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OLDHAM

WEDNESDAY 3rd SEPTEMBER 1986

KICK-OFF 7-30 p.m.

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME 50p



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Championship Play-off (inaugurated Season 1906-07)

Winners: 1906-07, 1964-65

Beaten Finalists: 1952-53 1953-54, 1955-56, 1965-66, 1985-86

Division One Champions: 1902-03, 1985-86

War League: Beaten Finalists: 1942-43, 1944-45

Challenge Cup (inaugurated Season 1896-97):

Winners: 1902-03, 1903-04, 1930-31, 1938-39

Beaten Finalists: 1920-21, 1940-41, 1941-42, 1948-49, 1953-54, 1955-56

Yorkshire Cup (inaugurated Season 1905-06):

Winners: 1908-09, 1944-45, 1954-55, 1955-56, 1963-64

Beaten Finalists: 1905-06, 1907-08, 1941-42, 1979-80

Yorkshire League (inaugurated Season 1907-08, abolished after Season 1969-70):

Winners: 1908-09, 1920-21, 1952-53, 1953-54, 1955-56, 1957-58

Runners-up: 1907-08, 1909-10, 1949-50, 1950-51, 1954-55, 1964-65

Yorkshire Senior Competition (predecessor of Yorkshire League, in operation Seasons 1895-96 to 1901-02):

Runners-up: 1985-86, 1900-01

Eastern Division Championship (operational during Seasons 1962-63 and 1963-64):

Winners: 1963-64

John Player Trophy (inaugurated Season 1971-72):

Winners: 1971-72

CLUB RECORDS

Attendance: 29,153 v Wigan, March 1959

Record Victory: 78-0 v Hunslet (away) 1972-73

Record Defeat: 64-0 v Wigan, 1921-22

Most Goals in a season: 147 Tuss Griffiths, 1955-56

Most Tries in a season: 48 John Freeman, 1956-57

Most Points in a season: 297 Tuss Griffiths 1955-56

Most Goals in a match: 8 Keith Williams v Dewsbury 1957-58

Most Points in a match: 31 Bruce Burton v Hunslet 1972-73

Most Goals in a career: 1028 Ronnie James

Most Tries in a career: 290 John Freeman

Most Points in a career: 2191 Ronnie James

Most Career appearances: 482 Stan Kelly

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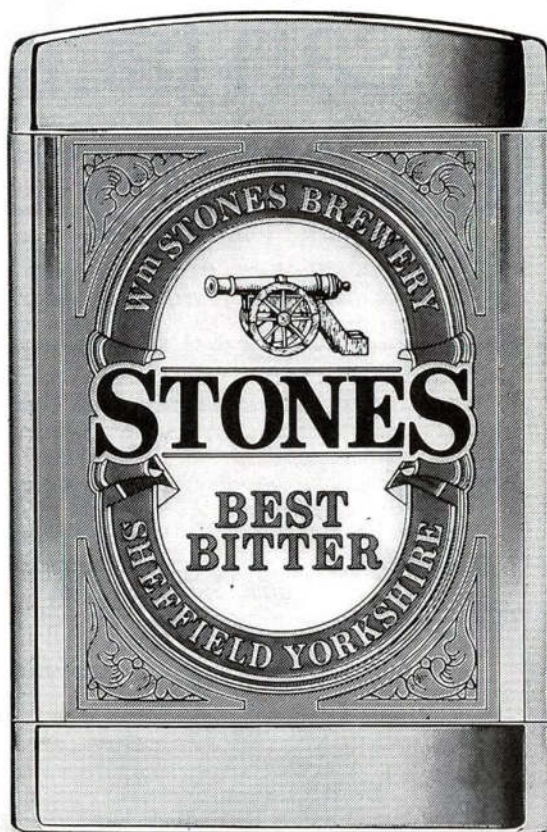
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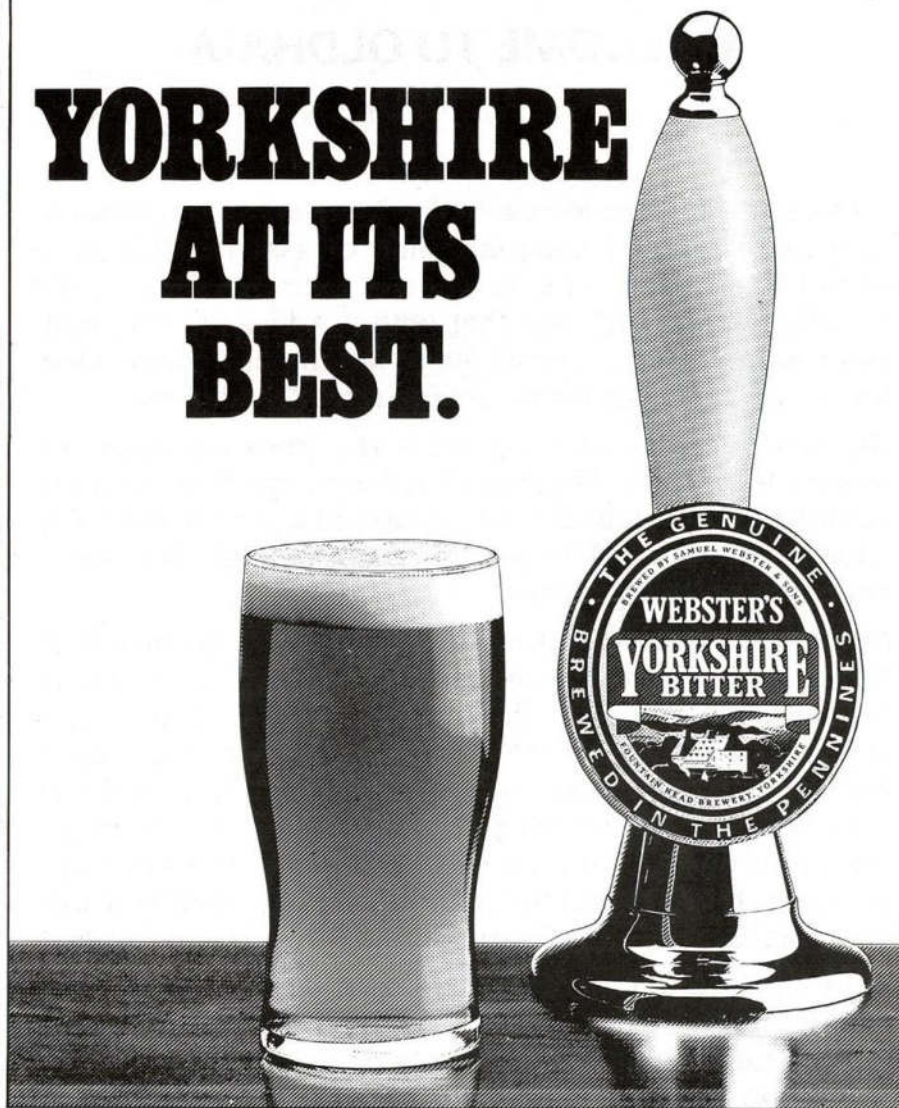
Twelve months ago almost to the day, Halifax met Oldham in their first home League match of season 1985-86. It would have been hard to convince many of the 3,967 people present that day that within a few months both clubs would have sampled life at the top of Division One, for the match was a rather uninspiring 12 - 12 draw.

Oldham subsequently slipped away from top spot last season to finish a disappointing ninth, but there is great potential at the club which just missed out on a Wembley appearance when they made a mess of their Semi-final encounter with Castleford.

Aussie centre Gary Warnecke will be back this season, to be joined by countrymen Gary Bridge and heavyweight prop Bruce "Bruiser" Clark as replacements for David Liddiard and Mal Graham. Coach Frank Myler also has at his disposal Moroccan flyer Hussein M'Barki, another of the growing band of overseas players excluded from the ridiculous quota. There are quality Englishmen too in such as scrum-half Ray Ashton, centre Des Foy, and forwards Terry Flanagan and ex-Featherstone Rover David Hobbs.

Both teams today will be anxious to go one better than twelve months ago, but as was seen on that occasion, today's result will not necessarily be a pointer to how the respective teams will fare in the coming eight months.

YORKSHIRE AT ITS BEST.



All the President's Men - From the President's Pen

Welcome to a brand new season. I am talking, of course, about our official Home League Programme.

The Bank Holiday meant that I wrote this "patter" before the Charity Shield and Featherstone games but I am going to stick my neck out and predict that we might well have won them both.

Down Under Means Up and Over

Obviously the Australian/Thrum Hall connection continues this year - and with a vengeance. As you know, it is the "big year" in British Rugby League with the forthcoming Test Series with the mighty Kangaroos on their 4 Yearly visit. Many of our old friends like Peter Moore and Ross Livermore will be with them and I know that when they come to Thrum Hall on the 29th October you will make them extremely welcome - even if they get a hot reception on the field. Who knows, there might even be one or two ex-Halifax players in their ranks (Paul Langmack is being widely tipped for a berth and Cavill Heugh is a distinct possibility). We, of course, shall have Chris Anderson and Graham Eadie who can muster 32 Kangaroo Caps between them and I don't need to remind anyone of the Australian influence on our Club's fortunes over the past two years - nor that Grant Rix and Keith Neller will also be here.

Graham arrives on 27th August and will probably have played for the Blue and Whites before you read this. We are at the mercy of the Brisbane Premiership in terms of Grant and Keith - and the trouble when one is signing successful players is that they invariably play for winning teams. In the mid season Woolworths Competition Wynnnum Manley played Valleys in the Final and their Premiership could be a repetition. If that happens, regrettably, Grant and Keith will not be with us until the 23rd September. Their first game, therefore, will be against Warrington at Thrum Hall. However, they are currently lying joint third so we could be seeing them a week earlier which would make their debut against St Helens at Knowsley Road - but I don't believe in "willing" any friends of Halifax to lose.

Whenever they play I am confident that, given the usual teething troubles - and please be patient - all this year's Australians will prove as successful and popular as those in the past. I loved Joe Kilroy's flair, Martin Bella's strength, Cavill's incredible running onto the ball and, of course, the inimitable Robbo spirit but I still think, given the young side we had in 84/85, that Keith is, pound for pound, the best Forward to come to Halifax. He played every minute of every game during that season and has come on by leaps and bounds in the last two years at Valleys. I think of all the people who have been to Halifax he is the only one who, since being here, has *never* played for his Reserve Team at home and he is, of course, currently Captain of Valleys.

The only question mark with Graham is, of course, his lack of match practice. He is still younger than three members of the current Halifax Championship winning team and when, notice I do not say if, he strikes form he will be simply "The Greatest". I wanted Grant Rix two years ago when I was chasing my young Australians but Ross Strudwick explained he was too precious to his Brisbane Club - and too expensive. Now that there is a Quota he has been made available - unless, of course, he is picked for Australia - and we shall be seeing at Thrum Hall a young man who is often described in the Brisbane Media as "the next Wally Lewis".

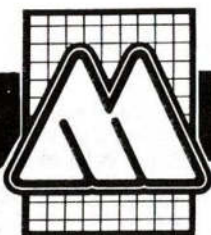
Red, White and Blue

However, totally unbiased as I am nowadays, I predict that we have one or two players at Halifax who will force their way into the reckoning for the forthcoming Test Series. Neil James has already been "Capped" and once Roy Dickinson gets to full fitness and "steam" he could well regain the place he gained two years ago. Maurice Bamford rates him highly even if Peter Fox did not. Paul Dixon is, I predict, going to be a revelation this season. He could well come into contention and, on a winning team, even men like Wilf George, Seamus McCalion and Colin Whitfield might be "there or thereabouts".

So, the new season carries the prospect of wonderful excitement and some great Rugby League Football. I conclude with the comment by Chris Anderson the week before the season started. When asked whether he was worried that people would "come at" us because we were now a recognised top side, he replied "No - I'm not worried, because *we are* a Top side".

The Top Side

That's the kind of confidence we need and I don't think it is misplaced. Please continue to exercise your lungs and give our top side that wonderful support which is becoming well known throughout the game. Here's to success for you and Halifax in 1987/87.



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PLAYER PROFILE by ANDREW HARDCASTLE



Another Leeds try for Neil Hague, on this occasion one of a hat-trick against Carlisle in October 1982.

NEIL HAGUE

I'd always thought that a move from Leeds would have to be a step down," said new signing Neil Hague after his Halifax debut in the John Smith's Yorkshire Cup Preliminary Round match against Mansfield Marksman the other week, "but I've been lucky. It's great to join the League Champions. I've been at Leeds for thirteen years, but that's one trophy we've never really looked like winning in all that time".

Nevertheless, they were thirteen years of almost constant success for Neil. He has appeared in four Yorkshire Cup Finals, one John Player Final, one Premiership Final and, the highlights, two Wembley Finals. Although he never quite achieved much-predicted International honours, there were four appearances for Yorkshire.

His initial impact after signing from Leeds Supporters in March 1973 was as a centre, but a switch to full-back in the late '70s was highly effective, with him carrying off the Leeds Player of the Year Award in Season 1978-79. More recently he has moved to stand-off, the position he now regards as his best. Inevitably he has lost a little pace compared to his younger days, and he now sees himself more as a provider of opportunities for others.

The return from retirement of John Holmes, however, meant that the stand-off position at Leeds would no longer automatically be his, so he decided to move on. Hunslet and Wakefield Trinity were the clubs to show interest, but after a phone call from David Brook he had no hesitation in picking Halifax. Hopefully more honours are just round the corner for this classy 5ft 11in, 13½ stone utility back.

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THE SLALOM LAGER ALLIANCE

by JACK SCROBY

Since the formation of the Alliance League in the summer of 1984, there has been a huge improvement in completion of fixtures. In fact in both seasons all the fixtures of all alliance Teams have been completed.

The Yorkshire Senior Competition Shield and the Lancashire Combination Shield have been played, along with an entirely new one, The Slalom Alliance Challenge Cup. This being run along side the first team Challenge Cup the prize being an exact miniature replica of the Rugby League Challenge Cup itself. This fine trophy rested for many years at Halifax R.L.F.C. being presented to them by a local brewery after one of their successes at Wembley in the 1930's.

Last season started disastrously for our Alliance side, losing nine of our first ten league fixtures, some of them very heavily. However thanks to a couple of morale boosting performances in the Yorkshire Senior competition Shield, the team began to blend together, and believe in their own ability.

Brendan Finn as captain gave a fine lead throughout the season to many youngsters completely new to Professional Rugby League. These included Dobek, Moore, Clayforth, Bell, Fairbank and Simpson who along with St Hilaire, Riddlesden, Cerchione, Huck, Hall and Batchelor and the occasional help of first team squad players Crossley, Smith, Bond and Beevers put in some sterling performances, winning twelve of the last fourteen matches to rocket up the league table.

Because of the Huge success of the Alliance League and the number of teams now playing in it, it has been decided to have two divisions this year. Hence due to our fine season and high placing last year, we are in the top division. This should prove a real test to us and show how our youngsters have developed, for we shall meet all the better second teams from both Yorkshire and Lancashire, some of whom we have not met over the past two years.

I feel confident that we have four or five future first teamers in amongst the Alliance ranks, and I am pleased to see Peter Bell and Dick Fairbank among the squad for the seasons opening matches.

It would be most remiss of me if I were to omit mention of the superb performances given by Colt footballers Dodd, Friz, Coulter, Kemp, Toolin, Joyce, Fogerty and Smith who came into the side at the end of the season. Congratulations to Gerry Slattery and the whole of the colts players who did so well for when called upon.



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ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The first of a two-part adaptation of a section from "The Thrum Hall Story", the new book on the history of Halifax R.L.F.C., to commemorate the centenary of the present ground.

Interest in Rugby League in Halifax is at a peak again following Halifax's Championship success last season. Coincidentally there would have been the same feeling of anticipation exactly a century ago as Season 1886-87 approached.

The team, at that time a Rugby Union team with breakaway still nine years away, had just won "T'owd Tin Pot", the Yorkshire Rugby Union Cup, and the only trophy available to them. It had been an eventful campaign, the semi-final victory over Batley ending in dispute with Batley protesting that the referee should not have disallowed what would have been their matchwinning try. The Yorkshire Committee in fact ordered a replay, but Batley refused to turn out, and eventually the result was allowed to stand.

The Cup Final itself was against local rivals Bradford at Cardigan Fields in Leeds. Under the control of the Rev. Frank Marshall, a character who evidently used to smoke a cigar while he refereed, it produced gate receipts of what were described as an amazing £750, the largest ever taken in Yorkshire at the time. Amid what proved to be unfounded fears that Batley players and supporters would try to stop the game, the pitch was surrounded by police and the teams escorted on to the playing area by more police on horseback. In a typically hard-fought Cup-tie, Halifax came through to win with what appears to have been a magnificent try by half-back "Little" Buckley, who was said to be only 5ft 2in tall.

In the evening the players received a splendid ovation on their return home. The journey was made by train to Halifax Station, then carried on by horse-drawn bus. "All Halifax and his wife" turned out to welcome them - Horton Street had never before seen so many people. As the bus turned the corner of Princess Street towards the White Swan Hotel, the club's headquarters where the celebrations would take place, a wheel came off and the bus overturned. Perhaps it was inevitable that somebody would suggest a Batley supporter had taken a pin from the axle. Fortunately nobody was seriously hurt.

All the star players were available again for the new 1886-87 season. In addition to the aforementioned "Little" Buckley, they included two brilliant threequarters in Jimmy Dodd and Tom Scarborough, who, like their team-mates, were all local lads. Scarborough though was soon to emigrate to Australia, despite one prominent supporter offering him £50 to stay!

The team, however, was not the only source of excitement as the 1886-87 season approached. There was the prospect too of a fabulous new ground. For a decade Halifax had been based at a field on the corner of Hanson Lane and Thrum Hall Lane where the filter house and offices of Yorkshire Water now stand. It was not possible for this ground to be bought outright though, so any improvements or developments of it would be a risk. Move was therefore a priority.

Just across the road from Hanson Lane was a farm known as Thrum Hall, owned by a person named Major Dyson and let to a farmer by the name of Riley Whittaker. This land, which totalled 76,000 square yards at the time and stretched as far as Gibbet Street, was purchased by the club for around £3,000, a figure which would in fact have bought ten two-bedroomed houses in 1886.

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HALIFAX v HULL - APRIL 1986 - COLIN WHITFIELD & BRIAN JULIFF
 PHOTO - COURTESY OF HALIFAX COURIER

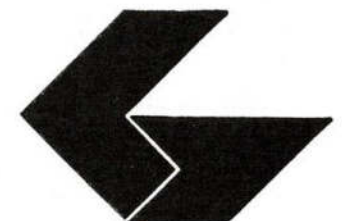


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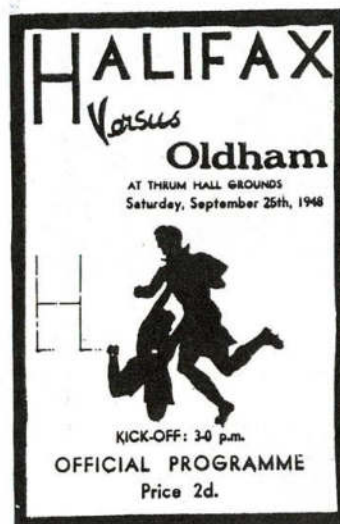
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PROGRAMME PROGRESS

A survey of the post-war Halifax match programme

by ANDREW HARDCASTLE



PART TWO - 1947-54

Season 1947-48 brought another slight improvement in the Halifax programme. It had a new author for the "Club Notes", Bill Hughes having replaced Arthur Archbell as club secretary and thus having inherited the role.

The notes remained quite short (though also newsworthy, for in those days before the match), and the number of pages remained at eight, but the size of these pages was increased and a distinctive new cover-design introduced (see illustration). Fawcett, Greenwood & Co. of Union Street continued as the printers, and the price of the programme remained at 2d.

Content was much as in Season 1946-47, with plenty of adverts, including one for "The Daily Dispatch", which claimed to be the best for

Rugby League. Indeed several of the adverts were national rather than local ones, the advertising rights for the programme having been acquired by the Property Publishing Company of London NW4. Local advertisers included tailors Sam Stocks, sports outfitters Nicholl, Brown & Coyle, and a couple of motor car dealers, Mayfield Garage and Carlton Autocars.

In amongst the adverts, the "Portrait Gallery" continued to liven up the publication, whilst a new feature was the inclusion of the first team and "A" team fixture lists, which had not appeared since the War.

Unfortunately, whilst it would have been interesting for a time, the club chose to retain this style of programme for seven seasons. By 1950 even the "Portrait Gallery" had gone, and although the notes supplied by Mr Hughes were interesting, informative and knowledgeable, the programme had become dull. Season 1951-52, furthermore, brought a price increase to 3d.

FIXTURES

AUGUST

Sun. 17th	Mansfield	-	Yorkshire	Cup	(H) 56-0
	Preliminary Round				
	STONES	BITTER	CHAMPIONSHIP		
Sun. 31st	Featherstone R.			(A)	3.30

SEPT.

Wed. 3rd	Oldham			(H)	7.30
Sun. 7th	Hull			(H)	3.00
Sun. 14th	County	Cup	Competition		
Sun. 21st	St. Helens			(A)	3.00
Sun. 28th	Warrington			(H)	3.00

OCT.

Sun. 5th	Barrow			(A)	2.30
Sun. 12th	Leeds			(H)	3.00
Sun. 19th	Hull			(A)	3.00
Sun. 26th	Castleford			(H)	3.00
Wed. 29th	AUSTRALIA			(H)	7.30

NOV.

Sun. 9th	Leigh			(A)	3.30
Sun. 16th	Hull K.R.			(H)	3.00
Sun. 23rd	Warrington			(A)	3.00
Sun. 30th	JOHN PLAYER	SPECIAL	TROPHY		

DEC.

Sun. 7th	JOHN PLAYER	SPECIAL	TROPHY		
Sun. 14th	Barrow			(H)	3.00
Boxing Day					
Fri. 26th	Bradford N.			(H)	3.00
Sun. 28th	Bradford N.			(A)	3.30

JAN.

New Years	Day				
Thur. 1st	Hull K.R.			(A)	3.00
Sun. 4th	St. Helens			(H)	3.00
Sun. 11th	Wigan			(A)	3.00
Sun. 18th	Salford			(H)	3.00
Sun. 25th	Oldham			(A)	3.00

FEB.

Sun. 1st	SILK	CUT	CHALLENGE	CUP	
Sun. 8th	Featherstone R.			(H)	3.00
Sun. 15th	SILK	CUT	CHALLENGE	CUP	
Sun. 22nd	Leigh			(H)	3.00

MAR.

Sun. 1st	Wakefield T.			(A)	3.30
Sun. 8th	Widnes			(A)	3.00
Sun. 15th	Wigan			(H)	3.00
Sun. 22nd	Salford			(A)	3.00

APR.

Sun. 5th	Castleford			(A)	3.30
Sun. 12th	Widnes			(H)	3.00
Good Friday					
17th	Wakefield T			(H)	7.30
Easter					
Mon. 20th	Leeds			(A)	3.00

SLALOM LAGER ALLIANCE LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP

FIXTURES 1986/7

SEPT.

5th	Hull		(A)	7.30
13th	Hull K.R.		(H)	3.00
19th	St. Helens		(H)	7.30
26th	Warrington		(A)	7.30

OCT.

4th	YORKSHIRE SENIOR	COMPETITION		
	First	Round		
10th	Leeds		(A)	7.30
18th	YORKSHIRE SENIOR COMP.	2nd Round		
24th	Castleford		(H)	7.30
30th	Wakefield		(A)	7.30

NOV.

7th	Leigh		(H)	7.30
15th	Hull K.R.		(A)	2.30
21st	Warrington		(H)	7.30
27th	Leigh		(A)	7.30

DEC.

5th	Castleford		(H)	7.30
13th	Barrow		(A)	2.30
19th	Wigan		(A)	7.30
23rd	Salford		(H)	7.30

JAN.

2nd	St. Helens		(A)	7.30
9th	Wigan		(H)	7.30
16th	Salford		(A)	7.30
23rd	Leeds		(H)	7.30
30th	Widnes		(A)	7.30

FEB.

7th	SLALOM CHALLENGE	LAGER CUP	ALLIANCE	
	First		Round	
14th	Barrow		(H)	2.30
21st	SLALOM CHALLENGE	LAGER CUP	ALLIANCE	
	Second		Round	
27th	Wakefield		(H)	7.30

MAR.

5th	Widnes		(H)	7.30
20th	Hull		(H)	7.30

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RL NEWS

EXPERIMENTAL LAW

For the duration of the 1986-87 season, the following Experimental Law will operate in all domestic League and Cup games under the aegis of the Rugby Football League:-

"When, from a kick in general play, a defender catches the ball on the full in his own in-goal area, the defending side will start play with a place kick from the centre of their 22 metre line."

NOTES:

(1) At the International Board Meeting in Paris in May 1985, the Australian League was given permission to operate this Experimental Rule during the current Australian season. Delegates attending the International Board Meeting in Sydney this July had an opportunity to study the Law in action during the second State of Origin match and in some Sydney Premiership games. They were very impressed and it was agreed that all Member Leagues would use the Experimental Law during their next domestic season with a view to its being introduced fully into the International Laws of the Game at the next International Board Meeting scheduled to take place in Papua New Guinea in July 1987.

2. Based on the Australian experience, the effect of the Experimental Law is to limit, but by no means to eliminate, the use of the "bomb". Attacking sides are having to think more deeply about what to do as the last tackle approaches. In Australia, for instance, a much wider variety of kick on or about the last tackle is greatly in evidence, much to the benefit of the game as a spectacle. The grubber, the chip, the kick across the face of the posts, and the cross kick are all being used as alternatives to the "bomb".

3. The Experimental Law will NOT operate in the forthcoming Great Britain v. Australia Test series or in Club matches against the Australian tourists.

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THRUM HALL CENTENARY

Next month the Thrum Hall ground records its centenary. The first ever rugby match here was on September 18th, 1886, when the visitors were Hull. To celebrate the event, the Supporters' Club have commissioned a special commemorative pennant which will be available soon, and there will also be published the major new history of the club, "The Thrum Hall Story". In the next Halifax programme Andrew Hardcastle, author of the "The Thrum Hall Story", will present the first of a short series on the exciting events of the summer of 1886.

SOUVENIR SHOP NEWS

A whole range of new souvenirs are, or soon will be, available to commemorate the team's 1985-86 Championship success. The Championship pullover, which is navy in sizes 36 through to 48, is priced at £17.50. Children's sizes cost much less. There is also a pennant (£1), car sticker (50p), sun strip (£1) and metal lapel badge (£1). Other new souvenirs include official club track suits and sweat shirts, and a magnificent new jacket which costs just £17.50. Call in at the Souvenir Shop under the Main Stand before or after today's game to see for yourself the new range.

STOP PRESS - Just arrived: Australian 1986 Tour Souvenirs.
Pennants priced at £1 and metal lapel badges £1.50

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POSTBAG



This page is set aside for comments from our readers. News and views on any subject are welcome, however, we reserve the right of publication. Full name and address must be supplied. Contributors letters will normally be credited with name and area.

HALIFAX RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

Herewith Acrostic Poetry in Rhyme,
Ascribed to chronicle the feats in time
Long past, or recently attained
In Sporting Circles as success was gained
From expert handling of a Rugby Ball,
A Hundred Years of Rugby at Thrum Hall's
Xystus; Where the Championship Award

Rests, currently through acts by Team and Board
Upon a system fair to one and all:
GGood service given; the answer to each call;
But mostly to attain perfections 'heights';
Youths own ability to find the 'lights'.

Let those who 'know' inspire the will to learn,
Engage the 'new'; for youth will have its turn,
And work as one; the future as the past,
Good ethics shown are morals that hold fast
Upon the character and style displayed,
Especially if that style is unafraid.

Futility must never stake a claim
On 'Board' or Teams endeavours, or the GAME
Of Rugby League as we know it today
Transformed; would head for sure and swift decay.
But decadence should not besmirch our Game,
And true ability *must* lead to fame
Long after we, who grace the scene today,
Leave far behind the present "Field of Play".

Club must come first, in action and in voice,
Leaving OUR mark and COLOURS or OUR choice
Utter commitment, void of flaws and cracks,
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Please read the initial letters downwards.

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THRUM HALL CENTENARY

With just four days to go now to the centenary of the Thrum Hall ground, the official centenary souvenirs are beginning to arrive. The pennant, which shows a view of the ground and also the club badge as it appeared in both 1886 and 1986, is available from the Souvenir Shop now for just £1. Calderdale Design Ltd, the Piece Hall glass engravers who sponsor the Halifax Man of the Match Award, have also produced an engraved tankard, which is available from their shop at 16 Piece Hall now, and from the Souvenir Shop shortly. Finally, the 128-page history of the club, "The Thrum Hall Story", will hopefully be on sale from today, price £5.95 (soft-back) or £9.95 (hard-back).

NEW RUGBY LEAGUE MAGAZINE

West Yorkshire's Trevor Delaney, author of "The Roots of Rugby League", has now branched out into publishing a brand new Rugby League magazine. Called "Code 13", it will be a quarterly journal devoted to Rugby League heritage and the game's development. Rugby League's leading researchers will be bringing together in-depth material on all aspects of the game from the 1890s to the present day. Together with a library of vintage photographs, it is intended to make every edition a collectable item. The first edition, due on September 8th, could well be available from the Souvenir Shop, but failing that, it can be obtained from Mr Delaney at 6 Elmwood Terrace, Ingrow, Keighley, BD22 7DP. Tel: (0535) 600868. The price is £2.95.

LEAGUE '86

A splendid little booklet previewing the Stones Bitter Rugby League Championship has been produced by Open Rugby magazine. Featuring a full-page colour picture of Chris Anderson and Paul Dixon, it is on sale in the Souvenir Shop for £1.

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