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*Centenary
Season*

OLDHAM

v

**Rochdale
Hornets**

SUNDAY 26th DECEMBER

Kick Off 3-30 p.m.

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HONOURS

Rugby League Championship Play-off winners: 1909-10, 1910-11 and 1956-57.

Runners-up: 1906-07, 1907-08, 1908-09, 1921-22 and 1954-55.

First Division Champions: 1904-05.

Second Division Champions: 1963-64.

Rugby League Challenge Cup winners: 1898-99, 1924-25, 1926-27.

Runners-up: 1906-07, 1911-12, 1923-24 and 1925-26.

Lancashire Cup winners: 1907-08, 1910-11, 1913-14, 1919-20, 1924-25, 1933-34, 1956-57, 1957-58 and 1958-59.

Runners-up: 1908-09, 1911-12, 1918-19, 1921-22, 1954-55, 1966-67 and 1968-69.

Lancashire Championship winners: 1907-08, 1909-10, 1921-22, 1956-57 and 1957-58.

Runners-up: 1910-11, 1911-12, 1919-20, 1923-24 and 1954-55.

Lancashire Shield winners: 1975-76.



When Hornets were last here, for the pre-season Law Cup tussle, the teams drew 21-21 after Oldham led 13-0 at half time. One of the Oldham tries was scored by Barry Kear, seen here forcing his way over despite the attentions of Chris Storey and Dave Hartley.

Picture by courtesy of the OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE.

JIM CHALLINOR

IT is with the deepest and most sincere regret that we record the passing of our coach Jim Challinor, who died in a Warrington hospital last Saturday evening at the age of 43.

Not only the Oldham club but the whole of Rugby League will be the worse for the loss of a man who rose from the ranks of junior rugby in his native Warrington to become a Test and international tour star and, later, a top coach at both club and international level.

Jim Challinor achieved fame as a player when, in the great Warrington side of the 1950s, he played centre to Brian Bevan and won both Northern League championship and Challenge Cup winners' medals, the first following the defeat of Oldham at Maine Road, Manchester, and the second after the famous Odsal replay, watched by a world record crowd of more than 102,000.

It followed the first of several visits to Wembley by Jim, who later took Barrow to the Empire Stadium as player-coach in 1967 and went again with St. Helens in 1972 before making his fourth trip as coach to the Great Britain side which won the first Test against the 1973 Australians in London.

That sort of record speaks for itself. But his achievements do not end there. When appointed coach of the Great Britain side, he took an unfancied team to triumph in France in the 1972 World Cup competition.

He kept the international job when the Australians toured here in 1973 and again for the 1974 tour to Australia and New Zealand.

It was before he departed on that tour that the Oldham club sought his services and got an agreement from him that he would take over at Watersheddings as coach in succession to Griff Jenkins.

You will all remember that in his first season here Jim got us out of the Second Division. Success, it seemed, followed him around.

He was a very popular figure not only at the clubs with which he was connected but throughout the Rugby League. At Oldham he earned the respect of all those with whom he came into contact, both players and officials, to say nothing of all members of the backroom staff.

Jim Challinor will be badly missed here at Watersheddings and before the kick-off this afternoon we will all pay our last respects with a moment's silence, the Oldham players wearing black armbands as they did at Wigan last week.

The funeral took place last Thursday at Padgate Church, Warrington. By special request of the family there were only family flowers but donations are being accepted for cancer research.

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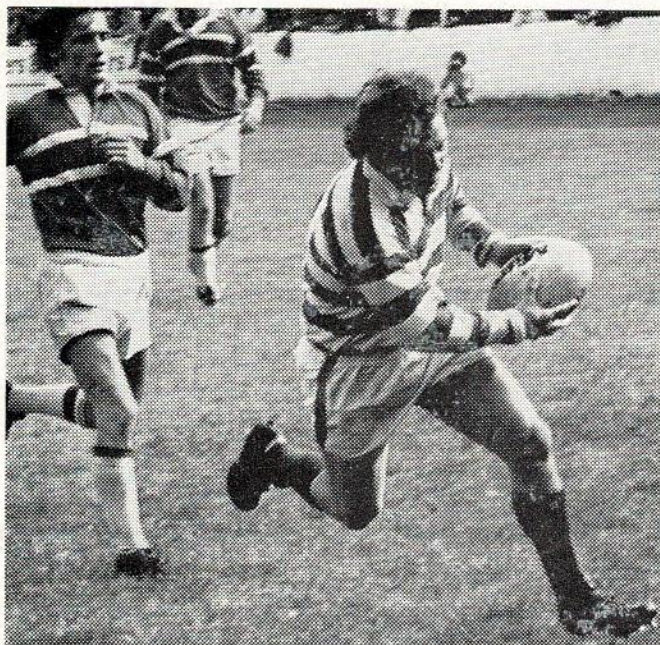
IN DEPTH

IN MONDAY'S

OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE

HAPPY NEW YEAR

May we take this opportunity of welcoming our old friends from Rochdale for this afternoon's holiday derby game and link with that a sincere wish to you all for a happy and prosperous year in 1977.



John Blair, seen here running in a try against Hornets in the pre-season Law Cup match, broke down again when making his comeback in the 'A' team last Sunday.

Picture by courtesy of the OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE.

MAN-IN-THE-MIDDLE . . .

PETER MASSEY is a shipping clerk and is married with two children. He passed his referee's exam in 1969, promoted to Grade 2 in 1972 and upgraded to Grade 1 in 1974. His hobbies include coaching schoolboys and students.

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Oldham FC Down the Years

No. 10

by TOM WEBB

THE Oldham club participated in the first top-four play-off for the championship in 1906/07 after finishing second in the league to Halifax. Runcorn were defeated 11-3 at home in the semi-final but Halifax won the title at Huddersfield by scoring 18 points to 3 by Oldham.

After reaching the cup final by virtue of conquering Runcorn, Halifax, Wakefield Trinity and Salford, the last-mentioned at Rochdale in the semi-final, Oldham again received losers' medals as Warrington won at Broughton by 17-3.

Joe Ferguson, with 70 goals, eclipsed his tally of 50 scored in the previous season and Tyson, with 23, topped the try scorers. Cash, with 19, finished second in the club list — three less than his total the season before. Joe Ferguson also scored 12 tries.

From 8th September, 1906, the club remained undefeated at Watersheddings, winning 60 consecutive games before losing on 20th March, 1909. In all matches Joe "Fergy" kicked 81 goals, his best performance for any one season. Arthur Lees retired at the end of the season and later coached the 'A' team for a year.

In the championship final the Oldham team was R. L. Thomas; Tyson, W. Dixon, Avery, White; Lees, Yewlett; Ferguson, Smith, Vowles, Topham, Wilkinson, Longworth.

In 1907/08 Oldham were superb until close to the end of the season. In the league 28 matches were won, two drawn and two lost. Wigan were overcome in the play-off but Hunslet, in their wonderful season which gave them four cups, won the final at Wakefield by 12-2. In the second round of the Challenge Cup, Oldham also lost to Hunslet, this time at Parkside by 15-8.

Dr. Gourley, the Mayor of Oldham, was club president and he personally signed W. B. Jardine, a great forward. G. W. Smith, a member of the original New Zealand Northern Union tourists in this country, signed for Oldham at the end of the tour. He had toured as a Rugby Unionist a couple of years earlier and had been one of the men to pioneer the tour.

He was also an Olympic hurdler. Joe Ferguson captained Oldham, Cumberland and England against the All Blacks and his side won each match.

The championship final team was Thomas; Tyson, Billy Dixon, Llewellyn; G. W. Smith; White, Beynon; Ferguson, Avery, A. Smith, Wright, Longworth, Wilkinson. The match was drawn 7-7 at Salford. In the replay, Oldershaw replaced G. W. Smith.

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- 4 WAINWRIGHT, A.
- 5 LUND, S.
- 6 TREASURE, D.
- 7 PATERSON, J.
- 8 WELDING, R.
- 9 O'MAHONEY, R.
- 10 KEAR, B
- 11 STARBUCK, P
- 12 REYNOLDS, J.
- 13 BROWN, R.
- 14 McCONE, M.
- 15 HERBERT, S.

Referee:
H. G. HUNT
(Prestbury)

T G Dg P

Hornets

- 1 MALONEY, J.
- 2 HENIGHAN, M.
- 3 McGIFFEN, S.
- 4 HARTLEY, D.
- 5 MARSH, D.
- 6 AYRES, W
- 7 ROUSKI, J.
- 8 HODKINSON, A.
- 9 CLARKE, P.
- 10 GOURLEY, T.
- 11 COOKE, T.
- 12 JONES, W.
- 13 COSLETT, K.
- 14
- 15

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OUR VISITORS

BY DON YATES

THE Christmas festivities continue this afternoon at Watersheddings with the visit of neighbours Rochdale Hornets, a club desperately fighting off the threat of relegation. Although Hornets at present lie at the foot of the First Division table it must be noted that eight of their 13 league matches played so far have been away from home and, in addition, they have travelled to play six of the teams currently occupying the top seven positions in the league. They started their First Division campaign with an impressive home win over league leaders St. Helens but then suffered with injuries and a difficult league programme which has left them with an awful lot to do if they are to avoid the drop.

However, they visit Oldham in the knowledge that their last four visits to Watersheddings in league matches have brought them four victories and one has to go way back to September 1969 for Oldham's last league win over Rochdale on this ground. The score on that occasion was 12-2 but the following four seasons saw Hornets win here with scores of 11-9, 8-2, 7-6 and 15-11 so they will be out to continue that sequence after a two season break in which Oldham have not met Hornets in league warfare.

One Oldham-Rochdale match that will be talked about for many years was that memorable Christmastime game in 1971 when Hornets came to Watersheddings under the leadership of Frank Myler and with their most successful side since the war. They had reached the Floodlit Cup Final a couple of weeks before Christmas and were confident of beating an Oldham side which had won only six of their opening 24 fixtures. The teams were:

OLDHAM: Martin Murphy; Mike Elliott, Phil Larder, Mick Siddall, Mick Wilde; Cliff Hill, Tommy Davies; Ken Wilson, Kevin Taylor, Frank Walker, Dick Bonser, Arthur Daley and Ray Clark. Substitutes: Joe Collins and Jim Reynolds (for Wilson).

ROCHDALE HORNETS: Joe Chamberlain; Norman Brelsford, Jim Crellin, Paul Machin, Brian Glover; David Taylor, Peter Gartland; Peter Birchall, Peter Clarke, Eddie Brown, Bob Welding, Alan Hodgkinson and Henry Delooze. Substitutes: John Hammond (for Taylor) and Kevin Flanagan.

That Hornets team came to Watersheddings with the best defensive record in the league and the strength of that defence was certainly tested in that match for, before half time, they were reduced to 11 men after referee Billy Thompson had dismissed both Peter Clarke and Alan Hodgkinson in separate incidents. Despite this numerical disadvantage, Hornets still led 3-2 at the interval and although Oldham pressed strongly on the Hornets line throughout the second half it was Hornets who increased their lead and went on to record a tremendous 8-2 victory with tries from Jim Crellin and Henry Delooze and a goal from Joe Chamberlain. Oldham's solitary goal was kicked by Phil Larder.

Hoping to lead the Hornets to a similar stirring victory today will be their new player-coach Kel Coslett, who was engaged by Rochdale last month and given the difficult task of steering them away from relegation. He is a vastly experienced campaigner who began his rugby career as a full-back with Aberavon RUFC, turning professional in July 1962 and joining St. Helens. He later moved into the pack and enjoyed several seasons at loose-forward before moving to prop.

Coslett holds the St. Helens record for goals and points scored in a season with the 211 goals and 446 points which he scored in season 1971/72. Apart from the numerous big games with Saints, he has skippered them twice at Wembley, Coslett has played 13 times for Wales and once for Other Nationalities with the highlight of his international career coming during the summer of 1975 when he visited Australasia with the Welsh World Championship squad. It was a tremendous challenge to Coslett when he left the luxury of triple cup winners St. Helens to take up the reins with a club firmly rooted at the bottom of the table, but he has set about his task in impressive style with the result that Hornets are now a far stronger combination than their league position indicates. They will come to Watersheddings hungry for success and with Oldham also in need of championship points it looks as if we are to be treated to another all-action clash between these two well-matched and ancient rivals.

Brian Batty

ENGLAND'S right-winger Stuart Wright is hoping to make up for the "lost" years in his chequered career as he bids for a world championship place.

He believes that moving to Widnes earlier this season in an £11,000 deal from Wigan provided the fresh challenge and impetus his game needed.

"I reckon I am a couple of yards faster than I was at Wigan because of the training methods at Naughton Park.

"I realised I was in with a great chance of an England call-up when we played at Castleford in the Player's No. 6 semi-final, but with my luck in the past I also knew anything could happen.

"Fortunately I got through okay (he actually scored a cracking try) but I wonder what would have happened if I had dropped a couple of passes."

It is true that we tend to put an emphasis on a game which the selectors single out as possibly decisive when form is better judged over a number of games.

Wright has certainly not enjoyed a fair share of a footballer's luck in his eight seasons in League. His solitary international appearance with England against New Zealand 12 months ago was ended by injury.

"I realise that because I had so many injuries, people in the game were beginning to rate me as injury prone", he admits.

"But when I had my cartilage out and came back last season I had a great spell of running in the tries with Wigan. The snag was that for the first time for three seasons there was no close season trip to Australia.

"My aim is to play in an international against Australia and, better still, help my country win."

Wright's strength as well as his skill and speed are now recognised by First Division defences as a major threat.

Wright, in turn, has come to learn that you have to use your eyes and experience to survive.

"I have at least gained the experience of playing so long against First Division sides that I know who the knuckle-men are and when and how they are likely to try and get you", he says.

"There is more to it than just running in tries — you have to be able to look after yourself."

With such a shrewd approach to the game to back his undoubted ability, Wright is entitled to the luck he has lacked and his best days are surely before him.

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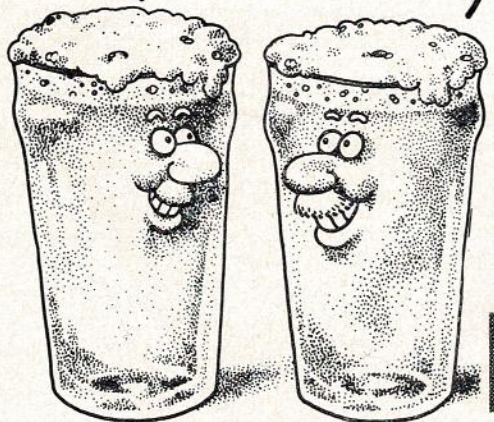
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NEXT MATCH AT WATERSHEDDINGS

JANUARY 16th K.O. 3.30

Oldham v Leigh

FIXTURES 1976-77

FIRST TEAM				"A" TEAM			
Date	Opponents	Ground	F. A.	Date	Opponents	Ground	F. A.
1976				Mar. 12	(Sat.) Leeds (3-00)	A	
Aug. 22	(Sun.) 1st Round County Cup-Blackpool (3-00)	A	10-17	20	(Sun.) Castleford (3-30)	H	
Sept. 5	(Sun.) Widnes (3-00)	A	20-22	27	(Sun.) Bradford N. (3-30)	A	
12	(Sun.) Leeds (3-30)	H	10-18	Apr. 3	(Sun.) Salford (3-30)	H	
19	(Sun.) Leigh (3-30)	A	13-19	8	(G.F.) Rochdale H. (3-00)	A	
26	(Sun.) Wigan (3-30)	H	23-20	11	(E.M.) Hull K.R. (3-30)	H	
Oct. 3	(Sun.) Wakefield T. (3-30)	A	13-11	17	(Sun.) Warrington (3-00)	A	
10	(Sun.) Barrow (3-30)	H	33-0	24	(Sun.) Widnes (3-30)	H	
15	(Fri.) Castleford 7-30	A	5-11 1976				
23/24	(Sat./Sun.) Player's No. 6 1st Round Batley	H	17-9 Aug.	21	(Sat.) Huyton L.S. (3-00)	A	36-4
31	(Sun.) Bradford N. (3-30)	H	10-20	28	(Sat.) Huyton L.S. (3-00)	H	25-9
Nov. 6/7	(Sat./Sun.) Player's No. 6 2nd Round-Leigh	H	13-28	18	(Sat.) Leigh (3-00)	H	22-17
14	(Sun.) Barrow (2-30)	A	23-16 Oct.	25	(Sat.) Wigan (3-00)	H	15-35
21	(Sun.) St. Helens (3-30)	H	9-20	2	(Sat.) Swinton (3-00)	H	26-8
28	(Sun.) Workington T. (3-30)	H	11-2	9	(Sat.) Barrow (2-30)	A	22-17
Dec. 5	(Sun.) Featherstone R. (2-30)	A	5-23 Dec.	20	(Sat.) St. Helens (3-00)	A	3-21
12	(Sun.) Featherstone R. (3-30)	H	0-18 1977	27	(Sat.) Workington (2-30)	A	
19	(Sun.) Wigan (3-00)	A		18	(Sat.) Wigan (3-00)	H	
26	(Sun.) Rochdale H. (3-30)	H		Jan. 8	(Sat.) St. Helens (3-00)	H	
1977				15	(Sat.) Leigh (3-00)	A	
Jan. 2	(Sun.) Salford (3-00)	A		22	(Sat.) Workington (3-00)	H	
9	(Sun.) St. Helens (3-00)	A		Feb. 5	(Sat.) Huyton (3-00)	H	
16	(Sun.) Leigh (3-30)	H		18	(Fri.) Warrington (7-30)	A	
23	(Sun.) Workington T. (2-30)	A		25	(Fri.) Rochdale (7-30)	A	
30	(Sun.) Wakefield T. (3-30)	H		Mar. 12	(Sat.) Warrington (3-00)	H	
Feb. 6	(Sun.) Hull K.R. (2-45)	A		19	(Sat.) Swinton (3-00)	A	
12/13	(Sat./Sun.) Challenge Cup 1st Round			26	(Sat.) Huyton (3-00)	A	
20	(Sun.) Warrington (3-30)	H		Apr. 9	(Sat.) Rochdale (3-00)	H	
26/27	(Sat./Sun.) Challenge Cup 2nd Round						

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