

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWCASTLE RUGBY FOUNDATION TO BENEFIT FROM NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND SUPPORT FOR RUGBY LEAGUE PROJECT

The Newcastle Rugby Foundation has received confirmation of a grant totalling £99,000 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to document the history of rugby league in the north east of England. The Foundation, the official charity of both Newcastle Thunder RL and Newcastle Falcons RU clubs, will embark on a two year project that will chronicle the sport at both professional and community levels all the way back to the very early 1900s.

The project will collate match information, photos, memorabilia, memories and news reports and make these available for public consumption via the establishment of an on-line museum. The Foundation will work with the North East Rugby League, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums and clubs and societies across the region to gather contributions for the project. The programme of activity will also include the training of volunteers, an education element, work with dementia support groups and a series of exhibitions.

Heritage numbers will be allocated to every player who has played professional rugby league for a club in the region. This will include Wallsend, South Shields and St Paul's in the early twentieth century, Newcastle Rugby League in the 1930s and Gateshead/Newcastle Thunder over the past two decades.

Speaking about the award the Newcastle Rugby Foundation Chairman Mick Hogan said, "We are incredibly grateful for the support of The National Lottery Heritage Fund that allows this exciting and important project to take place. With the Rugby League World Cup staging five games in the region in October and November 2021, the emergence of Newcastle Thunder and the growth of the community game it's the right time to embark on this.

"We will use the profile of the Rugby League World Cup and the fact that Newcastle will host the opening game between England and Samoa to engage with local residents and visitors to the city via a heritage exhibition. The history of the game at all levels of far more extensive than many would appreciate and its important that we document and bring it to life.

"At the Foundation we do a lot of participation-based programmes. This heritage based project will allow us to engage with even more sectors of our community in different ways than just playing rugby league."

The project has already set up a North East Rugby League Heritage facebook community page where supporters, former players and volunteers can share photographs, memories and memorabilia. All contributions will add to the on-line museum.



News of the funding award comes a day before the 125th anniversary of the birth of rugby league on 29 August 1895 following a meeting held at the George Hotel in Huddersfield. The date has added significance as 29th August 1936 was the inaugural match of the newly formed Newcastle Rugby League Club who travelled to Featherstone Rovers.

For further information on the History of North East Rugby League Heritage Project please contact Martin Flynn on 07841 495073 or via martinflynn21@hotmail.com

www.rugbyleagueheritage-ne.com