

John Hobby (24.7.1938 – 23.11.1991)

For such a great man, just where do you start?

Perhaps we should do it logically. So

- First we will start with an article written by Barry Ross on 23 March 2017 titled “John Hobby – A bush rugby league legend”
- Then we will add John’s complete playing, coaching record, and his record as a Country Rugby league official
- Then we will add some material from “The Hobby” years, 1966 to 1969, at West
- Finally we will add some photos of John Hobby, a 1969 article from the West Leagues magazine, and details of West’s “Team of the Century” that was announced on 15 May 2010.

So here goes..

John Hobby – A bush rugby league legend

Barry Ross – 23 March 2017 (an article for “Men of League”)



For a man who never played Sydney football, John Hobby had an amazing 17 year career.

He toured New Zealand with NSW Country in 1968, as well as representing Country Seconds four times, playing six matches against International touring teams, representing three divisions in a total of 30 plus games, playing for four Country Groups and winning six Premierships as a captain/coach.

Highly respected by his team-mates and opponents alike, John gave back plenty to the game he loved after his playing career had finished.

Born at Coolah on 24 July 1938, John attended the local primary school where he began playing Rugby League in 1946. After leaving primary school, he made the 110 kms south journey each way, five days a week, to study at Mudgee High from 1952 to 1954. In 1952 he was forced to give football away after being kicked in the head by a mule at a circus. This resulted in a fractured skull and for most people, football of any kind would never be considered. But he began playing again with the local under 15s in 1953 and the under 18s the following season.

He was moved up to the Coolah first grade side in 1957, where his father, Marsden, was a long term senior official and played with them until the end of 1959 before joining Bathurst Railways in 1960 and 1961. While with Railways in 1960, he represented Western Division in the Country Championship, as he

also did in 1961 and on 1 June 1960 was a member of the Western Division team which defeated France 14-7

at Dubbo. He also gained his first selection for Country Seconds in 1960. Bathurst Railway made the Group 10 Final in 1960 and the semi finals in 1961 and John played strongly in both games.

In 1962 he began the first of four successive seasons as Eugowra captain/coach, winning the minor premierships, but going down in the Grand Final. As this was his first captain/coaching job, John made himself unavailable for any representative selection.

For the next three seasons, 1963 to 1965, Eugowra won the Premiership and John represented Western Division each season, as well as playing with Country Seconds in 1963 and 1964. In 1963 he also played for Western Division against New Zealand at Parkes and in 1964 played his second international against France, when Western Division won 17-11 at Orange.

Newcastle was his next port of call in 1966 and here he was signed to captain/coach the Western Suburbs Rosellas for four seasons. Success was immediate and the Rosellas won the 1966 Newcastle major and minor premierships, defeating Cessnock 31-9 in the Grand Final with John scoring a try and a goal.

In 1967 Wests were again minor premiers but were pipped 13-11 by Norths in the Grand Final. Minor premiers again in 1968, the Rosellas won the pre-season competition but were defeated in the final. In another grand final in 1969, Wests were beaten by Lakes United.

While in Newcastle, he represented Newcastle against Great Britain in the unlucky 5-2 loss at Newcastle Sportsground on 13 June 1966. In this game he won the trophy for the best forward in either team. The next season he again represented Newcastle, this time in the 14-7 victory over New Zealand. He also represented Newcastle in the Country Championship in each of his four seasons.

NSW Country toured New Zealand in early May 1968 and John was a member of the team. Coached by Brian Carlson (23 Tests) and captained by Billy Bischoff, who was then playing with West Tamworth, the Country boys had to play three tough matches in four days. On returning to Sydney, John captained Country Seconds against City Seconds.

Tumut was his next destination and he captain/coached the locals to the Premiership in his first season, 1970. The same year, on 24 June 1970 at Robertson Oval Wagga Wagga, he played for Riverina in their tight 12-11 loss to Great Britain. Tumut were runners up in 1971 and 1972, but in 1973, John won his sixth Premiership from 12 seasons as a captain/coach. He remained captain/coach of Tumut until the end of the 1976 and then retired.

He worked as Tumut's non playing coach in 1980 and then served as a group 9 selector for three years from 1982 as well as Riverina Divisional coach in 1984, when they were runners up in the Country championship. For the next six years he continued to work in Rugby League, serving as a member of the Group 9 management committee, a Country RL selector, a senior Group 9 vice-president, Tumut club president and a member of the referees' fees committee.

During his long and successful career, John had several lucrative offers from Sydney clubs, but as a true son of the bush, he rejected them for life in the country.

While coaching at Eugowra, he met his future wife Jennifer, who was a local nurse. They married in 1966 and a team-mate from the Eugowra Premiership teams, international second rower, Barry Beath (1965 and 1971 Australian teams to New Zealand) was best man.

When John signed with Tumut he and Jennifer and their two sons David and Matthew settled down in the Riverina town. A few years later, daughter Gina was born and for many years, Gina and her husband, Daniel, have been involved with the Tumut RLFC.

While Rugby League was always his top priority, over the years John worked as an electrician, a contract harvester, a bricklayer and tiler, and at Tumut, he was a truck driver. He left his mark on all the towns in which he coached. There is a mural of him, Ian Walsh and Barry Beath at the Eugowra Central Hotel, while

at Newcastle he was named in the Rosellas Team of the Century. In Tumut, the locals enjoy watching football from 'the John Hobby Hill' at the local ground and in 1995 a John Hobby Memorial Foundation was created. At his place of birth, Coolah, a large granite plaque, denoting his extensive playing record, is fixed at the local football ground.

In his later years, John enjoyed fishing and lawn bowls, while he also spent a lot of time on his vegetable garden. In the early 1990s, John was diagnosed as having a brain tumour. Showing his typical courage and grit, he battled this for almost a year before passing away on 30 November 1991 at Tumut, aged just 53.



John Hobby – Detailed Rugby League Record

John's record is as follows.....

Born in Coolah, and attended Mudgee High School from 1947 to 1952.

After leaving school John had a spell from Rugby League, before resuming with Coolah Juniors in 1956. In 1957, 1958 and 1959 John represented Coolah Seniors.

....then.... WESTERN DIVISION

Bathurst Railway RLFC – 1960 and 1961

- 1960
 - Represented Western Division in the Country Championships
 - Represented Western Division v France
 - Represented Country Seconds
 - Played in the Group 10 Final
- 1961
 - Represented Western Division in the Country Championships
 - Played in the Group 10 Semi Final

Eugowra All Blacks RLFC – Captain / Coach – 1962 to 1965

- 1962
 - Unavailable for Representative football
 - Was in the losing team in the Group 11 Grand Final
- 1963
 - Represented Western Division in the Country Championships
 - Represented Western Division against New Zealand
 - Represented Country Seconds
 - Won the Group 11 Grand Final (Eugowra 13 def Forbes 0)
- 1964
 - Represented Western Division in the Country Championships
 - Represented Western Division in the State Cup
 - Represented Western Division v France
 - Represented Country Seconds
 - Won the Group 11 Grand Final (Eugowra won 8 – 7)
- 1965
 - Represented Western Division
 - Represented Western Division in the State Cup
 - Won the Group 11 Grand Final (Eugowra won 25 – 8)

...then....NEWCASTLE DIVISION....West Rosellas RLFC – Captain / Coach – 1966 to 1969

- 1966
 - Represented Newcastle v Great Britain (won “Best Forward” award)
 - Won the Newcastle RL Grand Final (West 31 def Cessnock 9)
- 1967
 - Represented Newcastle in the Country Championships
 - Represented Newcastle v New Zealand
 - Lost the Newcastle RL Grand Final

- 1968
 - Represented Newcastle in the Country Championships
 - Captain of Country Seconds
 - Toured New Zealand with Combined Country
 - Lost the Newcastle RL Final
- 1969
 - Represented Newcastle in the Country Championships
 - Lost the Newcastle RL Final

...then....RIVERINA DIVISION.....Tumut Blues RLFC – Captain / Coach 1970 to 1976, Coach in 1980

- 1970
 - Represented Riverina in the Country Championships
 - Represented Riverina v Great Britain (Shared the “Best Player” award)
 - Won the Group 9 Grand Final
- 1971
 - Represented Riverina in the Country Championships
 - Was in the losing team in the Grand Final
- 1972
 - Was in the losing team in the Grand Final
- 1973
 - Won the Grand Final (Tumut 24 def Wagga Kangaroos 4)
- 1974 and 1976
 - Captain / Coach of Tumut
- 1980
 - Coach of Tumut (Photo : The “John Hobby Memorial Trophy” is awarded each year at Tumut RLFC)



...then 1982 to 1990

- 1982, 1983 and 1984
 - Group 9 Selector
- 1984
 - Coach of the Riverina team (Runners Up in the Country Championships)
- 1984 and 1985
 - Member of the Group 9 Management Committee
- 1985
 - Member of the Country Rugby League selection panel
- 1986
 - Member of the Country Rugby League selection panel
 - Group 9 Senior Vice president
 - Member of the Referees Fees committee
- 1987 and 1988
 - Member of the Country Rugby League selection panel
 - Senior Vice President of Group 9
- 1989 and 1990
 - Member of the Country Rugby League selection panel

1966

What a year! For the first time West were Major Premiers in all 3 grades as well as being Club Champions. West welcomed new Captain / Coach, John Hobby (pictured) from Eugowra. Originally from Coolah, John was a tough lock or 2nd row forward. He is regarded by many, along with Rex Elvin, David Howell and John Cootes as West's best ever signings. Indeed Rex Elvin, David Howell and John Hobby all won Premierships in their 1st year with West. In the 1st Grade Grand



Final, West 31 def Cess 9. The West team was 1. "Monty" Spruce 2. M Alchin (2 tries) 3. W Hore (try) 4. R Hensby (try) 5. J McLaughlin (try) 6. "Tag" Spruce 7. M Gallagher 8. J Hobby (try, goal) 9. D Rowston 10. R Johnson 11. J Richards 12. A Buman 13. R Davies (4 goals). In Reserve Grade, West 19 def Maitland 9. The Reserve Grade side was 1. R Turner 2. ?? 3. G Sutcliffe 4. T Jukes (2 tries, FG) 5. O Kilpatrick 6. B Martin 7. K Hodgson (4 goals) 8. G Alchin 9. K Emerton 10. K Partridge 11. G Whitmore (try) 12. A Dagwell 13 C Bakes Res A Milton and R Walls. The deferred 3rd Grade Grand Final was played at DISTRICT PARK (yep, District Park, now defunct, behind the tennis courts at Broadmeadow). Brian Warby scored a Club Record of 6 tries in this Grand Final when West 41 def Kurri 0. The winning West side was 1. B Warby (6 tries) 2. G Ravelon 3. B Stanbridge (3 goals) 4. W Mahoney (try) 5. K Campbell (2 tries) 6. A Wallis 7. J Cooper (try) 8. D Howlett 9. G Whitmore 10. G McLachlan 11. G Savage (try) 12. H Hill 13. R Campbell Res K Davies (goal), B Smith, J Everleigh. Players to come into West grade in 1966 included West stalwart (and games record holder) Allan Dagwell, Jesmond lads, "larger than life" "Cas" Whitmore and Danny Armstrong and local junior Alan Wallis. George Ravelon came to West from Narrabri and centre, Bob Hensby (who later formed a great combination with John Cootes) came from the Roosters in Sydney.

Date	Opponent	Result	Reserves	Thirds
9 Apr	Central	Won 24 - 11	Won 21 - 8	Won 9 - 2
16 Apr	Waratah	Won 26 - 13	Won 24 - 9	Won 33 - 2
23 Apr	Kurri	Won 24 - 7	Won 11 - 4	Won 8 - 0
30 Apr	South	Won 18 - 12	Won 23 - 0	Won 20 - 0
8 May	Macquarie	Lost 11 - 6	Won 5 - 2	Won 34 - 6
15 May	North	Won 20 - 15	Won 19 - 2	Won 30 - 2
22 May	Cessnock	Won 7 - 2	Won 54 - 7	Won 45 - 0
30 May	Lakes	Won 13 - 4	Won 19 - 13	Won 44 - 6
4 June	Maitland	Lost 11 - 6	Won 20 - 6	Won 7 - 2
18 Jun	Waratah	Lost 17 - 0	Won 39 - 0	Won 15 - 0
25 Jun	Kurri	Won 15 - 7	Won 27 - 2	Won 18 - 2
2 Jul	South	Won 32 - 10	Won 13 - 7	Won 25 - 2
10 Jul	Macquarie	Won 29 - 7	Won 46 - 19	Won 62 - 0
16 Jul	North	Won 16 - 7	Won 21 - 0	Won 19 - 4
23 Jul	Cessnock	Lost 22 - 3	Won 19 - 11	Won 15 - 7
30 Jul	Lakes	Won 11 - 9	Won 18 - 2	Won 21 - 2
6 Aug	Maitland	Lost 12 - 5	Won 14 - 3	4 all Draw
21 Aug	Central	Won 15 - 8	Won 18 - 0	Won 10 - 4
27 Aug	Major Semis	West 7 Cess 4	West 24 Mait 11	
2 Sep	Major Semi			West 39 Kurri 4
9 Sep	Grand Finals	West 31 Cess 9	West 19 Mait 9	
17 Sep	Grand Final			West 41 Kurri 0

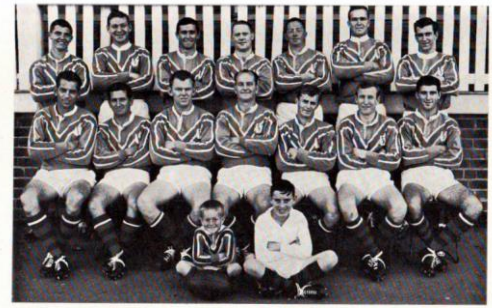
1966 - Rugby League History



FIRST GRADE — CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP — MINOR AND MAJOR PREMIERS, 1966
Back Row R. to L.: W. Gray, D. Hardy, J. Aitchison (Delegato), N.R.L.A. J. McDermott, W. Tarant, D. McLean, J. Harvey (S.V.P.), G. Maloney (Hon. Sec.), Middle Row (standing): D. Howlett, Sr., C. Anderson, B. Pearson, W. Rymhart, R. Johnson, J. Richards, A. Bunnis, R. Davies, J. McLaughlin, H. Harding (Pres.), N. Johnson (Asst. Sec.), A. Arnold, Middle Row (sitting): M. Akhita, G. Walsh, K. Turner, K. Emerson, J. Hobby (Capt./Coach), R. Hensley, D. Rowston, W. Hore, Front Row: B. Martin, B. Spruce, T. Walpole (Mascot), S. Patterson (Ballboy), G. Spruce, M. Gallagher, T. Walpole (Trainer).



RESERVE GRADE — CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP — UNDEFEATED MINOR AND MAJOR PREMIERS, 1966
Back Row R. to L.: H. Harding (President), A. Milton, M. Akhita, G. Sutcliffe, G. Whitmore, G. Mahoney (Hon. Sec.), C. Baker, G. Kilpatrick, K. Partridge, K. Emerson, J. Aitchison (Delegato), Middle Row: B. Martin, A. Dzusack, K. Henderson, K. Walls (Capt./Coach), G. Akhita, T. Jukes, R. Turner, Front Row: T. Walpole (Mascot), S. Patterson (Ballboy).



THIRD GRADE — CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP — MINOR AND MAJOR PREMIERS, 1966
Back Row R. to L.: J. Gardiner, G. Whitmore, D. Howlett Junr., G. Savage, W. Mahoney, G. McLachlan, K. Clarke, Middle Row: G. Rarfein, H. Hill, R. Campbell, R. Stanbridge (Capt./Coach), W. Smith, K. Campbell, A. Wallis, Front Row: T. Walpole (Mascot), S. Patterson (Ballboy).

In 1966 (the Golden Year) West created history by winning the major and minor premierships in all 3 grades. This was the first (and only time) that this has been achieved in Newcastle Rugby League. A special poem was penned for the occasion. When you recite the poem, speak loudly and think proudly of the mighty red and green

They brought back many memories

Of dim days of the past

And raised the tattered red and green

Sky high to fly top mast

In all three grades they reached the peak

And won the final game

They wrote new records in the book

To give West pride and fame

Upon the fields of Rugby League

They carved a tale of glory

For bards to write in years to come

THE MIGHTY WESTERN STORY!





At the 1966 Presentation Night when the West players from all 3 winning teams were presented with their premiership winning blazers.

Pictured (left) are losing Cessnock Captain / Coach, Don Schofield, John Hobby and West Secretary, Glen Maloney.

Pictured (below) are the 3rd Grade Captain / Coach, Brian Stanbridge, First Grade Captain / Coach, John Hobby, Reserve Grade Captain Kevin Hodgson, and the Mayor of Newcastle, Doug MacDougall



First Grade Players : Rob Davies, Brian Warby, Mick Gallagher, Allan Buman, Brian Carlin, Dennis Rowston, “Bomber” Hore, “Yarba” Walsh, “Monty” Spruce, “Tag” Spruce, Mick Alchin, “Wagga” Johnson, John Richards
Absent : Bob Hensby, John McLaughlin

20 September

First Grade Grand Final – No 1 Sportsground

Referee – N Spohr

West 31 Cessnock 7

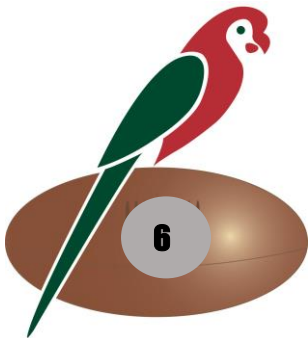


Team

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | B "Monty" Spruce | |
| 2. | M Alchin | 2 tries |
| 3. | W Hore | try |
| 4. | R Hensby | try |
| 5. | J McLaughlin | try |
| 6. | G "Tag" Spruce | |
| 7. | M Gallagher | |
| 8. | J Hobby | try, goal, Captain / Coach |
| 9. | D Rowston | |
| 10. | R Johnson | |
| 11. | J Richards | |
| 12. | A Buman | |
| 13. | R Davies | 4 goals |

Semi Final West 7 Cessnock 4

Point Score West 26
Cessnock 24
Maitland 23
South 22



1967

West nearly won all 3 again in 1967 – with First Grade unluckily beaten in the Grand Final by a couple of points. Reserve Grade defeated Lakes 21 – 9 in the Grand Final. The winning West team was 1. C John (try) 2. R Turner (try) 3. O Kilpatrick 4. D Armstrong 5. B Warby (goal) 6. B Martin 7. K Hodgson (5 goals) 8. G Walsh 9. K Partridge 10. K Emerton 11. G Savage (try) 12. A Dagwell 13. G McLachlan. Kevin Hodgson was Captain / Coach of this impressive team that lost 1 game during the season. Third Grade under Captain / Coach Brian Stanbridge also lost one game, and won the Grand Final 16 – 10 over North. The winning team was 1. W Smith 2. A Milton 3. B Stanbridge (6 goals) 4. D Howlett 5. K Campbell 6. A Wallis 7. J Cooper 8. W Mahoney 9. G Ravelon 10. D Bullen 11. R Campbell 12. H Hill 13. R Gilson (goal, field goal) Reserves I Paul, N Tarrant, K Davies. Players first appearing in grade in 1967 inc West Juniors Garry Dagwell, Chris John and Peter “Sherm” Holmes, who was the first player to wear pink football laces. But the biggest name to appear in 1967 was Father John Cootes. Cootes (pictured) was a Roman Catholic Priest and whilst studying in Rome he played Rugby Union with Lazio. He was a very talented player. On his return to Newcastle he played with West, and he represented Australia from West...that’s how talented he was! Cootes could do anything. On 7 May at Waratah Oval, goalkicker Rob Davies was dismissed from the field (yep, sent off). Coach John Hobby then missed one from in front. Then John Cootes kicked (I reckon) 11 from 11, but the Newcastle Herald said 11 from 15. Anyway, Cootes could score tries and kick goals, and from that day he was West’s goalkicker. All in all a very good year with just 2 points denying us a great year...and all the better with the arrival of John Cootes!.



Date	Opponent	Result	Reserves	Thirds
1 Apr	Macquarie	Won 27 - 19	Won 19 - 6	Won 28 - 2
8 Apr	Cessnock	Won 20 - 16	Won 23 - 4	Won 52 - 0
15 Apr	South	Lost 14 - 7	Won 13 - 12	Lost 9 - 5
23 Apr	Maitland	Won 17 - 15	Won 14 - 4	Won 14 - 9
29 Apr	North	Lost 23 - 6	Won 22 - 8	Won 22 - 4
7 May	Waratah	Won 46 - 18	Won 10 - 6	Won 28 - 5
14 May	Central	Won 15 - 6	Won 44 - 2	Won 12 - 0
21 May	Lakes	Won 23 - 10	Won 29 - 7	Won 31 - 0
28 May	Kurri	Won 17 - 9	Won 21 - 0	Won 18 - 6
4 Jun	Macquarie	Lost 15 - 11	Won 26 - 10	Won 43 - 2
10 Jun	Cessnock	Won 21 - 13	Won 11 - 7	Won 13 - 4
17 Jun	South	Won 29 - 5	Won 16 - 4	Won 14 - 0
1 Jul	North	Won 8 - 7	Won 17 - 7	Won 9 - 5
9 Jul	Waratah	Won 43 - 4	Won 37 - 7	Won 16 - 7
15 Jul	Central	Won 25 - 13	Won 24 - 2	Won 17 - 4
23 Jul	Lakes	Won 25 - 21	Lost 9 - 6	Won 14 - 6
30 Jul	Kurri	Won 34 - 2	Won 37 - 4	Won 32 - 0
5 Aug	Maitland	Won 10 - 6	Won 32 - 6	Won 6 - 5
13 Aug	Major Semis	West 16 North 7	West 24 Lakes 9	North 11 West 2
19 Aug	Final			West 19 South 2
9 Sep	Grand Finals	North 13 West 11	West 19 Lakes 9	West 16 North 10

1968

West had another good year in 1968 with First Grade disappointing by losing their last 3 games of the season and failing to reach the Grand Final. Reserve Grade, again under coach Kevin Hodgson won the Grand Final by defeating North 15 – 9. The West team was 1. B Warby (3 goals) 2. K Campbell 3. D Armstrong 4. R Cronin (try) 5. P Holmes 6. B Martin (try) 7. K Hodgson 8. D Rowston 9. B Carlin 10. K Partridge (try) 11. T Browne 12. M Page 13. G Waldie. Third Grade under coach Brian Stanbridge made it 5 consecutive Premierships, when they defeated South 12 – 0 (perhaps 12 – 6) in the Grand Final. The West team was 1. C John 2. A Milton (try) 3. G Walsh 4. E Ellum 5. R Dowse 6. W Weston 7. J Cooper 8. D Howlett 9. B Stanbridge (3 goals) 10. J Peterson 11. R Bullen (try) 12. L Bartholemew 13. R Campbell. In one of the smallest turnover of players recorded there were only 18 new players who played for West in 1968. The most notable of these were West United prop Tony Browne, utility Ken Smith and Waratah 5/8 David Higgins.



Ken Smith : Ken Smith was born in Ryde, and commenced his football career with the Burnside Schoolboys. He played Under 18's with Concord West (coached by Harry Wells) and in 1959 he was approached to play First Grade Rugby League in Eugowra. At Eugowra, Ian Walsh was the coach for the 1959 and 1960 seasons without any success...and then... John Hobby took over in 1962 with immediate success by taking out the Minor Premiership. 1963 was another excellent season, and Ken was chosen in the Group 11 team as five – eighth. In 1964 with John Hobby as Captain / Coach and Ken

Smith as five eighth Eugowra won the Major titles. John Hobby joined West in 1966 (and won the Grand Final with a 31 – 7 win over Cessnock) whilst Ken Smith coached Eugowra. In 1967 Ken coached Coolah and in 1968 he joined John Hobby at West. At West Ken was so versatile that he played in the backs or the forwards. At West he also gained the nickname “Poppa” because of his resemblance to St George great “Poppa” Clay. In 1970 he had a great game on the wing in the John Raper coached team that defeated Maitland 21 – 14. He had a real winger's game and capped it off with a grand try. In 1971 Ken won the “Best and Fairest” trophy for Reserve Grade. His willingness to play in any grade in any position was an object lesson to all the footballers at West.

Date	Opponent	Result	Reserves	Thirds
Caltex Pre Season Final – West 16 Central 14 (Kilpatrick, Hodgson tries, Cootes 5 goals)				
21 Apr	Central	Won 16 - 15	Won 46 - 4	Won 18 - 8
27 Apr	North	Won 19 - 12	Won 39 - 4	Won 41 - 0
4 May	Kurri	Won 13 - 9	Won 16 - 6	Won 20 - 0
11 May	South	Won 19 - 5	Won 15 - 0	Won 6 - 5
19 May	Macquarie	Won 24 - 2	Won 21 - 8	Won 13 - 8
25 May	Waratah	Won 19 - 14	Won 14 - 0	Won 26 - 8
2 Jun	Cessnock	Won 35 - 12	Won 31 - 12	Won 30 - 0
9 Jun	Lakes	Won 12 - 2	Won 21 - 8	Won 22 - 2
15 Jun	Maitland	Won 34 - 17	Won 36 - 2	Lost 11 - 10
23 Jun	Central	Won 25 - 6	Won 32 - 7	Won 39 - 4
29 Jun	North	Won 19 - 7	Won 22 - 9	Won 17 - 2
6 Jul	Kurri	Won 30 - 7	Won 34 - 8	Won 15 - 11
13 Jul	South	Lost 10 - 3	Won 12 - 5	Won 14 - 4
20 Jul	Macquarie	Won 15 - 6	Won 43 - 2	Won 21 - 9
27 Jul	Waratah	Won 19 - 10	Won 37 - 2	Won 45 - 6
3 Aug	Cessnock	Won 35 - 7	Won 46 - 0	Won on forfeit
10 Aug	Lakes	11 all Draw	Won 19 - 9	Won 23 - 2
17 Aug	Maitland	Lost 27 - 18	Won 42 - 12	Won 15 - 9
31 Aug	Major Semis	Lakes 20 West 18	West 36 South 6	South 7 West 6
7 Sep	Finals	South 13 West 11		West 22 Waratah 4
14 Sep	Grand Finals	South 9 Lakes 6	West 15 North 9	West 12 South 0

1969

John Hobby's 4 year term came to an end, with one Premiership in 1966, three Minor Premierships (1966, 1967 and 1968) and 2nd in the points table in 1969. Hobby was one of West's best players ever and his record as Captain / Coach speaks for itself. The Bill Lockett coached made it 5 in a row when they defeated South 14 – 8 in the Grand Final. The West team was 1. C John 2. B Warby (try, 4 goals) 3. I Bell 4. C Pritchard (try) 5. K Campbell 6. A Wallis 7. J Cooper 8. W Lockett 9. R Dean 10. T Browne 11. K Partridge 12. K Wright 13. B Carlin Res G Ravelon. The Brian Stanbridge coached Third Grade made it 6 in a row when they defeated Maitland 23 – 16 in the Grand Final. The West team was 1. P Gilfeather (try) 2. O Kilpatrick 3. T Kelly (try) 4. G Dagwell (try) 5. Bob Campbell 6. B Martin (try) 7. R Mitchell 8. B Stanbridge (4 goals) 9. J Peterson 10. G Ravelon 11. W Mutu 12. B Rooney (try) 13. R Campbell.

Many new faces joined West grade in 1969. West juniors "Flea" Anderson, Ian Bell, Steve Lawson and the Jesmond soccer goalkeeper "Bull" Druery all debuted in grade. Manly Junior Frank Frasca came to Newcastle University and made his name with West (and with the "fruit" community in Newcastle). Roger Dean came from Coonabarabran, Col Pritchard came from Newtown via Narrandera and Eugowra, and Brisbane lad Victor Poudziunas came to West from RAAF Williamtown. Marist Brother student, and South Junior, John Barber also made his grade debut in 1969. But the "biggest" imports were Alby Wiggs and Neil Berri from New Zealand. Rumour has it that Glen Maloney went to New Zealand to persuade a goal kicking winger Ernie Wiggs (Alby's brother) to come across the "dutch". However he



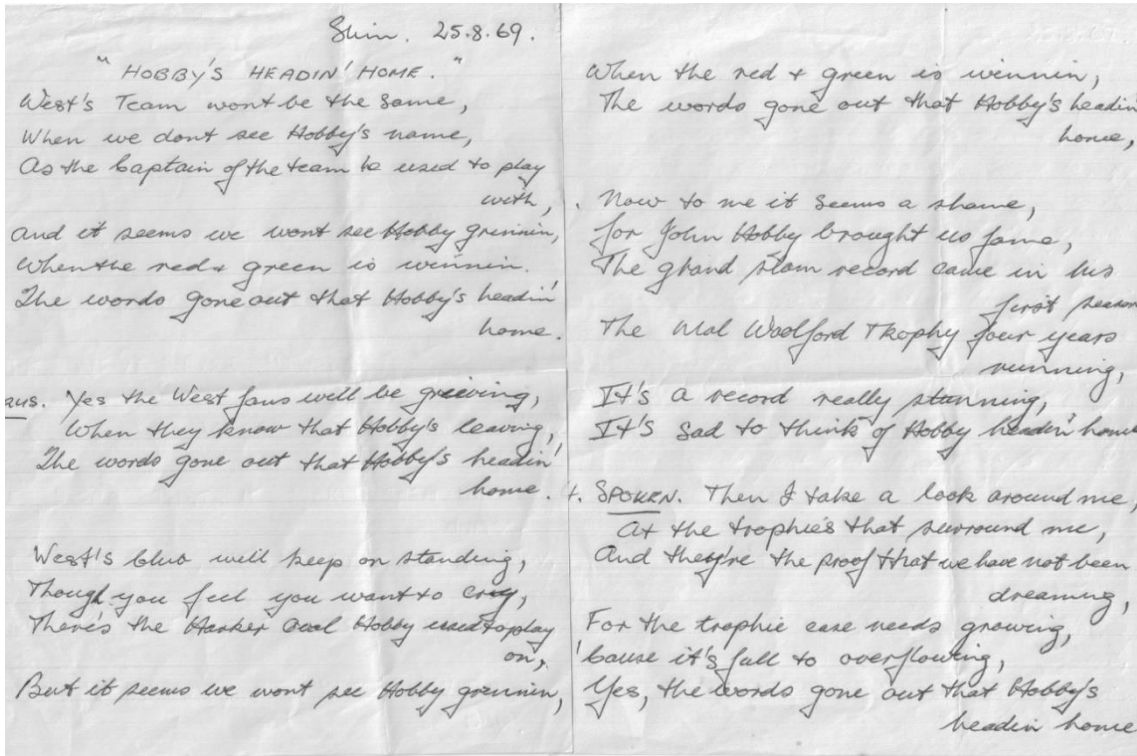
came back with 2 props, the bigger Alby Wiggs (pictured) and the smaller "Butch" Beri. Both players fitted in well, and played 3 seasons with West. They were soon joined at West by the popular Kiwi, Waka Mutu, who played 5 seasons with West mainly in the lower grades. All in all another successful season for West.

Date	Opponent	Result	Reserves	Thirds
20 Apr	Waratah	Won 55 - 3	Lost 25 - 12	12 all Draw
27 Apr	South	Lost 33 - 12	Lost 13 - 10	Won 13 - 0
4 May	Macquarie	Lost 12 - 9	Won 29 - 15	Won 11 - 3
11 May	Kurri	Won 24 - 5	Lost 21 - 16	Won 19 - 4
18 May	North	Won 24 - 14	Lost 15 - 7	5 all Draw
24 May	Cessnock	Won 29 - 14	Won 19 - 12	Won 23 - 9
31 May	Central	Won 8 - 7	Won 10 - 6	Won 31 - 2
7 Jun	Maitland	Lost 23 - 4	Won 18 - 14	Won 10 - 3
15 Jun	Lakes	Won 14 - 12	Lost 26 - 19	Won 14 - 3
29 Jun	South	Won 42 - 16	Lost 13 - 12	Won 17 - 7
5 Jul	Macquarie	Lost 10 - 5	Won 9 - 7	Won 36 - 3
12 Jul	Kurri	Lost 23 - 17	Won 34 - 4	Won 23 - 9
19 Jul	North	Won 17 - 14	Won 27 - 5	9 all Draw
26 Jul	Cessnock	Won 49 - 11	Won 23 - 6	Won 67 - 0
2 Aug	Central	Won 36 - 20	Won 30 - 9	Won 54 - 0
10 Aug	Maitland	Won 22 - 7	Won 36 - 3	Won 20 - 4
17 Aug	Lakes	Lost 14 - 11	Won 16 - 13	Won 34 - 0
24 Aug	Waratah	Won 14 - 2	Won 40 - 3	Won 12 - 2
6 Sep	Major Semis	Mait 31 West 16	West 9 South 7	West 7 South 2
7 Sep	Final	Lakes 12 West 8		
14 Sep	Grand Finals	Mait 19 Lakes 9	West 14 South 8	West 23 Mait 16

Slim Hunter's tribute poem to John Hobby – 25 August 1969

A rare find...the original of "Hobby's Headin' Home" was given to me by Wayne Hore in August 2017...with the question..."Have you seen this before?" The answer "No I haven't".. So this is a rare find..... and the great John Hobby did indeed return home to the "Country" ...to Tumut 1970, following 89 First Grade games over 4 years as Captain / Coach and a Premiership in 1966. GREAT...GREAT...PLAYER!!

Editors Note - I have changed just a few of the words in the poem...hopefully to make it rhyme a little better



"Hobby's Heading Home" Slim Hunter 25.8.1969

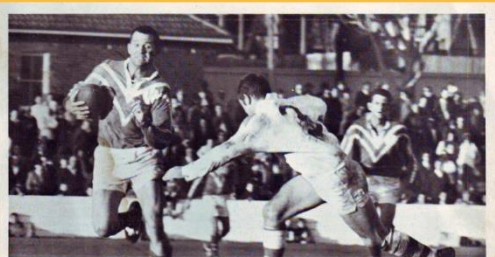
West's team won't be the same, when we don't see Hobby's name
 As the Captain of the team he used to play with
 And it seems we won't see Hobby grinning, whenever red and green are winning
 The word's got out that Hobby's heading home

CHORUS Yes, The West fans will be grieving, when they know that Hobby's leaving
 The word's got out that Hobby's heading home

West's club will keep on flying high, though some will feel they wanna cry
 Because Hobby striding onto Harker will be finished
 But it seems that Hobby won't be grinning, when the red and green are winning
 The word's got out that Hobby's heading home

It seems to me an awful shame, because Hobby brought us all that fame
 We won the Grand Slam in his first season
 Mal Woolford trophy 4 years running, it's a record really stunning
 It's sad to think that Hobby's heading home

Then I take a look around me, at the trophies that surround me
 They are proof that we have not been dreaming
 For the trophy case needs growing, 'cause it's full to overflowing
 The word's got out the HOBBY'S HEADING HOME!



JOHN HOBBY

The Quiet Man of Rugby League

(Right) In a club game at No 1 Sportsground, John Hobby tackles a Cessnock opponent while Keith Partridge (headgear) and Rob Davies look on.



(Below) In the Grand Final Mick Alchin and John Hobby tackle a Cessnock opponent.





1968 Newcastle Representative Team.

Back : George Ravelon, Dennis Ives, Jim Bonus, Trevor Walpole, Basil O'Brien, Mick Trypas, ????, John Cootes

Seated : Allan Jones, Jim Porter, John Hobby, Peter Diamond, John Barber

Front : Garry Collins, Terry Pannowitz, Brian Burke, Des Kimmorley

John Hobby makes a tackle in a Representative game (most probably would incur the wrath of the referees in 2017)





JOHN HOBBY

The Quiet Man of Rugby League

Born Coolah, N.S.W.

Quick reference to his football career prior to coming to West in 1966. Played at Coolah and Mudgee High Schools, then Coolah Juniors, before suffering a serious injury, which kept him out of football for three seasons. Made sufficient recovery to resume playing, and played for Coolah First Grade in 1957. He then played at Bathurst Railway and Eugowra in turn. He represented Groups 10, 11, and 14 in the Caltex Competitions. He also played for Western Division, in the Caltex Country Championships, 1960 to 1965, inclusive. He played for Western Division against France in 1960 and 1964, and also against New Zealand for his Division. He also played for Combined Country against City, in 1960, 1963, and 1964. He also led his team, Eugowra, to a hat trick of wins before finally coming to play in Newcastle with Western Suburbs in 1966.

The first time I saw John Hobby, was when he played lock forward for Western Division,

against Newcastle in 1964. This player seemed to be invincible, his big frame seemed to be everywhere the play was. So much so, that he was judged the best player on the ground, by all and sundry who witnessed the game. His big long runs, and tremendous cover defence, were a feature of his game.

It was little wonder that when he appeared back at the Club, that the "grape-vine" had it that West would try to sign up this "Adonis" from the Western Division, if they possibly could. The season passed with West going down to South in the Grand Final. But what of John Hobby? He had gone on, and played for Combined Country against City, and had led his team, Eugowra, to another victory out west. All through the crazy season, the question was asked, would Hobby come to West? With occasional visits by this player to Newcastle, the "grape-vine" worked overtime. Some quarters had it for sure that he would play, others had it that he wanted too much money. Another source stated that he would remain at Eugowra, for one more season, as West

was powerless, under its present constitution, to sign up a player before a certain date, and that Hobby could not afford to wait.

Then the announcement that Brian Carlin was to be player-coach for 1965, and that the committee was to have the power to elect the coach was resolved at the Annual Meeting, answered a lot of questions to the members of the "grape-vine".

The season of 1965 passed, with West being equal Minor Premiers under Brian Carlin, who had an injury-riddled season. The First Grade defeated North in a Semi-Final, only to go down to Maitland, the eventual competition winner, by 19 points to 12. The questions were asked about John Hobby once more. How did they go? Would he come to West this time? The answers came, yes, Eugowra won again, and it looks like he will be here in 1966.

All through the crazy season the questions were asked, and this was always re-started by an occasional visit by John Hobby, on business or just passing through, but the "grape-vine" insisted that he was signed, lock, stock and barrel. Then

the official announcement that the lock forward from Eugowra would play for Western Suburbs as player-coach, was finally made. With his appointment, West firmed to favourites to take out the competition, with all the keen judges in the district. But even the stoutest supporter did not expect West to take out the "Grand Slam" of three wins in all three grades. This was also to include the Minor titles and the coveted Club Championship Trophy.

John Hobby was to lead the Newcastle team in the Caltex Country Championship, and to be chosen as reserve forward for Newcastle, against Great Britain.

He did eventually play, and was judged the best forward on the ground, when he virtually took on the English pack on his own.

With the victorious season barely over, he was reappointed as West player-coach for the 1967 season. This season quickly took the pattern of the previous one, as West once again took out the Minor Premierships, in all three grades, and the Club Championship once again.

West supporters were delirious with joy, at the prospect of taking out the grand slam once more. Victory in the Third Grade, then the Reserves, leaving only the First Grade to follow suit, and the impossible would once again be achieved, but the First Grade were to go down to North by 13 points to 11, in a tough match, with North employing sound tactics to win. This was another season full of representative honours, besides leading Newcastle in the Caltex Championships. John Hobby was to lead Newcastle against the touring New Zealand team.

West committee once again appointed John Hobby as the playing coach for 1968 season, and it was a determined team that took out the first pre-season, held under floodlights, under John Hobby. John was again selected as Captain-Coach of the Newcastle team, for the Caltex Country Championship. He was also chosen as Captain of the Country Seconds against City. He was also selected as a member of the Country Touring side to go to New Zealand. This season was almost a carbon copy of the two previous seasons, as West finished Club Champions and equal Minor Premiers, in First Grade, and Minor Premiers in both Reserves and Thirds. The First

(continued on page 22.)

JOHN HOBBY (continued).

Grade, however, were beaten in both the Semi-Final, by South, and by Lakes United in the Final. Both the Reserves and Thirds were successful, in winning their respective competitions.

West committee once again re-appointed John Hobby as player-coach for the season, 1969, and with the season at the half-way mark, and with all his representative commitments over, West can expect a determined effort from him. West are once again at the head of the points table, equal leaders with Central and Maitland. No doubt John Hobby will endeavour to leave the district with another Premiership under his belt. But, win or lose, one thing is certain, that John Hobby has been the most successful coach to come to the Club since its inception. So it will be with reluctance that West supporters see the end of an association with John Hobby, "The Quiet Man of Rugby League".

Bill Scambrey.

Souvenir Programme

**Western Suburbs Rugby
League Football Club**



Saturday 15 May 2010

The Starlight Room

**Western Suburbs (Ncle) Leagues Club
88 Hobart Road, New Lambton NSW**

Scott Bradley



Played 1992 – 2000. 199 games with 179 in 1st grade. Scored a record total of 1 896 points for West. Played in winning Grand Final sides in 1992, 1997, 1998 and 1999.

Brett Cullen



Played 1995 – 2004. 195 games with 182 in 1st grade. Played in winning 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2004 winning Grand Final teams. Scored a record 230 tries for West.

Centenary Dinner

15 May 2010

Celebrating 100yrs

WSRLFC

Team of the Century

Selected by veteran

League reporter

George Piggford

Geoff Spruce



Played 1964 – 1973. 239 games with 221 in 1st grade. Played in winning Grand Finals sides in 1966 and 1970.

Neil Gibson



Played 1951 – 1971. Parramatta 1952. Played 203 games with 164 1st grade. Played in winning 1961 Grand Final side.

John Cootes



Played 1967 – 1973. 92 games with 83 in 1st grade. Scored 98 tries and kicked 194 goals for West. Played in winning 1970 Grand Final side. 5 games for NSW, 7 Tests for Australia. 1969 Australian tour to NZ, 1970 World Cup in England

Dan “Laddo” Davies



Played 1915/16 and 1920 – 1923. Played in winning 1915, 1916 and 1921 Final sides. Represented Newcastle against England in 1920 and New Zealand in 1921.

Paul Skovgaard



Played 1997 - 2002 Played 126 1st grade games and no lower grade games - a club record. Played in winning 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2002 grand Final sides

Tony Price



Played 1988 – 2002. Played 240 games with 222 in 1st grade. Played in the 1992 side and was Captain Coach of winning Grand Final teams in 1997, 1998 and 1999

Dennis Ward



Played 1973 – 1975. Played 63 First Grade games. Captain / Coach of West from 1972 to 1974. In 1973 was the first player selected directly from West for a Kangaroo Tour.

David Howell



Played 1977 – 1983. Played 116 games with 114 in 1st grade. Captain / Coach of winning Grand Finals in 1980, 1981 and 1982. Captain of the winning 1978 Grand Final

Peter Howlett



Played with West 1970 – 1975. Played 116 games with 109 in 1st grade. Played in winning 1970 Grand Final team. Played 2 games for NSW in 1973.

Ray Johnson



Played with West 1958 – 1967. Played 173 games with 165 in 1st grade. Played in winning Grand Final teams in 1961 and 1966. Represented Newcastle against South Africa in 1963 and Great Britain in 1966.

John Raper



Rugby League Immortal. Captain / Coach of West 1970 to 1972. Played 40 games including 39 in First Grade. Captain / Coach of the winning 1970 Grand Final team. (Captain / Coach)

John Hobby



Captain Coach of West from West 1966 – 1969. Played 89 First Grade games. Captain / Coach of the winning 1966 Grand Final team.

Steve Smith



Played with West 1977- 1983. Played 132 games with 118 in 1st grade. Played in the 1978, 1980, 1981 and 1982 winning Grand Final teams.

Allan Buman



Played with West 1961 – 1968. Played 123 games with 113 in 1st grade. Played in the winning 1961 and 1966 winning Grand Final teams. 9 games for NSW. 2 Tests for Australia against New Zealand in 1965. (Selected for Australia directly from West)

.....

Allan Dagwell



Played with West 1966 – 1980. 332 games with 301 in 1st grade – both are club records. Played in the winning 1970 and 1978 Grand Final teams. Played 2 games for NSW in 1975. Played in winning Country side in 1975 which defeated City. Played 13 games for Newcastle.

Glen Maloney



At the conclusion of the Centenary Dinner the evening was reviewed.

It was decided that "Mr West" - Glen Maloney, the person who has had the most influence on the West Rosellas, should be appointed as

Team Manager. Glen was the initial Secretary / Manager of West Leagues Club and Secretary of the Football Club from 1953 to 1975.

It's fitting that this 1969 photo has the No 1 on it - if anyone deserves to be No 1 at West it is Glen Maloney!!



Rosellas Rise to the Occasion

By Peter Sterling

Newcastle Morning Herald

20 May 2010



I've been to many rugby league functions but few as enjoyable as last weekend's Western Suburbs anniversary.

In a celebration of 100 years as a foundation member of the Newcastle competition, the Rosellas gave an insight as to why they have developed into the most successful of organizations.

Despite 500 being in attendance it still managed to be a somewhat intimate evening, reflecting how close and tight the club continues to be. The warm relationship between past and present players and with officials was particularly obvious.

For someone who played his first game of rugby league as a six year old second rower just up the road at Raymond Terrace, I found the whole night to be a nostalgia trip.

It reminded me of a childhood that was spent heading to No 1 Sportsground for the weekend match of the day and listening Noel Harrison calling games on NBN at night.

That was also a time when, even though many of my heroes were running around for Manly in Sydney (sad. I know), most of them were part of the Newcastle comp – plenty were there in person on Saturday night.

Now I wasn't a West faithful – I was more a supporter of the Terrace Magpies on the local scene – however, I was a big fan of the likes of Peter Howlett, Mick Trypas, John Barber, John Hobby, Allan Dagwell and, of course, Father John Cootes.

When it came to other clubs there was plenty of admiration for Maitland, who were a formidable outfit at that time and won premierships titles in 1969 and 71.

I remember how excited I was to find out that my dad was doing some dental work for the great Terry Pannowitz and that we actually got to go around to his house one school night. It has been very disappointing to watch the Pumpkin Pickers struggle for their existence after these heady days.

As part of the festivities respected league reporter George Piggford was given the unenviable task of sorting through the multitude of players who have worn the red, white and green jersey to determine a Team of the Century.

There were a criterion of number of games played but most important, it was a 17 man squad chosen on value given to the club.

Somehow George must have got the mix right, because it was received enthusiastically.

It spanned Dan "Laddo" Davies, who began his career at West in 1915, through to Brett Cullen, who finished up in 2004.

The highest profile member was Johnny Raper, league immortal and perhaps the greatest player to ever lace a boot. He was captain coach for three seasons after heading up from Sydney to continue the most illustrious of careers.

I told the story of how I'd been to Chook's 50th birthday at which his wife, Carol, had told of a near death experience. She said that she had nearly drowned one day and along the lines of what many believe her whole life flashed before her eyes. During this life threatening experience her whole life did pass before her and with tongue firmly planted in cheek she lamented that "John wasn't in it".

He continues to be the life of the party but I wouldn't surprise if he was seen around the streets of Newcastle early on Sunday morning "running out" the night before.

Raper's 1970 World Cup teammate John Cootes was as dapper as ever and still looks fit enough to pull on a boot. Along with Allan Buman and Dennis Ward, Cootes played Test football while representing the Rosellas. He was a superb athlete and an inspiration to plenty of us young players in our formative years.

So too Dennis Ward, who like Raper, came to Newcastle after enjoying plenty of success in the big smoke.

As a former Sea Eagle he was a particular favourite of mine and was part of one of rugby league's most infamous and controversial referring decisions.

In the 1972 World Cup the Australians took on France, and in a set move Ward chipped the ball back to the blind side where, in one of the most incredible efforts, Graeme Langlands dived full length to regather and "score" in the corner.

The French referee disallowed the try solely because he couldn't believe that anyone could physically achieve what Langlands had done, and possibly be on side. Instead of being duded by such a shocking call it would now be regarded as one of the greatest tries.

Possibly the biggest ovation of the night was afforded to hooker Allan Dagwell, the only man to play more than 300 first grade games for the club. He was the last player read out, cut the cake and given the distinction of being acknowledged as West's most valuable player in their history.

I recall what a big deal it was for him to be named for NSW for the 2nd and 3rd games against Queensland in 1975.

In doing so he was given the nod in front of the lights of George Piggins and Elwin Walters.

After meeting the man for the 1st time I decided that next time I was in his company, I would make sure Wendell Sailor was with me, to learn the meaning of the word humility.

It was quite surreal to leave the function on Saturday night to the strains of John Cootes on stage playing his guitar and singing the club song. The last time I'd heard him sing was on my vinyl 45 titled "The Man in Black".

Now that's nostalgia.



.....and in summary

John Hobby

- Was Captain / Coach of 3 clubs, and was successful in taking each club to the Grand Final in his first year
- From 1962 to 1967 he coached six consecutive Grand Final teams
- From 1970 to 1974 he coached four consecutive Grand Final teams
- Represented four Country Groups
- Represented three Country Divisions – at least on 30 occasions
- Represented Country in 1960, 1963, 1964 and 1968
- Toured New Zealand with Combined Country in 1968
- Played against six international touring sides
 - Great Britain in 1966 and 1970
 - New Zealand in 1963 and 1967
 - France in 1960 and 1964

How did John Hobby come to West?

Well in 1965 Glen Maloney and Jack Aitchison went to Eugowra to entice John Hobby to Newcastle to be West's Captain / Coach from the 1966 season. Obviously they were successful in their mission. They also tried to entice another Eugowra player, Barry Beath (John Hobby's best friend) to Newcastle as a player. They were not successful with this endeavor. Barry Beath went to Sydney, and had a successful career with the St George Dragons. Just as a point of interest, some years after John Hobby's death, his wife Jenny re married....to Barry Beath.

This long article is a record of everything "John Hobby" that I hold.

Most of it has been obtained from "somewhere else", and put together in a logical form. Special thanks to Gina Roddy (John Hobby's daughter) for her input.

Everyone has an opinion, but I have always said, in my opinion, John Hobby is the 2nd best player that I have seen play for West. John Cootes No 1...John Hobby No 2. Interestingly, neither player played in the "Sydney Comp"...indeed John Cootes represented Australia from West.

I just wonder if there has ever been a player who has achieved more, and given more, to Country Rugby League than John Hobby....that would be for others to decide.

At the footy on last Sunday, there was some talk about John Hobby....great player, "Nature's Gentleman", how he took on the "Poms" etc .

But he was human, and he was a "Bush Boy" with country values.

As Owen Kilpatrick recalled on Sunday...."One night after training John said to me....fancy a beer....and....eight schooners later the training session finished".

This article needs a few little updates, and then will be published in the West Rosellas 2017 Year Book. Hopefully in years to come people will appreciate why **JOHN HOBBY WAS A GREAT MAN!!**

David Locker

13 September 2017