

## Australian Schools UK Tour Newsletter Number 3

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December** – The tour squad arrived late afternoon at The Lymm High School Outdoor Education Centre, Tyn y Felin and settled in with a brief history of the centre. The property consists of 116 acres of grazing land. It was acquired 55 years ago by Lymm High School and is used by staff and students for a variety of activities. The property is surrounded by the beach coastline on one side and a tidal bay on the other with magnificent paddocks full of sheep. Just before dinner some boys obviously lacking any farm experience were seen chasing sheep around the paddock. Thankfully one member of the group was nearby to help a sheep who had happened to get its head stuck in a fence and helped release it. The same evening members of the Lymm School 1<sup>st</sup> XV arrived to stay over for the next two nights to get to know our players. Many of these Lymm boys were to be billets for upon our arrival in Lymm.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December** – With a good night's sleep, we awoke in this magnificent rural setting to a very windy and rainy day and the roar of RAF fighter jets taking off from across the bay. Two training sessions were planned – the first was a field session down the road at the local rugby club in Tyn y Felin. The afternoon session was transferred to the indoor facility at the Holyhead Leisure Centre where the Lymm High School 1<sup>st</sup> XV provided opposition for our lineout and the backs ran some moves and defensive plays against their backs. At the completion of this session both squads enjoyed a recovery session in the Holyhead Centre pool run by our staff Andy Clark and Tim Needham. After dinner the players spent the evening going through the game video tapes.

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December** – After a traditional English breakfast players squeezed muddy kit and wet towels into their already bulging wheelie bags. These in turn were squeezed into a bulging bus for the trip into England. A short presentation was made to Centre Manager, Richard, and Chef, Debbie, thanking them for looking after the group. The bus trip was close to 2 hours working our way back across the Isle of Anglesey through Conwy and heading towards Chester. We had a short stop at a popular tourist spot with the train station spelt with the longest name in the world. (See the attached photo). To break up the trip we dropped into the Direct Factory Outlet called "Cheshire Oaks" which had every designer you could imagine and was well received by all the team with some shoes being the most popular for a bargain. After a short stop we moved onto Lymm Rugby Club where we had our final Captain's Run before meeting the billeting families. Some players were very happy, particularly those who found themselves matched with girls as billets.

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December** – The squad arrived at Lymm High School where we were escorted around the school for a tour by Len Davies, our Liaison Officer, Director of Rugby of Lymm High School and great friend for the remainder of our visit. The 400 year old school is a secondary co-educational high school with over 2,000 students. With an early lunch enjoyed in the school cafeteria, we departed for our game at Lymm Rugby Club for our game against the U19 Northern Academies XV. After two hard test matches against Ireland and Wales many players who hadn't had much playing time were given an opportunity to start.

The game was played in quite good conditions with a firm ground and light breeze. We ran into the sun and breeze in the first half. It quickly became evident that the Academies Team was to be a much stronger team for a mid week game than we had anticipated. We trailed 14 – 5 at half time after a good try from Chris Feauai in the corner to keep the team in touch. After some defensive mistakes the Academies side scored twice and kicked a penalty. Jack De Guingand scored a rampaging try to put us back in touch but the opposition got away. A full report is attached. The Lymm Rugby Club provided an excellent after match function where both players and parents shared some time together and listened to the speeches.

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December** – Meeting again at Lymm High School the players went through the usual pool recovery session and weights session. On completion we were off to see Manchester United’s home ground, Old Trafford. A guided tour was arranged and we had the pleasure of looking over the playing surface, sitting in the player’s lounge, change room and reserve bench area. Our next stop was the popular and huge shopping complex on the outskirts of Manchester called the Trafford Centre where some more retail therapy was allowed for a few hours and lunch. On returning to Lymm High School that afternoon, the squad returned home with their billets for an early night.

**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December** – Billets dropped of everyone this morning at Lymm High school. For the first time on tour we were met at the training ground to a big frost on the ground. Although a beautiful sunny day the temperature was clearly way down on previous days sitting around 3 degrees. As the frost started to melt the ground turned to mud and the squad enjoyed a very muddy session. Lunch followed in the school cafeteria. After much discussion with players and staff we decided to change our normal training plans and complete our Captain’s Run in the afternoon at Sale Rugby Club training venue called Carrington which is right next door to Manchester United soccer training grounds. We dropped off on the way to see the Sale Rugby Club for Sunday’s game and then moved onto Carrington. The remainder of the afternoon was taken up with game analysis and some group discussions with the coaching staff.

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December** - Today all the squad were given the opportunity to sleep in and have a day off with their billets. The local community once a year hold, a “Dickensian Day” in the village. This is where the village community dress up in period costume, run stalls and close the streets to show how people lived over a hundred years ago. Tonight a team dinner was held at the local Italian Restaurant “Baci” where we enjoyed some good pasta loading in preparation for the game on Sunday against England U18.



Recovery at Holyhead



Longest Name Station



Old Trafford