Referees.

(b) To deal with all cases of rough or foul play or misconduct of any player reported by a Referee.

prepare (c) To ~~purpose~~ and present a report to each County Committee, as to any misconduct of Spectators at any match.

(d) To fine any Club not paying the Referee's expenses, per rule 3, in any amount not exceeding £5.

3/ 7 That the Travelling Expenses of the Joint Sub-Committee be equally paid by each County, and that the Secretaries expenses be paid one-third by Northumberland and two-thirds by Durham.

ALBERT BODDY, Hon. Sec.
WEST HARTLEPOOL.

TELEPHONE 4080.

4080

Durham County Rugby Union Society of Referees
~~DURHAM COUNTY RUGBY UNION.~~

~~SOCIETY OF REFEREES.~~

PROPOSED RULES

to be submitted to the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday August 25th 1896

1.—That the name of the Society shall be the "Durham Rugby Union Society of Referees."

2.—That the Society shall consist of an Honorary Secretary and five members of the County Committee, each representing one of the Divisions of the County, and who shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. Any vacancy occurring to be filled up by the County Committee from the Division in which the vacancy occurs.

3.—That any Referee shall be eligible for membership provided he be approved of by the Society. The Society may subject any candidate to an examination on the laws of the game.

4.—That each club in membership with the Union is invited to submit the names of competent persons willing to act as Referees, not later than the 30th September in each year.

5.—That the Society shall meet on the first and third Tuesdays in each month for the purpose of appointing Referees for the intervening dates, and for other business. Any club in membership with the Union, requiring the services of Referees, must send in their application not less than two days prior to the date of meeting. Any club unable to comply with this bye-law may have a Referee appointed on application to the Hon.

Secretary of the Society not less than two days prior to the match and enclosing a fee of five shillings.

6.—That any club may apply to the Society to appoint Referees in all their matches in Durham County whether at home or away. Clubs adopting this bye-law must send a list of their fixtures to the Hon. Secretary of the Society.

7.—That a Referee ^{shall} be allowed third-class railway fare and out of pocket expenses. The amount due to the Referee should be paid to him immediately after the match.

8.—That any referee appointed to officiate in a particular match or matches as in Rule 5, shall immediately communicate to the Hon. Secretary his acceptance or non-acceptance of the engagements.

9.—That when two contending clubs mutually request the services of a particular Referee, the Society shall, if practicable, depute the said Referee to officiate in the match in question.

10.—That all cases of dissatisfaction shall be reported within three days to the Hon. Secretary of the Society, and pending the consideration of the case the Referee in question shall not again be sent to officiate in a match wherein the aggrieved club is playing.

W. H. Humphreys
Hon. Secy.

ICE!!

RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION.

PROPERLY CONDUCTED 
AT FOOTBALL MATCHES

The Police have received strict instructions to arrest anyone assaulting Referees or other officials; or of disorderly conduct.

The above Union will strongly support the conviction of anyone so caught.

As the following Rugby Union Rules are not clearly understood by many, particular attention is directed thereto:—

LAW 3 (i) "When he, the Referee, notices any irregularity of play whereby the side committing such gain an advantage."

NOTE to LAW 3 (i).—This represents the most important change in the Laws, and it is here that Referees will have their greatest difficulties; the theory of this sub-section is that a side may not gain an advantage by its own breach of any Law although it may by a breach on the part of its opponent: thus, if one side knocks forward and the ball goes to an opponent who makes off with it and gains an advantage the whistle should not be blown. Again, it has become a very common practice in recent years for backs to knock deliberately on when their opponents were close upon them; if the ball when so knocked goes to an opponent who has a chance of getting away, the whistle should not be blown."

LAW 6 (c) "If a player while holding or running with the ball be tackled and the ball fairly held, he **MUST** at once put it fairly down between him and his opponents goal-line."

The Union requests the assistance of Club Officials and of the general public to prevent a recurrence of the unseemly behaviour complained of.

W. H. HUMPHREYS.

6 YORK ROAD, WEST HARTLEPOOL.

HON. SECRETARY.

F. W. MASON, PRINTER, HIGH STREET, HARTLEPOOL.