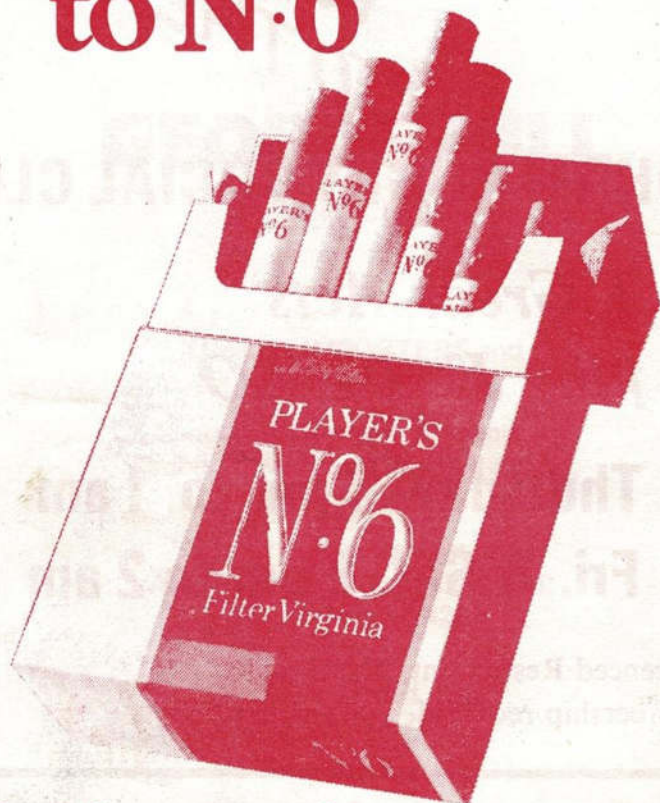


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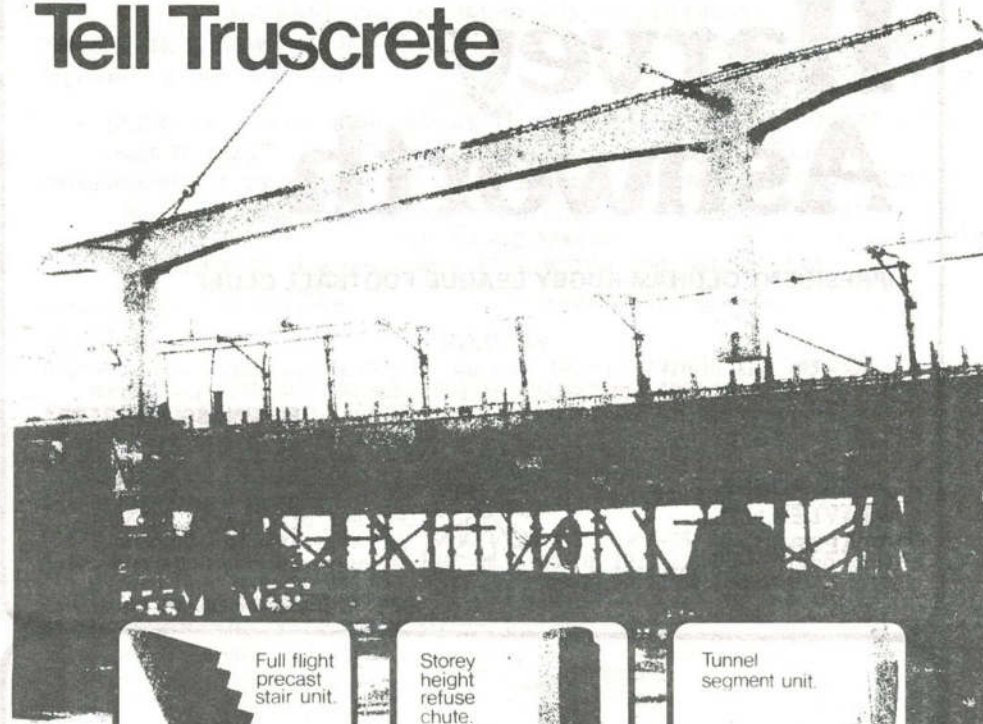
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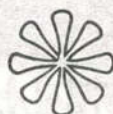
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OLDHAM OUTLOOK

It was all happening at Watersheddings last week-end the departure of Tony Peters and Mick McCone, the signings of Phil Ward and Colin North, the win at Batley and all crowned by the return in the social club on Saturday night of the very popular cabaret.

Tony Peters goes to Swinton and Mick McCone to Batley and we wish both players a long and happy stay with their new clubs.

We welcome, too, our new boys, Phil Ward and Colin North. Phil, well known in this area as a sprinter of some note and a former member of the st. Mary's under-17 and under-19 sides, came in a straight swap for Peters and went straight into our side at Batley.

He was down as sub but got his chance after 11 minutes when Chris O'Brien withdrew with stomach trouble. He promptly impressed as a player who can prove to be a very useful buy indeed.

Phil has formerly played for Salford and Bradford and, at 26, he is experienced yet young enough to give us several seasons of service.

He is very quick and fast off the mark, qualities that have been missing somewhat from our back division in the last few months.

The second signing, completed 48 hours later, was that of Colin North, a stand-off or centre, who comes to us from Batley with Mick McCone going the other way.

We have been interested in Colin for some considerable time. We are sure he will do a good job for us and the measure of Batley's assessment of his value can be gauged from the fact that he was on offer at £4,000.

It all means that, for the first time for a long time, we have some competition for places in the back line. This is always desirable.

On a more sombre note we have to record the transfer-listing of John Paterson. This is sad because John is the sort of dedicated and thoroughly professional player that we cannot really afford to lose.

What he really wants, however, is a settled scrum-half place and we cannot give him this because of the form of Alan Bates. Rather than stand in his way we have reluctantly agreed to put him on offer at £4,500 and he is worth every penny of that fee the way he is playing.

His try at Batley was his 12th this season and keeps him well out in front as our leading try-scorer.

Success at Batley and success in the social club, too. The cabaret night was a packed house, a sell-out. As far as we know everyone was delighted with the fare provided and we are confident there will be many more full houses on Saturday nights in future.

One of the attractions is the provision, FREE of a bottle of bubbly for every party of four or more which takes a table before 9 pm. Make a date, Saturday night in the social club.

May we remind you also that this week-end is the last chance you have of being included in our new pool's first draw which takes place next week.

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OUR VISITORS BY DON YATES

The exciting Second Division promotion chase will this afternoon be temporarily forgotten by Oldham as they launch themselves into an equally exciting battle when they take on Doncaster in the opening round of the Rugby League Challenge Cup.

Local fans will not need reminding that Oldham, although they have won the trophy on three occasions, have never reached Wembley while Doncaster's best Challenge Cup run was in 1970 when they reached the quarter-finals and held mighty St. Helens to a 4-4 draw before crashing 36-0 in the replay.

This will be the first ever meeting between these two clubs in this particular competition but there have been several previous meetings in league football where Oldham have by far the better record of the two.

Indeed, Oldham have already defeated Doncaster at Tatters Field this season but they certainly did not have it all their own way when winning 18-7 there last October and they can expect another tough match today for Doncaster, who lie 10th in the table, have recorded four of their six league victories on the grounds of their opponents. Their best result of the season was that 17-16 win over Rochdale at the Athletic Grounds which ended Hornets unbeaten league run but they also performed creditably when winning 32-25 at Swinton and in their other two away wins at Blackpool and Halifax. They also beat Halifax at home to complete a league double whilst their sixth victory of the season was in the home game against Whitehaven when they gave another encouraging performance to win 22-20.

The player who has led Doncaster during this their most successful season for eight years, is veteran prop Dick Lowe who has indicated that the end of the season will bring his distinguished playing career to a close. Lowe is a product of that outstanding rugby league nursery, Shaw Cross Boys' Club and he turned professional way back in 1962 when he joined Dewsbury, the club he served loyally for 15 years.

Throughout that time Lowe has been a tremendous club player with the highlight of his career coming in season 1972-73 when he not only won representative recognition with Yorkshire but also played for Dewsbury in that epic Championship Final when, against all the odds, they lifted the trophy with a 22-13 victory over Leeds. Lowe's career, though, has not all been success, and one of his biggest disappointments was to fail to reach Wembley after appearing in four semi-finals which brought defeat at the hands of St. Helens in 1966, Barrow in 1967, Bradford Northern in 1973 and Warrington in 1974.

It seems most unlikely that Lowe will achieve his ambition with Doncaster this season, he is realistic enough to admit that, but he also realises that Doncaster are capable of pulling off the thrills and spills which are always associated with the Rugby League Challenge Cup, the game's most glamorous knock out competition.

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- 4 PATERSON, J.
- 5 WARD, P.
- 6 BLAIR, J.
- 7 BATES, A.
- 8 CHARLES, C.
- 9 O'MAHONEY, R.
- 10 OWEN, G.
- 11 HALL, F.
- 12 HERBERT, S.
- 13 FLANAGHAN, K.
- 14 NORTH, C.
- 15 HUGHES, B.

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Doncaster

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- 2 PIPER, F.
- 3 PFLASTER, G.
- 4 WILKS, C.
- 5 BEALE, G.
- 6 MILES D./URWIN, J.
- 7 HANLEY, K.
- 8 BANHAM, A.
- 9 MOODY, P.
- 10 LOWE, T.
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Brian Batty

Wigan skipper Bill Ashurst leapt swiftly to the defence of the English game recently when it was described as having become much dirtier.

The League came under fire from no less than former Great Britain forward John Gray shortly before he returned 'home' to Sydney for the approaching Australian season.

Gray had spent several weeks on holiday and taken in a handful of games and his verdict 'What I have noticed is that, although the standard of play is very good, the game is a lot dirtier.'

'Offenders are getting away with more, especially off the ball. More fouls are being committed, too. I don't think the League are clamping down hard enough on dirty play.'

'They would not get away with it in Sydney. If there are any off the ball fouls, the touch judges are straight on. Touch judges there tend to be a bit over cautious but this is better than not coming on at all.'

Ashurst, now halfway through his first season since his four year spell in Sydney, where he often faced Gray, must be in a better position to judge even though he was carried off on a stretcher in a recent game at Widnes.

'I reckon Gray is talking through the back of his neck and I am surprised at his knocking the English game,' says Ashurst. There must be more off the ball incidents in Sydney than ever in England.

'Another thing is that we have never had a phantom biter like they had over there when I played. What does happen here is that more players go high in the tackler to smother the ball.'

'In Sydney they hit you to put you on the deck which is fair enough but you get some bad incidents off the ball. I guess they must have brainwashed John. That's something they could not do with me.'

League official David Howes says: 'League statistics do not support Gray's claims about our game. We had a spell of off the ball incidents but there was a clamp down and I don't think he is in a position to judge the situation.'

'We might get a lot of players threatening and squaring up at times but not anything violent.'

Great Britain skipper Roger Millward would support these views for he got flattened far more in playing in Sydney than in this country.

MAN IN THE MIDDLE

This afternoon's important cup-tie will be refereed by 38 years old Bill Allen from Sutton-on-Forrest, York, a former rugby union player whose career was brought to a close with a back injury. This injury resulted in Mr. Allen taking up refereeing and he passed his Referees Exam in 1968, reaching Grade Two status in 1973. He also holds a Grade Two Coaching Certificate and lists his hobbies as gardening and philately. Mr. Allen is married with two daughters and is a schoolmaster by profession.

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Under 16.

Salford 0

Oldham 35

Oldham : M. Royle; S. Dobb; M. Derbyshire; P. Stott; P. Rawkin; D. Foy; D. Chadwick; P. Kilgannon; C. Deakin; M. Gratton; B. Raynor; A. Karach; J. Warburton. Subs : R. Homa; C. Needham.

A game played in appalling conditions on a sloping narrow pitch. Salford were no match for a strong Oldham team who were able to score at will. The threequarters scored 6 tries between them, the others being scored by stand-off Foy and props Kilgannon and Gratton.

To prevent the score being too one sided the referee inadvisably disallowed 5 Oldham tries of which winger Dobb would have scored 4. The outcome was that tempers became frayed resulting in two Salford players being dismissed in the closing minutes.

Oldham were hoping to use this as a final practice for the coming English Schools semi-final against the undefeated First Division leaders Hull.

The Oldham School Authorities must now realise that it was a grave error to elect to enter the Second Division. The senior side have now shown that they could have defeated most of the Division First teams and that none of the Second Division areas, with the possible exception of Dewsbury, are strong enough to give them a match.

The result is that Oldham now face Hull, with eight county players in their team, having only played this one match since Christmas.

However it is encouraging to note that the regular Town Team players Dobb, Stott, Foy, Chadwick and Rankin and the others in the squad of P. Willis, C. Willis, Walsh, Maloney and Chadderton will all be available next year, what a good team we should have then!

Of the Fifth Years in the team great hope is held for loose forward and captain Joe Warburton who is an exceptionally strong tackler and runner, prop Martin Gratton who was very unlucky not to gain County honours and the giant Peter "Killers" Kilgannon.

Probably the greatest prospect however, is hooker Chris Deakin brother of the Amateur International Peter. Chris is a hard worker, good tackler and exceptional ball handler. A player to watch who can completely dictate a game.

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