

Notes from the first meeting of HQ Rugby League Programming Group

In attendance:

Bill Bates, Tony Collins, Bill Dalton, Victoria Dawson, Andy Hardcastle, Mick Harrup, Chris Heintz, Kathryn Hughes, Brian Sanderson, Alex Service, Stuart Sheard, David Smith, David Thorpe, Michael Turner

Aims of the group

As this was the first meeting, initial discussions related to the group's identity and what its remit will be. The key points were;

- To illuminate collections in interesting ways
- Find ways to signpost people from the HQ collection to other resources/projects
- Set up a network for RL heritage people
- Important to share RL stories
- Get RL fans in
- Bring parts of different collections together
- Capturing what's in private collections
- Enthuse Clubs about their heritage
- Plan talks and activities
- Start local – build from there
- David Hinchcliffe also got in touch *in absentia* to say "The game as a whole could benefit no end if we could encourage more use of the archives for detailed research on aspects of RL history. I hope that some thought could be given... to publicising the facilities now available at the University within the 'trade press' with ideas such as dedicated RL open days offering guidance on archive use."

Programming ideas

We then talked about some initial programming ideas. The Lottery bid outlines a pilot event (or two) before July 2015, then six events 2015-2016 and six events 2016-2017, with a budget that averages out at £750 per event. The main ideas suggested were;

- Heritage Forum (see more information below) and training for RL heritage skills
- 120th anniversary –related activities (RFL will be leading on this and will be in touch in the New Year)
- Activities to highlight defunct competitions/extinct clubs
- Explore Rugby League dynasties
- Tours
- Families and clubs – generations of fans
- Oral histories
- Regular meetings of statisticians / collectors fair / historians
- Games day (maybe approaching Subutteo as a sponsor)
- Show and tell day
- Films – need extras ie family of players invited. This was the most popular choice
- Past players (internationals theme)
- RL inspirations talks

- First World War event – perhaps around the anniversary of Somme
- Theatre – perhaps work with students or a professional theatre company
- World Club Challenge themed event
- Commentating on games (as a workshop)
- Photos – naming players in archival photos. This was another popular choice
- Loan items to others
- Hosting draws and other RL events

Family History Days

We also talked about Family History Days – which Heritage Quay would like to run on weekend days the Giants are playing at home. The group were cautious about the potential for these days, in particular how easy it would be to attract people to events on match days when there are travel plans or pre-existing rituals to consider. It was suggested that they would probably have to be every home Sunday game to make it predictable. Dave Smith has the following actions to explore and report back on at the next meeting;

- Explore links with Supporters Liaison Officers and Giants staff/ The Zone
- Look at advertising – including free parking, and hinting that HQ is a bit (but not a lot) like the George
- Look at viability of a Pop-up at the stadium on match day

Heritage Forum

There was great enthusiasm for a Heritage Forum strand, based at Heritage Quay, which would provide a place for Rugby League historians and heritage projects to share learning, information and skills and display or talk about outputs of their work. Saturdays in Spring and Summer were earmarked for meetings, which the Programming Group will help organise. Dates and times will be set in the New Year and circulated. Alongside these bi-annual forums, the group expressed an interest in a series of training opportunities for those archiving or collecting RL heritage. The HQ team will work with Rugby League Cares to produce a plan for delivering this training and an idea of dates, to be discussed further at the next meeting. The following training ideas were suggested; Oral History, Archiving, Copyright, Digitisation/Preservation/Data Protection.

Exhibition

A small exhibition in Heritage Quay will be in place after Christmas, the group ran out of time to discuss what things could be included. More information about the exhibition and how you can share your experiences is in the main email body.

Sharing contact information

All in attendance asked that their emails could be shared with each other – for now I have still hidden the emails of those who couldn't attend, with their permission I will share in the future

Next meeting: Saturday 7th March 11am-2pm Heritage Quay