

Redeugh Boys' Club - Annual Presentation Night (08/07/2005)

“Thank you. It is a great privilege to be with you tonight.

This has been a week of mixed emotions. On Wednesday we celebrated our country's success in winning our bid to host the Olympic Games in London in 2012. A great celebration in London and the promise of regeneration. Also, the promise that the benefits will ripple out to the regions. Certainly I, and fellow politicians in the North East will be looking for more of a tidal wave than a ripple to ensure that the people of the North East really do benefit from the games.

Then, on Thursday, the tragedy of the terrorist bombs that killed over 50 people, injured hundreds more, affected thousands and left the nation in sorrow. Words cannot describe those who did this. There is no cause, no religion, that can justify such brutality. These people are the enemies of humanity. Their action was indiscriminate, their victims were of all faiths and non, all races and all beliefs. In the end they will be defeated, not by their methods, not by terror and intolerance. But by the increasing realisation that we are one people in one world and it is our determination to come together that will prevent them from driving us apart.

I am proud to have been asked to become a Patron of Redeugh Boys' Club. Before I became an MP I was a councillor. For eight years I was Chairman of Gateshead's Recreation Committee, in the days when we were developing Gateshead Stadium and building Gateshead's reputation in Sport. But I soon came to realise that it is not always the big things that matter most. I realised the importance of voluntary organisations, like Redeugh Boys' Club, to the borough, and that it would take a huge increase in local taxes for the council to provide the important services these voluntary organisations provided, and why it was so important for the council to help and support them.

It is often said that the volunteers who run these clubs do so for no reward. People like Terry Ritson, Allan Blackburn, Alec McPherson, Evan Bryson, Les Stokoe, Peter Featherstone, Wilf Reed, Bill Gibson and many others. And people like my old colleague Stan Long, who sadly passed away recently and who dedicated his life to helping young people.



David presents Peter Featherstone with his award for club volunteer worker of the year.

However, it is not true that they do it for no reward. But the reward they get is not personal wealth, but the satisfaction of seeing all of you enjoying your membership of the club and what you get out of it. Sometimes a Brendan Foster, a Steve Cram, a Steve Grant or an Anthony Reed emerges, and that is great of course. But the important thing is that everyone gets the chance to take part and enjoy their sport and their membership of the club.

So, when you come up to collect your awards tonight, be pleased with yourselves of course, but also be pleased that you are giving those behind the club their true reward.”