



## THE PRESIDENT'S REFLECTIONS

At the traditional President's signing-off occasion at Widnes last Sunday (15<sup>th</sup> June), Dave Herriman referred to opening a box of toys twelve months before, the Leigh Dinner being the first toy to be played with. Over his year in office, the box of toys has been dipped into on many occasions but now the time has come to close the box and to hand it on!

Brian Leigh, who - like the Queen - has known more Presidents than he would care to admit to, has reported elsewhere that he considered Dave Herriman "to be a most splendid President, arguably one of the best in the County's history". Hardly an event passed without Dave's presence being noted - if only we had conjured up a Twickenham final for him.



"My year in office has been the most rewarding and educational I have spent in my fifty-four years as a player, coach, referee and administrator. The problems faced by clubs to survive in these changing times are similar in many respects. But small clubs do have a different agenda to the larger, more well-established and, as administrators, we should be aware of this; that was my first lesson.

The second is that the game is being driven, I believe, by paid staff at Twickenham and not necessarily in the direction we want to go. The obsession with leisure rugby over the traditional fifteen-a-side game and the funding of the NCA clubs are a worry. We must regain control of the game once again and instruct our paid staff that we are the policy makers; they are there to implement that policy.

My year started slowly as expected but like a good symphony gathered momentum in a whirl of activity with many events to attend; for a complete month I was out of the house for some part of the day or night.

I have assisted in the opening of a large building development, visited a factory and attended a fashion show; quite educational you will agree. I set out to attend every event where the Club Lancashire logo was used and to visit every club I was invited to. I failed miserably on both counts; the job proved far too big and a rethink is required. I hope that, in future, the Vice-Presidents will become more involved in the work-load. In this respect I must thank Senior Vice-President Ken Andrews and Past President Terry Alexander who have deputised for me on many occasions.

With regard to rugby, I have witnessed many games and festivals and found the standard of rugby, particularly at levels 8, 9 and 10 much improved. At junior level I think they should be encouraged to express themselves more as individuals. I did hear a coach state that a player would not be considered because he could not play in the coach's pattern. That I hate, it's a players' game; remember we only coach because we don't play any more.

The Trophy final was a game of outstanding commitment and excitement, the lead changing hands five times, between Leigh and Blackburn. Blackburn provided my best league game, a tremendous battle at Rossendale with the only try separating the sides in Blackburn's favour. The Colts finals day, played in terrible conditions, saw young men at three age groups showing skill and commitment beyond their years. Likewise, the close fought Junior finals at Sefton, in their Centenary year, was a wonderful day.

The Championship was, unfortunately, a disappointment. We started fitfully and went steadily downhill losing convincingly to Yorkshire. The decline must be addressed if we are to remain in the top flight.

The standout memory for me will be the joy and fun witnessed at the North West Tag Festival for children with learning difficulties. An event brilliantly organised by our RDOs and CRCs and helped by the students of Manchester Met University; a day that showed rugby people at their best.

I thank you all on behalf of my wife Margaret for your hospitality, consideration and kindness. I am truly blessed to have been allowed the experience of being your President. The people who have helped to make this such a wonderful year for me are too numerous to mention and I won't try to name them in case I forget someone. I look forward to continuing to serve the County and hope that I can continue to bring the County to you the clubs. It is a superb organisation; support us to help you all in the future of our game."

**Dave Herriman**  
18<sup>th</sup> June 2008