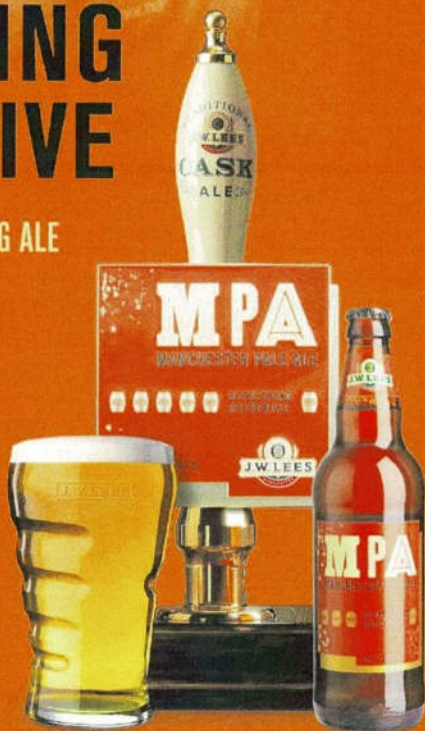


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Rugby Oldham

A RUGBY LEAGUE COMMUNITY TRUST

In association with Oldham Rugby League Heritage Trust

Presents

“The Triple Celebration”

A celebration dinner for the 30th anniversary
of
The 1984 Tour to Australia, New Zealand
and Papua New Guinea.

The 100th anniversary of
The Rorkes Drift Test.

The 125th anniversary of the first match at
Watersheddings.

at

The White Hart, Lydgate, Oldham on October 3rd 2014 - 7pm



The Rorke's Drift Test

Third test Match - July 4th 1914 at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

This year it is 100 years since the famous "Rorke's Drift" test match was played against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Having been pressured by the Australian R.L. authorities to play a third, and deciding, test match in the space of eight days and in spite of an appalling injury list, the British team under instructions from the Northern Union, (Rugby League) headquarters, that the match should go ahead and... "every man should do his duty"... prevailed to win the test and with it the ashes.

The victory was secured by 14 points to 6 in spite of suffering further injuries on the day that at one point saw them reduced to just nine men on the field. The team was captained by the Huddersfield legend, Harold Wagstaff and included three Oldham players. Centre, Billy Hall. Forward, Dave Holland and 'hero of the hour', full-back, Alf Wood, whose four goals added to a magnificent defensive effort proved to be vital in tipping the scales in Britain's favour. It was "boys own" stuff that has ensured that this fantastic victory will be forever regarded as one of the greatest, "backs to the wall" successes in sporting history. The Australian captain was Sid Deane who himself had made 103 appearances for Oldham between 1909 and 1912 before returning to Australia.

The trouble for the British team started in the very first minute when winger, Frank Williams, suffered an injured knee and had to leave the field, he did return but was little more than a passenger before another wrenching forced his permanent withdrawal. Early in the second half Huddersfield's, Douglas Clark broke a thumb and a finger but had them strapped up and carried on until he was heavily tackled and dislocated his collar bone. Even then it was against his own wishes and in tears, that he was prevailed upon by the touchline staff to leave the field. Billy Hall had to go off with concussion and when Stuart Prosser was badly winded, Britain were down to nine men for a short period.

At half-time the Lions were 9 - 0 to the good thanks to a try from William "Avon" Davies of Leeds, after good approach work by Holland, which was converted by Wood who also landed two penalty goals. Midway through the second half, Arthur "Chick" Johnson of Widnes, who came out of the forwards to cover on the wing for Williams, scored a remarkable try after he placed the ball on the floor and then dribbled it over the line to score. Wood converted and so Great Britain held a 14 - 0 lead .

Despite their numerical advantage the Kangaroos were met by a resolute defence from the Lions. Although Wally Messenger (brother of the famous Dally) got over for a try, every GB man left standing put their body on the line to secure the victory. Deane strode through the tiring defence to score in the last minute but it wasn't enough for the home side and the Australian crowd warmed to the efforts of the tourists and gave them a great reception as they left the field.

AUSTRALIA: H. Hallett, D. Frawley, S. Deane - captain, R. Tidyman, W. Messenger, C. Fraser, A. Holloway, C. Sullivan, W. Cann, F. Burge, E. Courtney, S. Pearce, R. Craig.

GREAT BRITAIN: A. Wood (Oldham), F. Williams (Halifax), W. Hall (Oldham), H Wagstaff - captain (Huddersfield), W. Davies (Leeds), S. Prosser (Halifax), F. Smith (Hunslet), D. Holland (Oldham), P Coldrick (Wigan), R. Ramsdale (Wigan), A. Johnson (Widnes), J. Chilcott (Huddersfield), D. Clark (Huddersfield).

Referee: Mr. T. McMahon (NSW) - Attendance: 34,420.



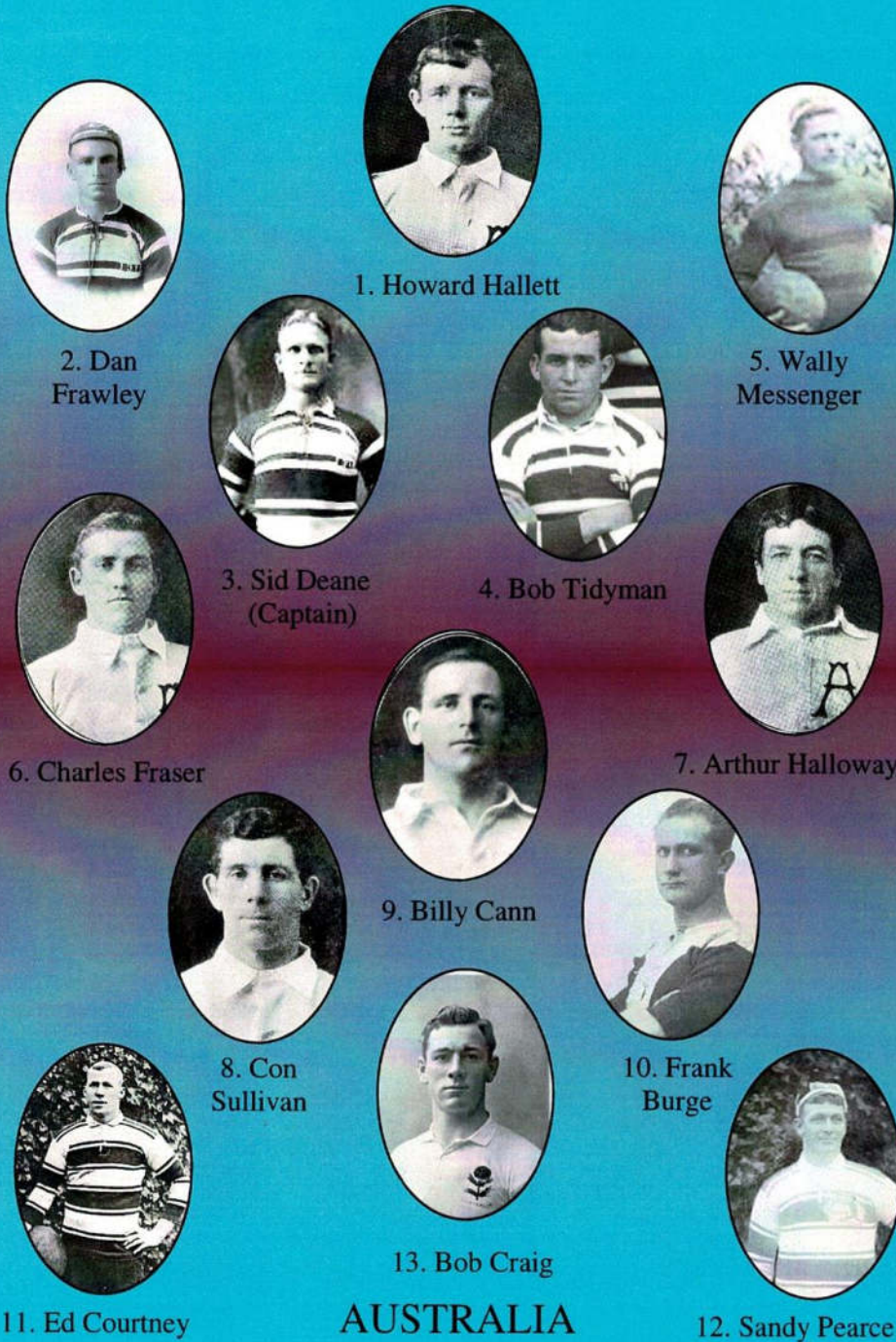
Left: The three Oldham players who took part in the Rorkes Drift Test.
Back: Billy Hall

Front: Alf Wood, club President, Mr. R. Thompson, Dave Holland.

Right: The captain of Australia, Sid Deane during his Oldham playing days.

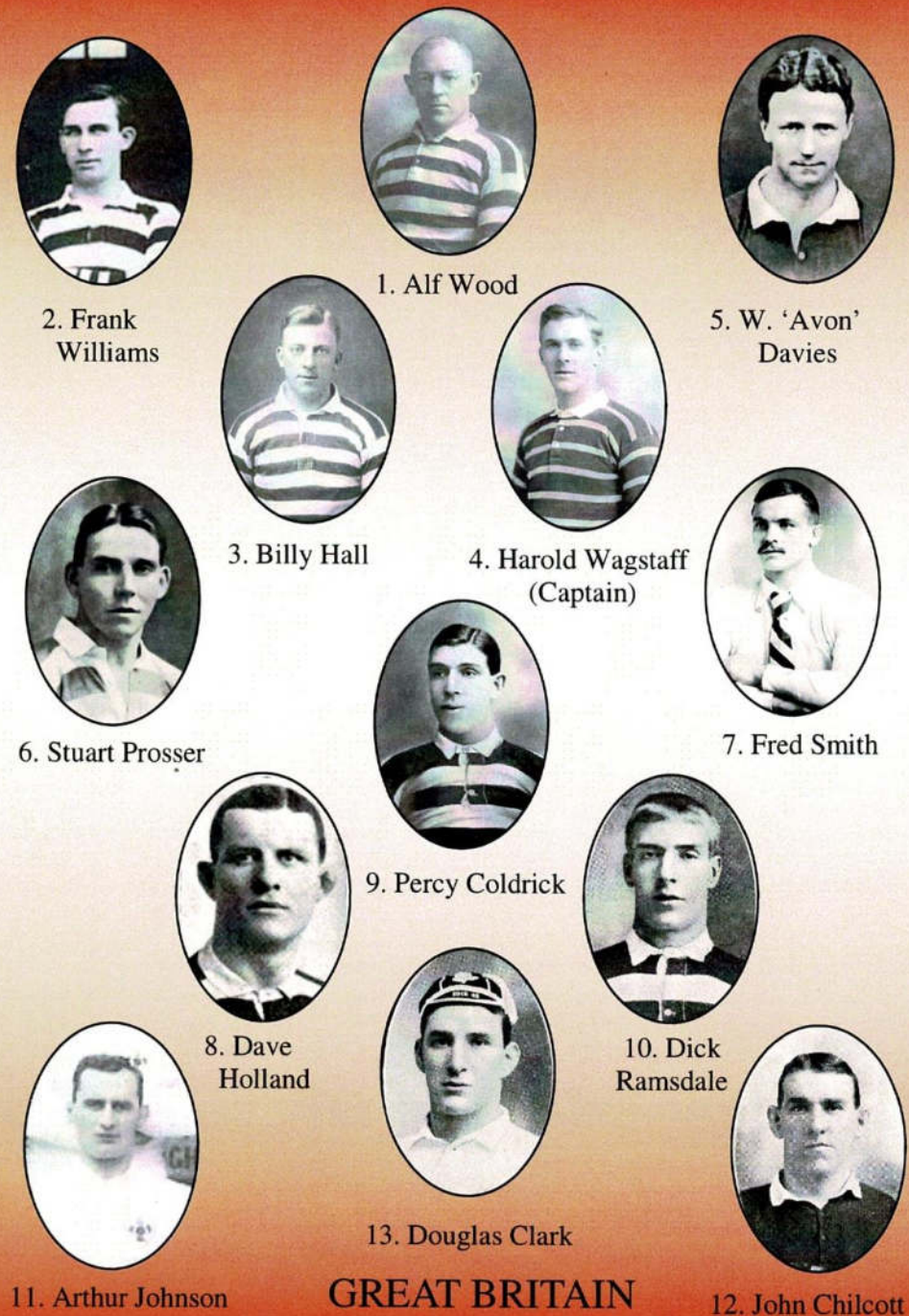


July 14th 1914 at the Sydney Cricket Ground



AUSTRALIA

The Rorke's Drift Test



GREAT BRITAIN

Rugby Oldham would like to thank **Smurfit Kappa** - the main sponsor of the evening and all of our other sponsors, contributors and donators of raffle prizes whose kindness has made this event possible.

Especially J.W. Lees - The sponsor of this booklet.

Their advertisements and logos are featured throughout the booklet.

The logo for Smurfit Kappa, featuring a stylized blue 'S' inside a square frame followed by the text 'Smurfit Kappa' in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

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The Tesco logo, featuring the word 'TESCO' in a bold, red, sans-serif font with a blue horizontal line underneath.

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The 1984 Tour

Five Oldham players made the 1984 tour to Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, a record for the club, Ray Ashton, Terry Flanagan, Des Foy, Andy Goodway and Mick Worrall making up part of the youngest ever touring team (average age 23).

Under the captaincy of Bradford Northern's Brian Noble and under the direction of the then current Oldham coach, Frank Myler, the tourists had a successful campaign in the district matches losing just one each in Australia, to Toowoomba and New Zealand, to Auckland. However, with a massive injury list, the tests were a different matter and all six were lost against the Kangaroos and the Kiwis, although they did gain victory in the first ever test against Papua New Guinea.



Above: (Left to right)
Andy Goodway, Des Foy, Ray Ashton and
Mick Worrall.



Left: Terry Flanagan.

All the Oldham players managed to get on the score-sheet during the tour. Andy Goodway scored two tries in the first match of the tour against Northern Territory. One against North Sydney and another two against Auckland.

Des Foy scored a "hat-trick" against Western Division, one against Northern Territory and one against New Zealand Maoris.

Ray Ashton scored a try against Western Division.

Mick Worrall scored a try against Wide Bay.

Terry Flanagan scored a try against Newcastle and another against New Zealand Maoris.

Leading try scorers on the tour were Ellery Hanley (12) and Des Drummond (11). The leading goal kickers were Mick Burke (36) and David Hobbs (15).



In training on the tour at Lang Park, Brisbane. (left to right) Des Drummond, Des Foy, Wayne Proctor, Mike Smith, Garry Schofield, Terry Flanagan, Mick Worrall, Mick Adams. (Opposite: Scenes from the tour.)

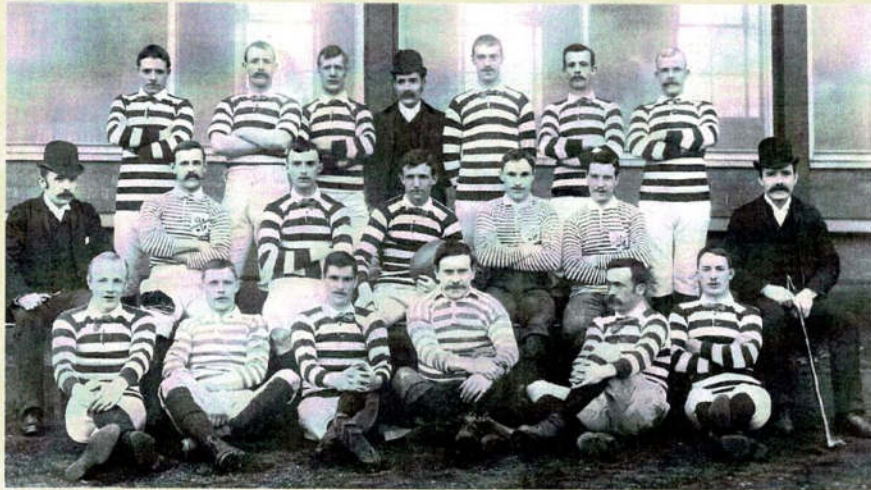


WATERSHEDDINGS - REMEMBERED

Ian Wilson - Secretary: Rugby Oldham

When the name of the ground is first mentioned to the unaware, the response tends to be something of a quizzical smile. 'Watersheddings' sounds as though it is, or rather was, somewhere unusual, where slightly esoteric happenings occurred that might have meant something to some people but were perhaps outside the normal experience of most. And of course that is indeed the case. It meant a huge amount to many, including me, to have enjoyed so many experiences over the years at our old ground – of all sorts, including many that are memorable for disappointment as well as those when the overwhelming emotion on departure was huge elation. But, for those who were not party to the Watersheddings experience, all I can say is that they are the losers.

My first memory was as a youngster, standing on a home-made wooden box, in the top tier of the penny-rush, in 1955 ; and the emotion after most matches at Watersheddings in those days, of course, was very much positive, with what now seem unbelievably huge crowds in attendance. I particularly recall still the win over the visiting Aussie tourists, and the euphoria after another over Leeds in the championship semi-final, both in 1956-7.



The first season at 'Sheddings - Oldham team group 1889

Back: Darlington, Pendlebury, Giles, Mr. J. Platt, Holden, Fitton, Simpson.

Middle: Mr. S. Taylor, Armstrong, Bennett, McCutcheon, Jack Hurst, Pennington, Mr H. Court.

Front: Blomley, James Hurst, Thomas, Barnes, Gwynn, Nuttall.

For some reason, though – perhaps it is because the level of emotions aroused was even greater after a loss – it is two disappointments from those early days that still remain the most vivid : the loss to Wigan in the cup in 1958 after 14 consecutive victories over them; and the 8-20 defeat by Hull in the Championship semi later that spring.

Moving much closer to the present day, I can still recall as though it was yesterday the whole process involved in attending games with my growing family – the drive from Macclesfield, parking on Sharples Hall St., watching with the same small group of fellow-supporters on the wall close to the players' entrance – that began on 11 October, 1981 with a Div. 2 game v Keighley that is only really memorable in hindsight as being the occasion of Andy Goodway's first try for the club! During the next 15 years, of course, there were many more incredibly evocative occasions to recall – and the extra benefit that there are also people still around with whom the recall is joint! There were again some good occasions – and the Paddy Kirwan try win v Wigan in 1987, when for some reason we happened to be standing directly behind the posts under which Paddy scored, was merely the most memorable! The downside occasions still resonate, inevitably – the Mr. Mean abandonment, v Leigh, in 1984; a terrible loss 5-8 to an unfancied Workington on a freezing Wednesday night in 1983; the loss to Saints after Ian Sanderson had been sent off in the cup just 10 days after the above-mentioned win over Wigan. But what about the fantastic effort against the Aussies, also in 1986, or a marvellous 6-1 win over Bradford in a cup quarter-final, or the amazing atmosphere on Good Friday 1995 when we beat Salford immediately after the announcement of the coming of Super League. I could go on for ever!

By then I had graduated to be the League Express reporter on the club's home games, so that I used to leave the family for the final 20 minutes of matches and trot upstairs to what was laughingly called the Watersheddings press box to watch the final minutes whilst also putting my match report together - and it was in that role too that my final recall of Watersheddings was forged – the Scott Ranson hat-trick in the final competitive game at the ground in August 1996.

Memories indeed!

Mick Burke lands the last-minute, winning conversion against Wigan in the 1987 cup-tie.



WATERSHEDDINGS

1890s



1900s



1910s



1920s



1930s



1940s



1950s

WATERSHEDDINGS



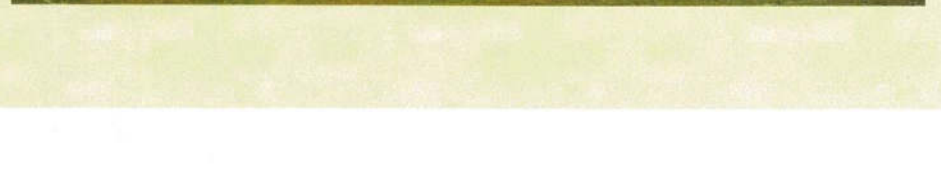
1960s



1970s



1980s



1990s

Rugby in Oldham - A personal perspective.

As a 'comer-in' I little realised in 1969 how important a part of my life Oldham RLFC would become. That first match was a 22-12 victory against Salford, a side that contained the likes of internationals; Burgess, Hesketh, Watkins, Coulman and Dixon. So Oldham had a pretty decent side then! Well no, as the following season 1969/70 proved disastrous with the club next to bottom of the league. Despite this I managed to maintain interest because Oldham had become MY team. And as I always say when you hit rock bottom the only way is up. Finishes of 16th, 13th and 9th followed and on the split into two divisions Oldham qualified for Division One.

When the good times returned they did so with a bang as the best lottery in RL funded a brilliant era with many outstanding players, some of whom we are pleased to see here tonight. Despite sporadic successes since that time there is no doubt in my mind that the period 1980 to 1986 was the best of the modern era. After that Oldham became a 'yo-yo' club flitting between divisions. Two Challenge Cup semi-finals were the highlight of the following decade but a brief flirtation with Super League proved disastrous as Oldham spent money they hadn't got in an effort to match the big guns. It was in this period that my wife and I tried to hold the club's Directors to account through the 'Roughyed' fanzine and some aggressive questioning at the AGM. It was to no avail as the club went under in 1997.

The advent of a new club in late 1997 reawakened interest and there was some steady progress, especially under Mike Ford whose team came to within one game of returning to the big time in 2001. My personal favourite game in this period, when I was pleased to be editor of the club's matchday programme, was the semi-final comeback against Rochdale Hornets at Spotland when Oldham recovered a 26-4 deficit to win 39-32. Unfortunately the game proved so draining that Oldham did not have enough left to account for Widnes the following week in the play-off final.

In subsequent years Oldham have continued to flirt with success managing six Grand Final appearances. There was real hope when the club had a major backer in Bill Quinn but a nomadic existence did the club no favours. Hope revived yet again when a ground was found in the town at Whitebank but, without the resources to develop the site, progress remains slow. Rugby Oldham was formed in 2005 with the backing of over 400 supporters to aid ground development and is committed to that if the current business model is sustainable. However, with more and more soccer and rugby clubs having to be rescued from disaster by Supporters Trusts it may be that this co-operative model is the way forward. Whatever direction professional rugby takes in Oldham, 'Rugby Oldham' will be supportive. This dinner tonight shows we are able to stage a major fundraising event in a professional manner. We thank everyone for their attendance and hope you share our ambition to see Oldham RLFC regain a position as a leading player in rugby league.

Geoff Cooke (Chairman - Rugby Oldham)



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