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BRIAN BATTY

The first time I met Reg Parker his huge frame was silhouetted against the skyline as starkly as the shipyard cranes hovering in the backyard.

It was a few years after the second World War when Reg was already a giant . . . but many strides away from making the tour of Australia and New Zealand as manager.

He was waiting for the coach to arrive at Craven Park to collect Barrow's second team and I was covering my first Rugby League game for the local evening paper.

I cannot remember much about that game, except that it was at Whitehaven, but I went on to watch Reg quickly earn promotion and play an exciting part, as a powerful second row forward, in Barrow's fine team of the fifties.

He collected a winners' and a losers' medal with Barrow at Wembley and recalls: 'Those were wonderful days, playing with men like Willie Horne and Jimmy Lewthwaite.

'I had just over 12 years with Barrow, signing as a 17-year-old, when I was six feet four inches and 15 and a half stone.

'I rated Horne as the greatest player ever although I always felt that he never enjoyed the complete recognition he deserved.

'He was a brilliant captain — the finest thinking player in the game. He had to be for he also did the thinking for the other 12 players in the side.'

Reg almost had the experience of playing alongside one of the greatest players produced by Welsh Rugby Union when he was serving his National Service.

'I was posted to Wales for a spell and played Rugby Union like a lot of other League men. I was in the same side as Bleddyn Williams, who was in his hey day with Cardiff.'

The nearest Reg got to winning a tour place was to be chosen for a trial but he has long cherished the hope that he would make the trip in an official capacity.

'I regard this job as a great honour,' he says. 'It is going to be hard work and I shall be seeking advice from men like Wilf Spaven and Jack Harding before I leave.

'I believe that I can strike up a fine balance with Jim Challinor, the assistant-manager. We played against each several times and I met him a lot when he became player-coach of Barrow.

'I intend to be completely involved during this tour. I don't want to be just a robot.'

Reg has been a Blackpool director for 13 years, during which time he has coached the side and he has served on the Council for two years.

He has shown both enthusiasm and dedication during his first season as a Test selector and has acquired considerable business experience as a successful hotel proprietor.

I feel confident he can do a sound job in Australia with his prime aim to see that Britain regain the Ashes and try to match the feats of the record breaking 1970 side.

A CHANGE OF JOB?

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The Pools office are running a coach to the Salford cup tie at the Willows, and any Pools agents wishing to travel on this free coach, should submit their names as soon as possible. Any prospective agents will be welcome to use the coach on this occasion. Seat tickets are available to all Pools agents at normal prices. Looking forward to your support and a good Cup run.

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SALFORD v. OLDHAM

SUNDAY, 3rd FEBRUARY, 1974. Kick-off 3-0 p.m.

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ON THE INSIDE—

DAVE PARKER

The television sub-committee of the Rugby League council met BBC officials to discuss a new four year contract which will commence next season if agreed to, on Friday. No doubt many people feel live coverage and the television presentation are the ruination of our great game. Well let me tell you and members of the press who are continually knocking television.

There are far worse things wrong within the game than any caused by television, the games world wide preacher.

I can tell you that ladies refuse to use the toilet set aside for them at Thrum Hall, the home ground of Halifax; clubs play old groaning records and some, including Huddersfield, have stopped playing music before a game. Public address systems on a lot of grounds are also incoherent and need looking at. I can remember the days when you couldn't go to Fartown and some other grounds without seeing a brass band parading up and down setting up the atmosphere. Others have grounds-men and old directors for that matter who are like ogres, bent in their ways and not able to encourage a group of young supporters, the games lifeblood. They prefer to have them outlawed and on my rounds I have seen boys ejected from grounds when they are simply watching the professionals training. These are the stars of tomorrow. Around Castleford, 10 years ago especially, diehards will tell you it was the "in thing" to do on a Tuesday and Thursday evening, and at training there was as many people present as there are now at most club's "A" team games.

Talking of "A" team football, some clubs to save finance seem to get on the same old hop every year of just calling off the "A" team games for the slightest excuse. This is another piece of mismanagement within the game, and it will only drive the younger players away. The hard or waterlogged grounds account for many matches, but at present clubs are literally playing on the three day working week. If they really did their homework games could be arranged for during the week for at least 50 per cent of the club's playing register will be on the three day week, and teams could be made up with first teamers on the same stint and promising amateurs. It would also give clubs a chance to have a daylight workout. The ban on flood-lighting since November 14th is bound to have affected the players and the standard of play. I feel it is the power crisis which has seen the downfall of the one time league leaders St. Helens. They lost their fourth game in eight matches at Warrington last Saturday in the Players Trophy semi-final, and they seem to have lost their sharpness.

In the Kippax team to play at Leigh in the first round of the Rugby League Challenge Cup on Sunday, February 3rd will be three ex-professionals, and one of them is hoping it could be the break he needs to get back into the game. He is 23-year-old hooker or loose forward Billy Woodford, who went to Hull K.R., but couldn't get into the first team for Flash Flannagan and stopped away. He has since been crossed off. The other two players are Mick Wood and Dennis Ward, former forwards with Castleford.

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Rugby Quiz

1. When was rugby league's biggest attendance recorded?
2. When did the Warrington Club change into a limited company?
3. When did Warrington join the Northern Rugby League?
4. What is the record attendance at Salford?
5. What were the results of the Oldham v. Warrington league clashes last

ANSWERS

1. 1953-54 when 102,569 watched the Challenge Cup Replay at Bradford when Warrington beat Halifax 8-4.
2. 1941.
3. Warrington were founder members of the Northern Rugby Union in 1895.
4. 26,470 for the Challenge Cup tie between Salford and Warrington in 1936-37.
5. Warrington won both matches, 20-10 at Wilderspool and 12-11 at Watersheddings.



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- 8—ASHCROFT K.
- 9—TAYLOR K.
or O'MAHONEY R.
- 10—McCRACKEN W.
- 11—GREGORY B.
- 12—HALL F.
- 13—PETERS

- 14—BLAIR J.
- 15—

WARRINGTON

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- 3—NOONAN D.
- 4—PICKUP W.
- 5—BEVAN J.
- 6—WHITTLE A.
- 7—GORDON P.
- 8—CHISNALL D.
- 9—ASHCROFT K.
- 10—BRADY B.
- 11—WRIGHT D.
- 12—WANBON B.
- 13—MATHER I.

- 14—
- 15—

Touch Judges

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B. Bailer (Wigan) Orange

Referee:

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Action Replay



OUR VISITORS

The star of the Warrington victory in last weekend's televised cup match against Saint Helens was former Oldham full-back Derek Whitehead. He joined Oldham in September 1968 from Swinton, but it wasn't until he moved to Warrington for £4,500 that he gained his first Great Britain cap. In season 1970-71 he played twice for Britain against France and the following season he played against New Zealand. This season he has twice represented Lancashire and his goal tally so far stands at 95. Although the Wires depend very much on their forward strength they have two excellent Welsh wingers in Denis Curling and John Bevan. Curling was signed from Aberavon R.U.F.C. in August 1972, whilst Bevan turned professional from Cardiff R.U.F.C. last September. On his debut in the First Division match against Castleford he scored a try and he is the leading Wires try scorer with 9. On Boxing Day he scored 4 tries when Warrington won at Leigh 29-7. Before turning professional he played 11 times for Wales at rugby union. Centre-three-quarter David Cunliffe is a product of Saint Helens junior football having joined Warrington in August 1971 from the United Glassblowers side. Another former Saint Helens junior league player is Derek Noonan, a versatile back who was substitute this season in both Lancashire's matches. Billy Pickup was the subject of an Oldham enquiry when he was with Huddersfield, but it was to Wilderspool that he was transferred last March. Last season he scored a try for Yorkshire in the 32-18 defeat of Lancashire. Another of the Welsh contingent at Wilderspool is Swansea born Frank Reynolds, a strong running centre who joined Warrington in July 1971 from Llanelli R.U.F.C. One of Warrington's longest serving players is Parry Gordon who was signed from Wigan R.U.F.C. He has played twice this season for Lancashire and events proved that he should have worn the British No. 7 jersey for the third test match against Australia. Gordon's other representative honour has been for England U-24 against France. A player equally at home whether at stand-off or scrum-half is Mike Philbin who joined Swinton from Blackbrook juniors. Last March he was transferred to Warrington for a bargain £1,500, some of which he repaid on his debut with a try in the 16-all draw at Workington. Shortly before Christmas Warrington secured the services of another versatile middle back in the shape of Alan Whittle. He is a most experienced player having joined Saint Helens from the local junior league in 1963. Whilst at Knowsley Road he appeared in the Challenge Cup Final, two Championship finals, a Floodlit Cup final and three Lancashire Cup finals including the one in 1968 when Saints beat Oldham 30-2. In October 1972 he was transferred to Barrow but he found the travelling a little too tiring although, on his last visit to Watersheddings he scored both Barrow tries as they were beaten 37-6.

As previously indicated the Warrington strength is in their powerful, yet mobile pack which is well led by international hooker Kevin Ashcroft. A former Leigh junior star, Ashcroft began his professional career in 1963 with Dewsbury before transferring to Rochdale Hornets in November, 1964. At the end of his first season at the Athletic Grounds he gained his first representative honour when he was a member of the England U24 side which defeated their French counterparts by 17-9 in Toulouse. In February, 1967 Ashcroft was on the move again, this time to Leigh where he enjoyed so much success. He was a member of Great Britain's World Cup teams in 1968 and also in 1970, and he also made several appearances for Lancashire. In season 1970-71 he was a member of the Leigh side which won both the Lancashire and Challenge Cups. The following July he followed Alec Murphy to Warrington for £7,000 and his drive and determination contribute much to the Warrington pack. Prop Brian Brady joined Warrington from Warrington Colts in 1963 and his powerful bursts this season have been rewarded by two appearances in the Lancashire team. The fiery Dave Chisnall sprung to fame after joining Leigh from Parr juniors in 1968. In 1970 he toured Australasia with Great Britain and played in 14 matches including one test against Australia. The following season he was a member of Britain's World Cup squad and he also played for Lancashire. In August, 1971 he, too, followed Murphy to Warrington for the fee this time being £6,500. A player who cost Warrington nothing is 21-years-old second-row forward Wayne Gaskell. He is a product of Warrington junior football, as is Ian Mather, who in April, 1972 was signed by Salford from Thames Board Mills. Last November he moved to Warrington and made his debut in that great 20-13 away win at Leeds in the Captain Morgan Trophy. Mather

has been playing at loose forward, a position which has also been filled this season by Mike Nicholas, the player signed in September, 1972 from Aberavon RUFC. Twenty-seven-years-old Joe Price was signed from Warrington Colts whilst yet another Welshman in the side is Bobby Wanbon who before turning professional played rugby union for both Glamorgan and Wales. He joined St. Helens in January, 1968 from Aberavon RUFC. He has played 5 times for Wales at rugby league and he moved to Warrington in September, 1971. Maintaining the international flavour, last month Warrington signed David Wright the strong running Queensland second-row forward.

Although this galaxy of stars have not produced the expected goods in league football they have more than made up for this in the lucrative sponsored competitions by reaching the finals of both the John Player and Captain Morgan competitions. Warrington, rather surprisingly, lie way down in 11th position in the league table having won 7 and drawn one of their 17 league matches. Their best wins have been at home against Salford 20-13 and Leeds 10-4 but in direct contrast they have lost at home to Wigan 12-17 and have conceded a double defeat to the almost certainly relegated Whitehaven, losing 5-9 away and 8-10 at home. As a player, Alec Murphy was always sure to turn up a match winning performance whenever the cup-ties came around and this habit seems to have rubbed off onto his team judging by Warrington's performances in the Captain Morgan and John Player Trophies. In the Captain Morgan Trophy Warrington had to visit Wigan where, although Wigan had the better of the exchanges, Derek Whitehead's goal-kicking proved vital in Wigan's 12-4 defeat. In the quarter-final Castleford visited Wilderspool where, after an exciting match Warrington eventually won 15-7 before a crowd of 5,246 which was the largest of the quarter-final ties. Warrington, in fact drew the largest of the first round ties (8,577) and they also drew the biggest semi-final crowd when Leeds were beaten 20-13 at Headingley before a crowd of 4,053. Warrington's pack won the day that afternoon and next Saturday's final at Salford should be an exciting clash of two top note sets of forwards when they meet Featherstone Rovers. In the John Player Trophy Final, Warrington face Rochdale Hornets in what should be another close fought and interesting clash. Oldham were knocked out of this competition in round one when Warrington crushed Oldham in the first half to lead 23-4 at the interval before coasting home 31-14. After beating Castleford 18-9 in round two, it looked as if their run in this cup was drawing to a close when Dewsbury built up a 7-0 lead in the first 20 minutes of their quarter-final clash. Warrington, however, had different ideas and with a good supply of possession from Kevin Ashcroft and a superb performance from Alan Whittle they rallied to win by 20-12. In last week's semi-final, favourites St. Helens came unstuck when opportunist tries and a well drilled defence saw Warrington through by 20 points to 9.

Appearances and Scorers

	P	T	G			
Kevin Taylor	26	1	0	Jim Reynolds	9	0
Chris O'Brien	25	7	0	David Treasure	9	5
Fred Hall	24	1	0	Johnny Farrell	8	1
Tony Wainwright	23	12	1	Bob Gaitley	7	1
Martin Murphy	23	3	0	Neil Goodwin	7	0
Geoff Munro	21	5	0	Brian Hughes	6	0
Mike Elliott	20	3	0	Terry Gorman	6	0
Keith Ashcroft	19	0	0	Ken Wilson	4	0
Terry Clawson	16	1	36	Peter Astbury	4	0
Phil Larder	15	2	25	Stuart Bottom	3	0
Tony Peters	15	3	0	Steve Whitmore	3	0
Johnny Blair	14	2	10	Andy Kavanagh	3	0
Bill McCracken	13	4	0	Ian Holland	2	0
Arthur Daley	11	1	0	Bob Irving	2	0
Mick McCone	10	4	0	Gareth Owen	1	0
Tommy Davies	10	1	0	Norman Hodgkinson	1	0
Brian Gregory	9	4	0	Ian Radcliffe	1	0
				Sid Highton	1	0

FIRST TEAM FIXTURES

1973		
Aug.	18—Leeds	A
	25—Dewsbury	H
Sept.	1—Wigan, Lancs. Cup	H
	8—Bramley	H
	15—Player's Competition	
	22—Wakefield	A
	26—Castleford	H
	29—Wigan	A
Oct.	6—Whitehaven	H
	14—Dewsbury	A
	19—AUSTRALIA	H
	27—Featherstone	H
Nov.	2—St. Helens	A
	11—Widnes	H
	25—Wigan	H
Dec.	1—Featherstone	A
	8—St. Helens	H
	16—Warrington	A
	23—Leigh	H
	26—Rochdale H.	H
	30—Whitehaven	A
1974		
Jan.	1—Salford	A
	6—Hull K.R.	H
	13—Leigh	A
	20—Warrington	H
Feb.	2—Challenge Cup (1)	
	10—Bramley	A
	16—Wakefield	H
	23—Challenge Cup (2)	
Mar.	2—Leeds	H
	9—Challenge Cup (3)	
	17—Widnes	A
	23—Chal. Cup (Semi-final)	
	31—Hull K.R.	A
Apr.	7—Castleford	A
	13—Salford	H
	15—Rochdale H.	A

"A" TEAM FIXTURES

1973		
Aug.	11—Rochdale	H
	18—Barrow	H
	25—Workington	A
	29—Rochdale	
	(1st leg Shield)	H
Sept.	8—Rochdale	
	(2nd leg Shield)	A
	22—Barrow	A
	29—Wigan	H
Oct.	13—Swinton	H
	20—Swinton	A
	27—Workington	A
Nov.	3—St. Helens	H
	9—Widnes	A
	17—Huyton	A
	24—Wigan	A
Dec.	1—Barrow	H
	7—St. Helens	A
	16—Warrington	H
	22—Leigh	A
Jan.	4—Salford	A
	12—Workington	H
	18—Warrington	A
	23—Salford	H
	26—Swinton	H
Feb.	9—Huyton	A
	23—Huyton	H
Mar.	2—Barrow	A
	9—Huyton	H
	13—Leigh	H
	16—Widnes	H
	23—Rochdale	A
	29—Swinton	A
Apr.	6—Workington	H

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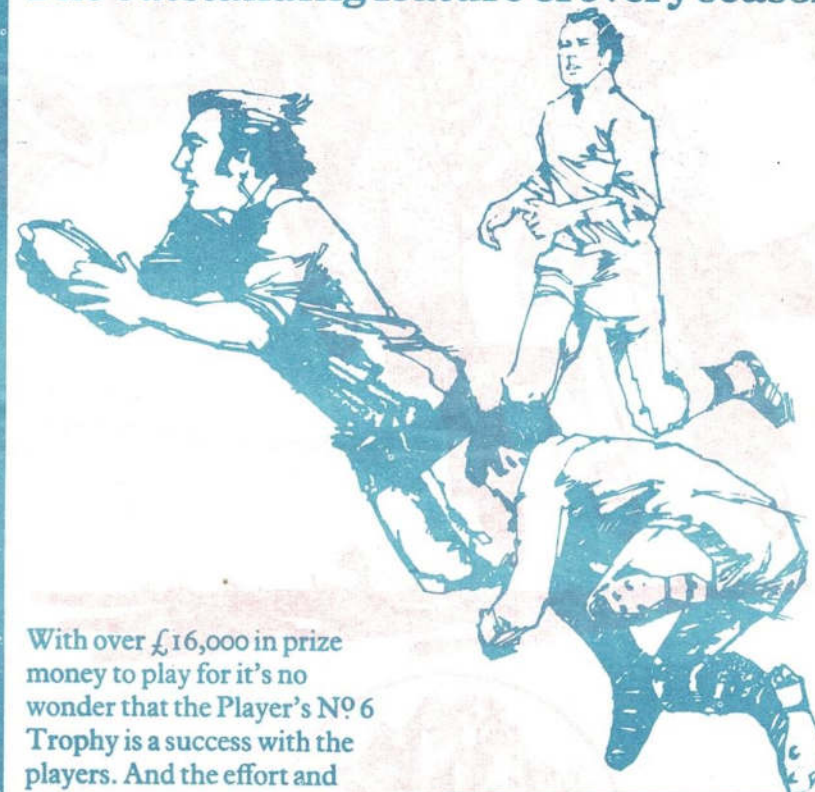
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