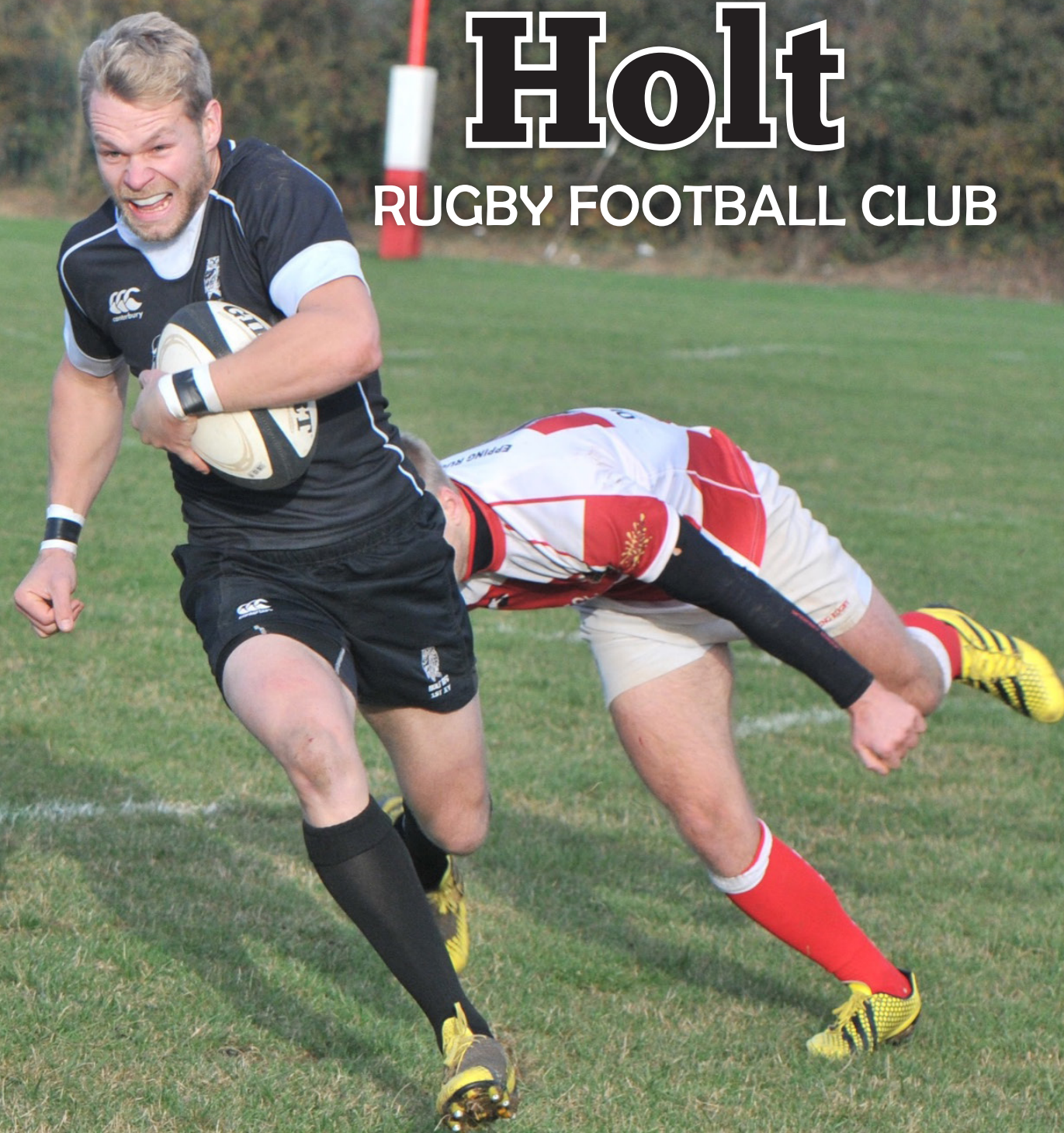


# Holt

## RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



Holt RFC has ended 2016 with a most significant achievement. Ben Youngs, a player who developed through their junior ranks, was named man of the match in England's momentous victory over Australia at Twickenham. Moreover he and his fellow-international brother Tom Youngs, have been unstinting in their tributes to the Holt coaches and administrators who put so much effort into sustaining quality rugby in this rural corner of Norfolk.

Images courtesy of Stuart Young



Holt is above all a community and a family club. This season, three Harrison brothers have played for the first XV together; four members of the Tagg family have appeared at various levels, with father Steve captaining the 3rd XV. Last year it was the turn of the Rileys to provide three members of the senior side. One of these brothers, Jim Riley, is the current captain: he can play equally well at wing or outside centre and displays an aggressive determination with ball in hand wherever he is positioned.

Indeed Holt entered the 2016/7 with hopes for positive results to be delivered by their pacy outside backs. Unfortunately this has proved not to be the case to date. An impressive victory in the opening game away against

Campion was followed by a series of defeats. Gallingly three of the defeats, all at home, have been by a single point. As Head Coach Ed Steed put it "if we have had any luck at all it has been bad luck".

However the team subsequently secured a good win in their game against Woodford. There are now high hopes that in the long term a very young side

gains experience and can take advantage of firmer grounds towards the season's end, results will improve. Hopefully the final table will be a fairer reflection of a side with both potential and ambition.

The club was formed in 1961 when a group of rugby enthusiasts from the Georgian town met and decided to form their own local team. Norfolk is a big

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county and the players felt that they were travelling too far for their current teams' home games, let alone away fixtures.

In one respect they were very fortunate. Holt is the home of Gresham's School and the Headmaster of the time was a distinguished former rugby international, Logie Bruce-Lockhart, who was both sympathetic and supportive. Logie, who had won five caps for Scotland in the 1940s, made a pitch available for the team's first game, provided resources and encouraged players to join the new club. He became the founding Club President and all were delighted to welcome him as an honoured guest at this year's Annual Dinner.

Over the years Holt grew in strength and became recognised as a force within the region. The 1975/6 1st XV won 28 of their 32 games and secured the Norfolk cup for the first time with a 9-6 win away to Diss in the final. Several of their players were chosen to represent Norfolk and Eastern Counties.

Employment in the local area is predominantly in agriculture and hospitality. Holt are therefore not as fortunate as some other Eastern County rivals in being able to recruit from a pool of young people starting a first job locally. The club develops talent.

It has an excellent colt and mini system, and has always generated great loyalty from its players - several of whom have appeared more than 500 times for the club. Many college and university students play for the club before departing at the start of term, come home to turn out in vacations, and return to the area after completing their qualifications.

There will always be a warm welcome for all in the newly extended clubhouse at Holt's Bridge Road ground. Indeed, in the 2016/17 season Holt were presented with the Eastern Counties Rugby award for club facility of the year.

Article provided by Martyn Sloman

