

TRANSCRIPT OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN BY Mr. F. W. NEWSUM ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD TO THE MEMBERS OF ALL CLUBS ON 14th NOVEMBER 1947.

1. Thank members for coming to the meeting in response to an invitation issued by Club Secretaries.
2. I do fully realise the responsibility that falls to me of having to make this statement for I believe that in the response which is given tonight will depend the ultimate success of amateur sport on the Lindum Ground
3. I propose therefore to make a somewhat detailed statement of Lindum Ground affairs over roughly the last twenty years and to ask those present who know this history to suffer the rather long story which I am telling for the benefit of those who have not got the fuller knowledge
4. I think again that it is essential that the back history is understood and appreciated for I feel sure that as the pioneers of 1928 made a success of their venture so it should be possible in 1947 to repeat that process.
5. It is therefore in 1928 that I wish to start the story, and as I was not personally in close contact with affairs at that time, I cannot guarantee the complete accuracy of my facts, but you can roughly accept them as being true.
6. In 1928 the Lindum ground was considerably smaller in size than it is now, its southern boundary instead of being on the Wragby Road frontage was at that time a boarded fence running from the main entrance gates at the end of St. Giles Avenue in an Easterly direction and joining up at the corner of Mr. Hardings(?) orchard. The land lying between this fence and the Wragby Road was rough grass and included an enormous hole in this area which was the remains of a stonequarry. It really was an enormous hole and with the most precipitous sides and for small boys with toboggans it provided the most exhilarating but nevertheless nerve wracking experience. This land was owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, whilst the Lindum Ground itself was owned by the late Col. Ruston. At that time, 1928, two things of moment happened
7. Col Ruston wished to sell the Lindum Ground which had for many years represented the home of the Lindum Cricket Club and the Lincoln Ladies Hockey Club
8. The Lincoln Rugby Club was looking for a permanent and more central home. They had had grounds on Longdales Road, on Lee Road, on Bunkers Hill but they saw in the Lindum ground if it were slightly extended towards Wragby Road the chance of a good playing pitch
9. By public subscription at that time which brought in several hundred pounds and by raising a mortgage at a low rate of interest through the English Rugby Union, the Lindum ground was purchased from Col. Ruston and an additional strip of land on the Wragby Road side from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and that ground then became the property of the Lincoln Rugby Club
10. It is only right that we should pay tribute to the pioneer work carried out at that time by the late Col. Boothby, Mr. Midgeley and I am sure all those who

have enjoyed their games on the Lindum ground from 1928 onwards will endorse what I have to say.

11. The arrangement made at that time with the English Rugby Union was for a mortgage of £2570.00 at an interest rate of 2 ½% per annum and repayable at an annual rate of £116.00. At that time again a deed was drawn up whereby for 50 years the Lindum Cricket Club were allowed to rent the ground for the cricket season, the rent being paid to the Lincoln Rugby club who were committed to adding an additional amount and passing it over to the Rugby Union in annual repayment of capital and interest. Very briefly indeed that was the position in 1928 and I think tonight we should remind ourselves of the debt we owe to those pioneers and the faith they had that the obligations which they had entered into would be faithfully fulfilled by members of those clubs included in their arrangements. That their faith was amply justified was proved by the fact that in 1934 annual payments to the English Rugby Union had been met and the sum originally advanced of £2570 had been whittled down to £1752. Encouraged by this fact the final stretch of land up to the Wragby Road which had been gradually filled in by tipping was purchased for a sum of £350 once again through the help of the English Rugby Union but this raised our annual repayments to practically £150 per year including interest at 2 ½%.
12. Prior to the outbreak of war the Lincoln RFC was in negotiation with the National Playing Fields Association in an endeavour to get through a very large scheme of improvement similar to the one now contemplated and although we eventually received certain small sums of money from them, the outbreak of war in 1939 meant a complete closedown of these negotiations. It is worthy of note that we were practically the only one of many clubs in the Country who had fulfilled the obligations entered into with the English Rugby Union. I know that this gave the greatest possible satisfaction to the four trustees, Col. Boothby, Mr Midgeley, Edward White and Major Wilson
13. May I now skip from 1939 to August 1945 with the exception of just stating that W.D. took over the ground for the period of years ending in May 1945 and through their kind permission the Lindum C.C. was enabled to play a certain amount of cricket. In 1945 I happened to be in conversation with Col. Peel on the Lindum ground when Rustons were holding their annual sports, there were several thousands of people on the ground. He said to me what a pity it was that a ground of the possibilities of the Lindum was in such an unfinished state. During this conversation with him I said "Well Geoff what are we going to do about it. Why don't we make an effort and see if something cannot be done" I therefore made it my business to call a meeting at my house at which were present certain Lincoln Rugby Club members including Col. Peel, Col. Henton Wright, Mr. Tutt, Mr. Gothorp and myself. I laid in front of them an agenda for discussion which I propose to read out to you now.

As a result of our unanimous approval that something should be done to coordinate the energies of all users of the ground and to avoid petty friction or jealousies, we decided to recommend to the general committee of the Lincoln RFC that a Ground Management Committee be formed representative of the Lincoln RFC, the Lindum CC, the Ladies Hockey Club – to manage all ground affairs to be responsible for

repayment of the annual instalment to the Rugby Union and to consider the matter of development of the ground for the benefit of all users of the ground.

The Rugby club were good enough to elect me Chairman of that committee in 1945 and I have endeavoured to fulfil together with the committee the duties that were entrusted to us at that time. It would only be fair if I spoke with gratitude of the help that I have been given whilst occupying that office and I have asked many things of many people and very willingly have they given of their best.

Before passing on to larger matters I would like to assure members present that on maintenance expenses and repayment of monies to the English Rugby Union our affairs are in order and we are in a solvent condition. Tio this we are indebted to the four main clubs using the ground, the Lindum, Rugby and the Men's and Women's Hockey – have paid the heavy dues that we have had to exact from them..

May I now come back to the investigations which the Ground Management Committee made from Sept. 1945 and onwards into improvements of a capital nature on the ground, and may I once again remind all members that your own clubs have been consistently represented in the very many meetings – and into the early hours of the morning – that took place.

In considering these improvements that were necessary we found that all clubs were thinking in the same terms. We wanted to complete the unturfed stretch adjoining the Wragby Road, we wanted better changing accommodation, we wanted a club headquarters – a comfortable warm headquarters – where we could have tea after a game, where we could drink our beer at night, where we would perhaps have some billiard tables. Then from this why not squash courts, a rifle range, and then why not better accommodation for the spectators. We all wanted these things – our heads were in the clouds. We still do want these things but where was the money coming from to even make a start.

We still owed a sum of £1500.00 approx to the Rugby Union. We were committed to paying back £150 per year approx to the Rugby Union. We can just manage to do this, we will I am sure continue to do it but it does mean levying very heavy rents on the Lindum, the Rugby and the Mens and Womens Hockey clubs for the next ten years. By that time at last the ground would be paid off but nothing else could be afforded. We should not for ten years be able to turf the additional piece of land, no major improvements could be carried out to the pavilion and none of those many things which all the clubs needed would be carried into effect.

On these findings therefore the crux of the matter was money and we wanted a lot of money quickly. The Ground Management Committee therefore split into two sections. One, the maintenance section which I have referred to previously and which is consistently meeting and fulfilling its function, the second was a General Purposes Committee formed under the Chairmanship of Mr. Dawson. This General Purposes Committee again I would remind you, representative of all clubs, having considered very possible angle, decided to form a Company and to mould that Company along the same lines as the Abbeydale Club in Sheffield which had made a complete success of its venture. This is a marvellous club which has considerable

playing pitches of all kinds, bowls greens, tennis courts, squash courts, and central and comfortable tea rooms, billiards rooms, dance rooms and so on.

The formation of our Company took some considerable time and we are greatly indebted to Colonel Phillips for the immense amount of work which he undertook in this connection.

The draft Articles of Association of the Company were submitted to general meetings of all clubs some months ago and received formal backing.

May I now make a personal observation. It is I believe because such a long period has elapsed between the approval of the draft articles and the opening of the subscription list 4 weeks ago that enthusiasm for this project has waned. I believe again that many members, particularly the young members, have not been fully acquainted with the objects of the Company. I refuse to believe that the members of the clubs when the facts are fully presented to them are going to withhold their practical support. Let me give you the immediate position as far as the Company is concerned.

Towards the sum of £5000.00 which the Board has agreed is the minimum sum on which we could proceed, we have so far received roughly half that amount, that sum being subscribed by about 45 persons out of a total circulated membership of 570. Although our subscription list closed on Wednesday last we can still accept contributions up to Saturday in next week and we have asked you to meet us tonight in order to present the facts of the case to you and to ask for an expression of confidence and for your further and immediate support so far as it is in your power to help us. From the angle of the Board of Directors our main disappointment is not so much in the total amount so far contributed, but that the numbers subscribing have not yet reached 50. We do not feel justified in continuing our efforts to reach the £5000 unless far more members are prepared to help us in a practical way. I do therefore make this appeal to you

The shares in the Company are £1. each. Many of you have not money available to give large sums. To those who cannot afford much I would say to them will you show that you want this scheme to go forward by making an application for one share. To those who can afford more be it 2,3,4,5,10 or 15 give us what you can but please show your interest and enthusiasm by at least taking one share. I have a supply of application forms and I do ask those who can help to fill one up justy as soon as you can and to let us have it back. Time is very short indeed and the Board require your encouragement at once if the project is to proceed.

May I close on this note. I have referred to the long time which has elapsed in the formation of this Company. I have the feeling that because of this you feel that the Directors of this Company are some distant and perhaps unrepresentative body. May I remind you who they are:

Miss Cannon, who represents Ladies Hockey

Messrs Dawson, Newsum, Wright – Rugby & Cricket

Dodds – Mens Hockey

Stickney, Rugby, Wells-Cole,Phillips,Ranby – Crickeand myself

We are therefore representing the interests of you all and it will be our endeavour to carry out your wishes just as far as our means will allow. It is not our purpose to interfere in any way with your individual club arrangements but purely tavel in the footsteps of those good friends in 1928 who set our feet on the road. They budgeted for two things. Immediate results which gave us the Lindum ground and for the future which provided improved facilities for the growing youngster. I feel confident that we can all do the same thing again but we must have your support at once. May I therefore reiterate the positive in order to make it quite clear:

GFirstly the Company

We require £5000. by Staurday next – we have got half that amount. If we can by then float the Company one immediate thing will be done. We shall pay off the outstanding debt to the Rugby Union of some £1500. This will mean that the Groung Committee will at once be relieved of finding a sum of £150.00 per year out of approx £4 to £500 which is necessary to find to meet total ground expenses. This will,lead the Ground Management Committee to make a decision from two choices.

1. To lower the rents of the clubs using the ground, or
2. To spend the money saved by appointing a permanent groundsman to keep the playing filed in a much better condition and/or spending the money in general betterment of the amenities.

Looked at from a different angle wer would perhaps take the view that under old arrangements being able to repay £150 approx to the Rugby Union it would take us about 33 years to reach the £5000 for which we are now appealing. If therefore the £5000 is subscribed we reach now in 1947 a position which we should not attain until the year 1980.

If the Company fails then we revert to the position as we have known it from 1928 to 1949 which is the annual repayment of £150 per annum for a further 10 years when the ground at the end of that period becomes the property of the Lincioln RFC but apart from the debt being paid off no improvements whatsoever having been made. I cannot help but think that you can only find one verdict and that is that this Company – your Company – has got to succeed. In my opinion it is necessary for you tonight to make a clear expression of you opinions

I would suggest Mr Chairman that we do not discuss to start with how a further £2500 is to be raised by Saturday next but thatwe do obtain a solid vote of confidence from all represented here tonight that they are wholeheartedly in favour of the Company and in giving that undertaking are prepared to do all they can in ensuring its success. Once that fact is unmistakably evident then we should procveed to consider how further monies can be raised

The verdict is in your hands and I feel sure in coming to your decision you will realise that responsibility. We are noty only voting for immediate club benefit but you are voting on a matter for which in 15 or 20 years time playing members will be your judges.

I mam more than grateful myself to the pioneers of 1928, I hope that in 1968 we may also receive asppreciation for the efforts we are making today.