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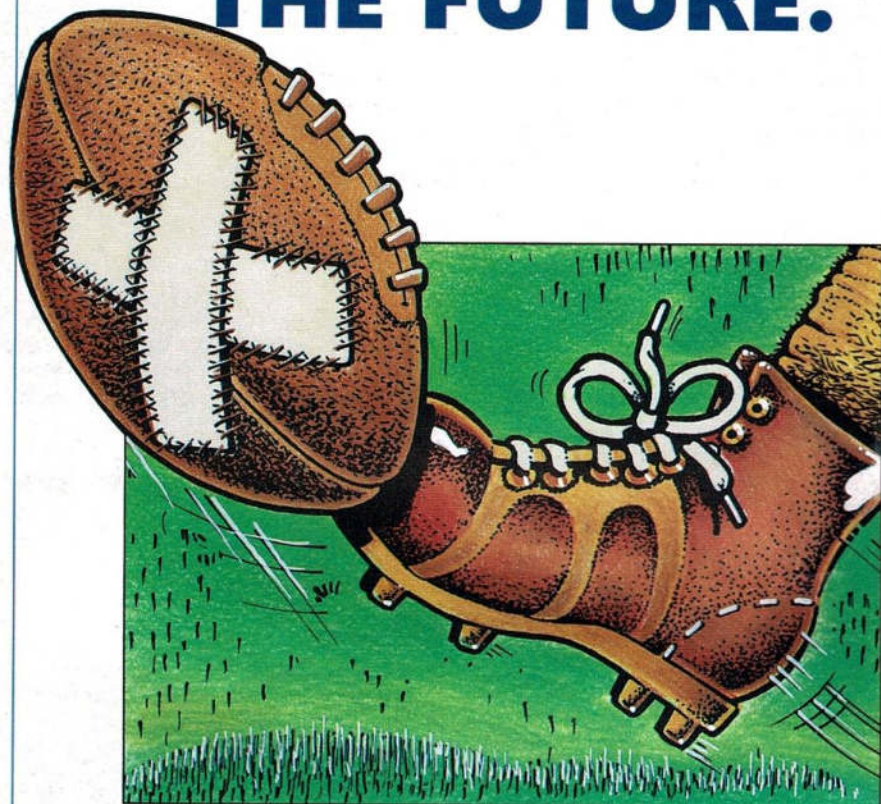
versus **OLDHAM**    Sunday 29th August 1993    Kick-off 3.00pm

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## WELCOME TO THRUM HALL

Welcome to Thrum Hall as another Stones Bitter Championship season gets underway.

And although today officially sees the end of the close season, events throughout the summer have been just as hectic at times as we normally expect them to be during the winter.

As you probably read in the newspapers we have several new faces at all levels of the club, and I would like to extend a warm welcome to Gary Stephens, Trevor Briggs and Mick Slicker who have joined us on the coaching side, plus new playing recruits Steve Hampson, Michael Jackson, John Schuster, Steve Lay, Danny Burton, Craig Dean, Richard Marshall, Mick Martindale and Paul Highton.

The ground itself has had a good lick of paint and so all is hopefully set for a season which may fulfil the ambitions and aspirations which are so high at the club. Our crowd limit remains fixed at 9852 and already the police have recommended that the games versus Wigan on Sunday October 24th and Leeds on Sunday January 2nd 1994 are all ticket affairs. Tickets for the Wigan game will be on sale from the middle of next month.

Don't forget that you can pre-book grandstand seating tickets for any first team game — either call into our ticket office, or send a stamped addressed envelope plus the correct remittance.

Wednesday night sees our revamped Academy team play their first home game of the season when they entertain Wigan (kick-off 7.30pm). Admission for Academy matches this season will be £1 for adults and 50p for juniors and senior citizens, with season ticket holders gaining free admission. Would spectators for Academy games please use the turnstiles at the top of the drive adjacent to the cricket ground.

Our next home game is versus Featherstone in a fortnight, enjoy today and see you then.

*David Fleming*



**Halifax RLFC (1990) Ltd**  
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**Halifax HX1 4TL**  
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# TEAM TALK

Welcome to the new season at Thrum Hall.

I am sure everyone is optimistic about the teams prospects. The players have trained hard during the off-season, and the team has been strengthened substantially with the acquisition of Steve Hampson, Michael Jackson, John Schuster, David Boyd, Michael Hagan and two new local lads, Lee Harland and Stuart Morris. However, I've a feeling we will have to be patient to see the full team in action. Injuries, and overseas commitments for David Boyd and Michael Hagan leave us well below our best, but I remain confident that when we're at full strength the team will compete extremely well.

Our visitors today, Oldham have also strengthened their squad, and will be looking to establish their team in the 1st division. They have some fine players, and today's competition will be a tight affair.

I'm looking forward to the season. Your genuine support will be a key aspect in the progress of the team. Thank you for your support and enjoy the game.



Malcolm Reilly

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# TODAY'S VISITORS

Today we welcome Oldham RLFC to Thrum Hall for the first time since September 1989, when we met in a Second Division campaign which finished with the Roughyeds triumphing in the Premiership, and gaining an ultimately short lived promotion whilst Fax could do no better than a 5th place finish.

A Fax side on the ascendant were to meet a relegated Oldham twelve months later, since when, the fortunes of each club have been very different.

Current coach Peter Tunks, an amiable Aussie state-of-origin player who had a spell with Leeds, has done an amazing job of gaining back the club's First Division status whilst making a profit on the transfer market. Chiefly through astute player swaps which has given him the 'Swap-Shop' tag! His current squad consists of a good mixture of seasoned pro's, young talent and solid squad players, soon to be bolstered by Aussie test giant Bob Lindner — a capture which rocked the Aussie game when announced two months ago. The Illawarra 2nd row forward is sure to add to the gates and the try tally at Watersheddings over the next two years.

Tunks' only problem position looks to be at stand-off where no obvious candidate stands out, although, at the time of writing a deal to take Leigh's goal kicking full back Paul Topping to Oldham looks on the cards, which could lead to either Paul Fletcher (the ex-Castleford full back) or Wally Gibson, a fine, pacey Kiwi signed after a contract dispute with Huddersfield, being given a run out at No. 6. Tunks is not short of options in the three quarters, recent capture from Orrell R.U. Nigel Heslop, the ex-England wing, looked good in the recent Wigan 7's, and David Jones (ex-Wakefield Trinity) should occupy the wing spots, Hugh Gumbs having twisted an ankle in last weeks narrow

victory over Rochdale. Shaun Irwin, signed two weeks ago from Castleford, will likely partner either Darren Abrams or Martin Holden, a promising ex-BARLA international signed from Wigan St Patricks this summer, in the centres.

Whoever wears six, it seems certain that Steve Kerry will wear seven. Kerry was a prolific points scorer during his time at Salford, who fell out of favour at the Willows following the arrival of Craig Coleman. He will no doubt be wanting to prove a point to his critics this season.

'Tiny' Solomon, who figured in this summers New Zealand v Australia test series, will undoubtedly wear eight, Peter Tunks recently describing him as 'the best Kiwi forward in this country', with Ian Sherratt, ex of Bradford and Salford but now in his second spell at Watersheddings, and Paul Groves, the vastly experienced international capture from St Helens making up the front row, Jason Fogerty will miss today's game due to illness.

Andy Goodway looks set for a place in the second row, the luckless forward Goodway started his pro career at Watersheddings, before gaining honours at Wigan, and spent a short time under Doug Laughton at Leeds. His back row partner could be either Ben Olsen or David Bradbury, the young BARLA tourist signed on return from the 1991 tour. Mike Kuiti, another Kiwi who has had spells at Rochdale and Leeds will complete the pack — the former Kiwi test loose forward is another with a point to prove in the top division.

If Oldham can consolidate a First Division place this season it will be the first such time in seven years. As a 'Yo-Yo' club. Bob Lindners influence will no doubt be a crucial factor, as will Peter Tunks' ability to get the most out of a squad with little or no experience of playing together. The first few matches will be crucial to the morale and confidence of the team, and no-one should dare underestimate a side with everything to gain, and so little to lose.



Paul Groves



Bob Lindner

**GILBERTS HAVE GOT A NEW BALL ....  
PASS IT ON .....**

## NEWS ROUND

### OBITUARIES

Today's match could not be allowed to pass without reference to the sad loss during the close season of the club's Academy Coach Colin Dixon. Full tributes to this most popular of men were given in the "Evening Courier" and the Rugby League press, but Halifax R.L.F.C. wish to place on record their own appreciation of Colin's services to them as player, coach and general personality, and wish also to pass on their commiserations and best wishes to his family.

Colin died in June, just a few weeks after his induction into the Halifax R.L.F.C. Hall of Fame. He saw this as the great honour it was intended to be, and it will ensure that his name will always be remembered, as well as known to future generations of Halifax supporters.

The early close season was generally a sombre time at Thrum Hall with the deaths of two other former players. First was Des Healy, our second-row forward at Wembley in 1949, a match which came soon after his recruitment from Irish Rugby Union. He became a local schoolteacher and later deputy headmaster of St Malachy's at Ovenden, remaining for the rest of his life in his adopted town of Halifax and becoming a prominent member of the Past Players' Association.

We also lost another of the very few Irishmen to play for Halifax when Dave Hickey died on June 8th. Dave was a speedy winger who played for us between 1935 and 1940, being part of our triumphant 1939 Wembley squad. Unlike Des Healy, he returned to his native Ireland after retiring, but retained many friends in Halifax. We send our regards to the Healy and Hickey families too.

### HALL OF FAME

The close season saw the opening of the new Halifax R.L.F.C. Hall of Fame in the Taverener's Bar. Sponsored by the Past Players' Association, who put it together, and Courage Brewery, it features photographs of 24 of the club's greatest players, plus several other photos from Halifax's past. Anyone who has still not seen the Hall of Fame can do so on any Thursday evening, when the Taverners is open from 7.30pm onwards.

Efforts have been made to trace the descendants of the early Hall of Fame inductees, but in the case of Archie Rigg so far without success. Rigg, who played at the turn of the century, was a local lad, so quite probably there are relatives in the area. Indeed one of them donated Archie's caps and medals to the club, perhaps soon after his death in 1951. If anyone knows of any relatives, the information would be gratefully received by club historian Andrew Hardcastle.

### 1902-03 SOUVENIRS

In season 1902-03 Halifax performed the "double", winning both the Challenge Cup and the Division One Championship. To celebrate this marvellous achievement there were produced a number of souvenirs. For a number of years the club has possessed a battered old coffee mug with the names of the players and pictures of the two trophies. Recently Keith Sutcliffe, the great-grandson of one of the 1902-03 heroes Herbert Hadwen, kindly loaned a matching milk jug. It is known that there were other items, such as a sugar bowl. Does anyone know the whereabouts of any such crockery? It would be nice to complete the set!



Colin Dixon



# COMMERCIAL COMMENTS

Good Afternoon Everyone,

Welcome to Thrum Hall for what could be the start of a very interesting season. Our thanks to you all for your continued support of the Halifax R.L.F.C.

We are very pleased to welcome today our new Main Sponsor:

## **Marshall's Building Products**

On behalf of Halifax R.L.F.C. I would like to thank this prestigious local company for becoming our major sponsor. We hope that our new partnership will be highly successful.

Our thanks also go to Courage Brewers North, their continued support is greatly appreciated.

Today we welcome as our Match Day Host, Graham's Builders Merchants of Halifax. We hope that everyone has a wonderful day, and we thank you for your Sponsorship.

The Top Tackle Award this year is once again sponsored by A.C. Transmission. Our thanks go to George and Eileen Lackenby for once again sponsoring Halifax R.L.F.C.

Today our Match Ball Sponsor is ADA Social Club, who support the club every year. Welcome to Ken Hayes and his guest. Enjoy your day with us.

Match Mascot today is Helen Whitworth. Have a great day Helen.

There are still numerous opportunities to help the club by various sponsorship on match days. Match Ball Sponsorship, Executive Club Membership, Hire of a Hospitality Box, or be the Match Host.

Please contact me at the Commercial Office for any information on the above.

*John Burnett*



*John Burnett  
Commercial Manager*

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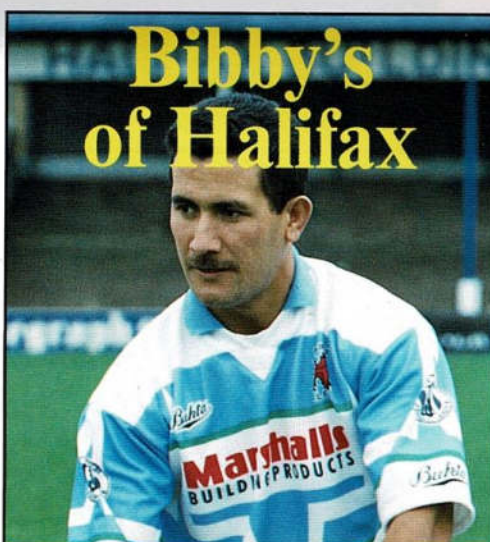


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## ACADEMY UPDATE

### Good Afternoon

Could I firstly take this opportunity to publicly thank everyone here at Thrum Hall, from the Directors right through to the players and backroom staff who have given me such a warm welcome from the day I arrived at Halifax RLFC.

To introduce myself, I arrive at Thrum Hall from the Waterhead amateur club in Oldham. I began my coaching career with the Oldham junior under 11's, whom I coached for two seasons. I then took on the under 15's, and coached this team through to under 17 level. During this period the Oldham juniors club joined forces to become the youth section of Waterhead ARLFC. It was whilst with the Waterhead under 17's that we had so much success, winning all the cups going — Lancashire, North-West Counties, North-West Counties League and we finished the season with the National Youth Cup! Whilst coaching the youth section I also coached the Waterhead 2nd team in open-age football for two seasons, under Ken Wilson, who was 1st team coach. Last season I coached the under 19's in the National Youth League. After winning the National Cup I decided that I needed a change and that the under 19's would be the last season at Waterhead for me. I would not have been able to coach another amateur side as the Waterhead Club was the only one for me — I had enjoyed many good times and met many good friends, therefore I was looking to get into the professional game as a new challenge to my coaching career.

The Academy seemed like an excellent place to start, so I made enquiries as to which positions were still open. The tragic and untimely death of Colin Dixon left an opening at Thrum Hall, and after a telephone conversation with Malcolm Reilly, I made a formal written application. When I finally heard that I had got the job I was delighted to say the least.

Having now trained here for the last couple of months, we have finally got together a squad which I am very hopeful will give all you supporters something to enthuse over! For me to be able to work with such great names as Mal Reilly and Gary Stephens is something else, and both coaches are putting their faith in youth. This, and the commitment that the board are making to the clubs future, has led to some great signings of outstanding prospects, and I look forward to telling you about them during the next few weeks.

We commenced the first phase of the Academy competition at Craven Park yesterday. I wish I had a crystal ball so that I could tell you about a good victory but I haven't — so I'll have to make my comments about that next time. Meanwhile, we entertain Wigan here at Thrum Hall next Wednesday at 7.30 and whatever the result — I can guarantee you a good quids worth of exciting Academy football. The support here for Alliance football is legendary — I hope that we can persuade some of you to become Academy regulars as well.

Mick Slicker

### ACADEMY FIXTURES

|               |            |      |        |
|---------------|------------|------|--------|
| Sat August 28 | Hull KR    | Away | 2.30pm |
| Wed Sept 1    | WIGAN      | Home | 7.30pm |
| Sat Sept 11   | Keighley   | Away | 2.30pm |
| Sat Sept 18   | Widnes     | Away | 2.30pm |
| Wed Sept 22   | SALFORD    | Home | 7.30pm |
| Sat Oct 2     | Whitehaven | Away | 2.30pm |
| Wed Oct 13    | SHEFFIELD  | Home | 7.30pm |

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## CLUB NEWS

### THRUM HALL TAVERNERS CLUB

We will once again be running a coach to away fixtures this season. The first is to Hull next Sunday, and bookings can be made in the bar after today's game, or you can contact Eric Whiteley, our secretary, on 0422 355902.

On Tuesday September 28th, Peter Bonner is holding another Australian Tour Presentation Evening. This will commence at 8pm and light refreshments will be provided.

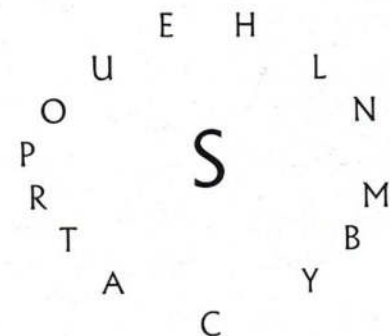
During the close season we were able to show Winfield Cup action every Thursday night. The videos were provided direct from Australia

courtesy of Arthur Perrett, to whom we now express our thanks. Aussie matches will continue to be shown right up to the Grand Final, along with our own league action every Thursday. Friday night Stones Bitter Championship matches screened by Sky Sports will be shown in the bar after home Alliance fixtures.

### HALIFAX PAST PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

All former Halifax players are cordially invited to the annual bowls and social night at Halifax Bowling Club on Thursday 2nd September. The bowling commences at 6.30pm, with the snooker, dominoes etc. from 7.30pm.

### WIN MATCH TICKETS WITH THE HALIFAX WORD-WHEEL!



If you'd like to win **two** tickets to our next home game, simply study the 'word-wheel' printed above and see how many Halifax players surnames you can spell out of the letters. Each letter can be used as many times as you like but the centre 'S' must be included at least once. All the players you name must have made at least one first team appearance last season.

Write the names on a postcard and send it to HALIFAX RLFC WORDWHEEL, Thrum Hall, Halifax HX1 4TL, to arrive by Friday 3rd September at the latest. Don't forget to include your name, address and a daytime 'phone number.

The entry with most names in accordance with the rules will win the prize. In the event of a tie a draw will be made and the first out of the hat will be deemed the winner. The judges decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

The winner will be notified direct, and their name published in our next home game programme. Good luck!

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## MEMORY LANE

WITH OPEN RUGBY MAGAZINE

### OCTOBER 1987 — CHANGING TIMES AT OLDHAM

On Saturday the 22nd March 1986 I was at Central Park, Wigan to watch Oldham's Challenge Cup semi-final against Castleford. Sitting in the next seat was Jimmy Knox. On the stroke of half-time, Oldham scored what appeared to be a crucial try, to take the lead by 7-6. The Oldham supporters thought that we were 'on our way to Wembley' for the first time in the club's history. It was not to be, as Castleford came back strongly to win with a convincing 18-7 final score.

Disappointment, disillusionment and disbelief were the thoughts echoed by the many Oldham followers on the sad and silent journey home. In my view, this was something from which Oldham never really recovered, and I got the impression that if any opportunity ever became available to Jimmy Knox, enabling him to become involved with the club's affairs, then he would accept it.

That opportunity became reality on the 3rd June 1987 when Oldham's new board of directors was announced and Jimmy Knox's name was amongst them, the other three members being Greg Pache (35), David Gardener (38), and the club's former chairman Harvey Ashworth.

Jimmy Knox is Oldham born and bred, and the Managing Director of a plastics firm. Pache, born only 200 yards away from Oldham's Watersheddings ground, now resides in Warrington where he is M.D. of a steel suppliers. Gardener, a regular supporter for two years, heads a car sales firm, and is also on the board of local soccer club Stockport County. Ashworth is well known to the club and is a wholesale butcher.

These are the four just men who have taken on the liabilities of Oldham R.L.F.C. which currently stand at around £300,000. Faced with ground safety problems and relegation to the second division, the club was tottering on the brink of extinction. However with the help of the new board they hope to realise £250,000 from the sale of £1 ordinary shares in blocks of 25. The club also aims to work closely with the local council in the development of the Watersheddings facilities. These men have 'put their money where their mouths are' and hopes are high according to Greg Pache to 'do a Wigan', although only time will tell.

They have been faced with many problems at the club, and have been helped by one or two members of the previous committee. They have also had to cope with the introduction of the players' new freedom of contract, and the Rugby League tribunal system having just signed Paul Round for £65,000 — more than Oldham had hoped to pay.

On the field the directors have opted for one of Rugby League's new breed of coaches with the appointment of Eric Fitzsimmons and his assistant Iain McCorquodale, as well as the return to the club of popular Aussie Mal Graham. One of the priorities of the new regime has been to examine local talent, as previously many good Oldham based players have been allowed to perform with distinction for other clubs. One of the aims of Eric and Iain is to try and foster a good spirit in the team, and whilst not making wholesale changes, they have added new ideas regarding the responsibilities of each player, and have attempted to give each player a 'job description' in every game.

Eric has been pleased with the attitude of the players and hopes to maintain a healthy competition for places within his squad. He also makes the point that good players do not necessarily make good coaches — but of course there are exceptions. One asset is to have Mal Graham's leadership qualities on the field, and they have been encouraged by a good start to the season. They have developed systems of play which the players themselves believe in, a point which they stress is vital to long term plans.

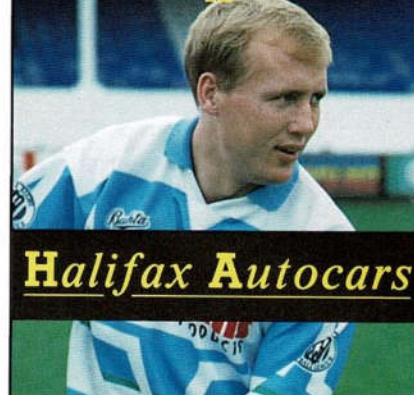
Everyone connected with the club is confident that Oldham will once again be a force to be reckoned with. Off the field, the directors stress that their commitment is not only on the playing side but aim to make the Oldham club a viable proposition in business terms.

I think the time for change has been long overdue at Oldham. One cannot help but feel confident of success both on and off the field, not only for this season but for the overall future of the club.



Eric Fitzsimmons

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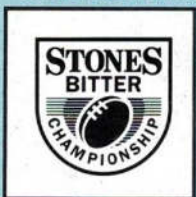
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(Red Flag)



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**3**  
CENTRE

**4**  
CENTRE

**5**  
LEFT WING

**6**  
STAND-OFF

**7**  
SCRUM-HALF

**8**  
OPEN SIDE  
PROP

**9**  
HOOKER

**10**  
BLIND SIDE  
PROP

**11**  
SECOND ROW

**12**  
SECOND ROW

**13**  
LOOSE  
FORWARD

### PAUL TOPPING

26 year old ex-Swinton goal kicking full back, signed from Leigh only this week.

### DAVID JONES

Signed from Wakefield Trinity as part of the deal which should have taken Gary Price to Watersheddings.

### SHAUN IRWIN

1990 GB Tourist signed from Castleford this month. Holds numerous u21 caps.

### MARTIN HOLDEN

Ex-Barla international signed from Wigan St Patricks during this close season.

### NIGEL HESLOP

Ex-Orrell and England winger now impressing after switching codes in February this year.

### WALLY GIBSON

Ex-Huddersfield full-back who was impressive in the recent Wigan 7's.

### STEVE KERRY

Prolific try and goal scorer moved from Salford after falling from favour last term.

### SE'E SOLOMONA

Kiwi prop originally with Widnes. 'Tiny' edged out Brent Stuart to prop for NZ in recent trans-tasman series.

### PAUL GROVES

Vastly experienced international hooker recently acquired from St Helens.

### IAN SHERRAT

28 year old former Bradford and Salford prop now in his 2nd spell at Oldham.

### ANDY GOODWAY

Back at Watersheddings after an injury prone career with Wigan and a season at Leeds.

### DAVE BRADBURY

20 year old Leigh youngster, signed in '91 after touring with BARLA Young Lions.

### MIKE KUITI

Former Kiwi Test loose forward signed from Rochdale this year. Had a short spell with Leeds.

## OLDHAM



Coach  
Peter Tunks



Substitutes  
14 Iyan Greaves  
15 Martin Strett

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## MICKEY MOLE

Good afternoon everyone — It's great to be back isn't it? The Lawn's never looked better, the house has been given a good seeing-to (I must have cleared B&Q out of blown vinyl and misty buff emulsion) and it's been funny waking up sober on Monday mornings, but, at the end of the day, I've been looking forward to today since we put the frighteners up Saints (for the 3rd time this year) last May.

And Hello to you travellers from Oldham — the only club who have to re-write the team Pen-Pics on a weekly basis! I had to chuckle when I heard that your 1993/94 team photo includes Gary Price — who hadn't quite signed but was a 'certainty'. I've heard about these 'certainties' before (even had a few bob on some of them), and somehow they never seem to materialise. So, when Mr Price decided on Featherstone for his football this term it left a few red faces at Watersheddings where the chief photographer had already taken the films to the chemist! Anyway, no worries — simply hang on until big Bob Lindner arrives this week, and graft his head onto Pricey's body. Hey Presto — problem solved!

I am also looking forward to the Radio Leeds phone in again. You may find this hard to believe but I actually missed hearing Kevin Maguire of Batley every Sunday at about 5 o'clock! Talking about Radio programmes, did anyone hear Peter Marsland on a Radio Leeds phone-in back in July? What you might not know is that the official Club PRO was so keen to make the right impression on the wireless that he had his hair cut specially for it! I noticed Peter, even if no-one else did!

So, did you all do the usual summer things then? The Gala? A round of golf or two? A nice shiny car? I did — and funnily enough, so did certain members of the Thrum Hall contingent, so I've decided to have a close season quiz (just for fun). Can you identify the following three persons from the following three clues?

1. Which ex Bradford commercial Manager and current Fax director managed to have his club declared out of bounds after it left his hands and got stuck in a tree during his historic round of 135 during the Evans Halshaw open in June?
2. Which well know right winger visited the Halifax Gala in drag this year, obviously pressing claims to a spot in the Halifax Pantomime this Christmas? (see photograph).
3. Which 'Happy' groundsman delayed collecting his new L-registration Volkawagen until the 4th of August, as he had just put a fivers worth of juice in the old one?

Finally, for this week, I see the odds on the lads lifting the league title this time aren't exactly generous — Chances of this happening are not as slim as the chances of a few other events occurring at Thrum Hall during the next few months — so should you be looking for a flutter on something with a better return I'll leave you with the following 'Honest Mickey' prices — place your bets!

Mark Preston getting through a night in the Coliseum without falling asleep — 33-1.

Stan Hardy applauding the players from the field — 100-1.

Lee Harland getting a Christmas Card from Dougie Laughton — 1000-1.

Oldham finishing the season with the same squad of players who started it — name your odds!



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# FAX 'N' FIGURES

T – Try  
D – Drop Goal  
G – Goal  
\* Man of Match  
(s) Player Substituted

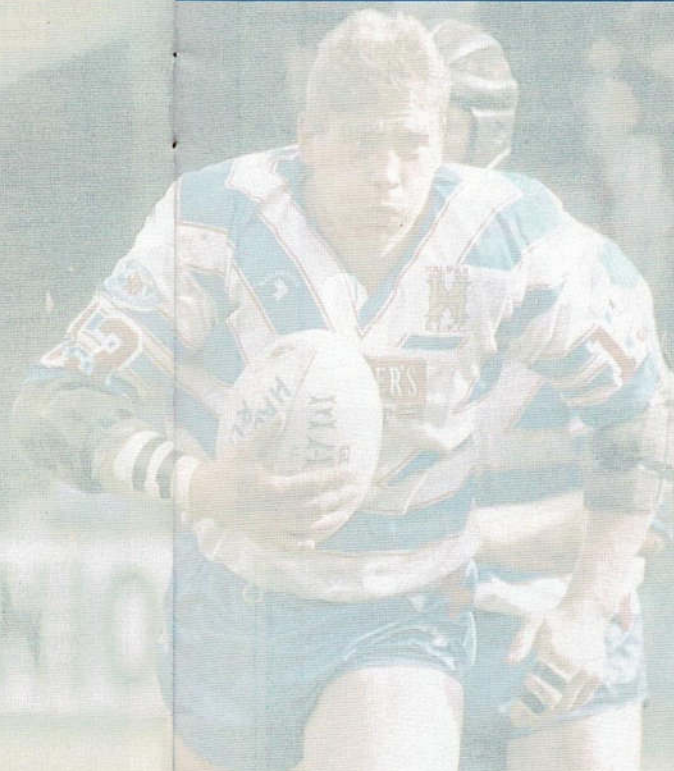
## FIXTURES

Res. Att.

1 2 3 4 5 6

7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| August                 |   |
| 29 Oldham              | H |
| September              |   |
| 5 Hull                 | A |
| 12 Featherstone        | H |
| 19 Sheffield Eagles    | A |
| 26 Leigh               | H |
| October                |   |
| 3 Warrington           | A |
| 8 Salford              | H |
| 24 Wigan               | H |
| 31 Hull K.R.           | A |
| November               |   |
| 7 Castleford           | H |
| 21 Wakefield Trinity   | A |
| 26 St. Helens          | A |
| December               |   |
| 5 Widnes               | H |
| 19 Oldham              | A |
| 26 Bradford Northern   | A |
| 1994 January           |   |
| 2 Leeds                | H |
| 9 Hull                 | H |
| 16 Featherstone Rovers | A |
| 23 Sheffield Eagles    | H |
| February               |   |
| 6 Leigh                | A |
| 20 Warrington          | H |
| March                  |   |
| 4 Salford              | A |
| 13 Wigan               | A |
| 20 Hull K.R.           | H |
| 27 Castleford          | A |
| April                  |   |
| 1 Bradford Northern    | H |
| 4 Leeds                | A |
| 10 Widnes              | A |
| 17 Wakefield Trinity   | H |
| 24 St. Helens          | H |



Programme photographs courtesy of Geoffrey Hookham, Keith Hamer and The Halifax Evening Courier.  
Peter Tunks photograph courtesy of The Oldham Chronicle.

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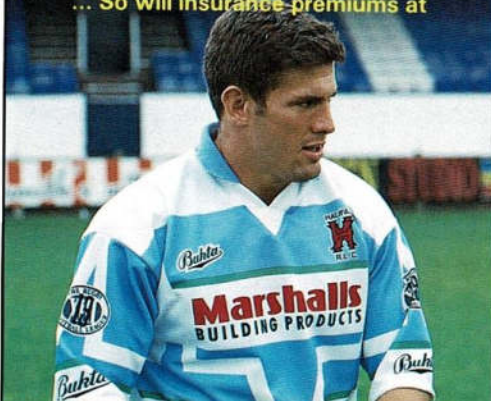
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# THE 'A' TEAM

## Good Afternoon

I should firstly like to say how pleased I am to be at Thrum Hall, working alongside Malcolm, Gary and Mick. I am looking forward to working with a fine set of lads who did superbly well last year.

We have however, lost a couple of lads from the side which finished 3rd in the Alliance last year; Damieon Pickles is now with Brendan Finn at Huddersfield, Peter Ball has moved to Dewsbury and injuries in the first team has meant an early call up for full-back Steve Lay, who is currently on loan from Hunslet, so it is going to take a lot of hard work to get things off to a good start.

As far as my own ideas go, I like lads to play in a certain way. I like to get them into certain positions on the field and then let them display their skills. I like to play an open game, but the key is knowing when to open the game out — you can even open it out in your own 20 yard box depending on the quality of your ball handlers and the state of the opposition defence at that time. During the next few weeks, it will be a case of getting to know all the players, getting to know the coaching methods of Malcolm and Gary in order to slot in as well as possible.

One thing I am definitely looking forward to is meeting some of you supporters! The support that the Alliance team enjoys here at Thrum Hall is amazing, and I am certain it was a major factor in the success of the side last term. We faced a tough opening fixture on Friday at St Helens — which will have been a real tester for the team, and we open our home account with the visit of Hull next Friday. Hope to see you then.

*Trevor Briggs*

## ONE TO WATCH THIS TERM?

Since signing professional forms in May last year, Richard Smith is the first to admit that things have not perhaps been exactly as he hoped! As the ex-Siddal amateur explains.

"I think I went downhill a bit after signing, which I can only put down to myself. I would have a decent game one week, but play badly the week after, and it's a difficult circle to get out of as you try to motivate yourself."

Judging by his performance at the recent friendly at York however, we are certainly looking at a different Richard Smith this year. His running was strong, his tackling was hard and his confidence seemed to have returned. To what can this be attributed?

"I feel a lot stronger this year, and a lot faster. I've trained hard during the close season, and, under Malcolms influence, I've gained confidence through being a lot fitter — physically and mentally. The whole squad has had a lift in confidence and this can only be good for individual players."

Richard is looking forward to working with the new coaching staff, and sees the new campaign as a challenge. "Although I haven't got to know Trevor personally yet, what he has shown us so far has been good, and we are all looking forward to working with him."

It was some silly losses at the beginning of last season that let the side down when points were counted at the end. Obviously Trevor Briggs and the A-Team will need time to get to know each other, but as Richard says, "I know Trevor has got a hard act to follow after the good season we had last year, but the lads have that reputation to live up to as well, and we are looking at getting off to as good a start as possible this time."



## ALLIANCE FIXTURES

|                     |                     |   |
|---------------------|---------------------|---|
| <b>August</b>       |                     |   |
| 27                  | St Helens           | A |
| <b>September</b>    |                     |   |
| 3                   | Hull                | H |
| 10                  | Featherstone Rovers | A |
| 17                  | Warrington          | H |
| 24                  | Ryedale-York        | A |
| <b>October</b>      |                     |   |
| 1                   | YSC Cup (1)         |   |
| 6                   | Salford             | A |
| 22                  | YSC Cup (2)         |   |
| 29                  | Wigan               | H |
| <b>November</b>     |                     |   |
| 4                   | Castleford          | A |
| 12                  | Batley              | A |
| 19                  | Wakefield Trinity   | H |
| 28                  | St. Helens          | H |
| <b>December</b>     |                     |   |
| 3                   | Widnes              | A |
| 10                  | Wigan               | A |
| 17                  | Ryedale-York        | H |
| 29                  | Leeds               | A |
| <b>1994 January</b> |                     |   |
| 7                   | Alliance Cup (1)    |   |
| 14                  | Featherstone Rovers | H |
| 21                  | Hull                | A |
| 28                  | Alliance Cup (2)    |   |
| <b>February</b>     |                     |   |
| 4                   | Wakefield Trinity   | A |
| 11                  | Leeds               | H |
| 18                  | Warrington          | A |
| 25                  | Batley              | H |
| <b>March</b>        |                     |   |
| 6                   | Salford             | H |
| 11                  | Widnes              | H |
| 18                  | Bradford Northern   | A |
| 25                  | Castleford          | H |
| 31                  | Bradford Northern   | H |

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## IN TOUCH

### JUNIOR KIWIS TOUR 1993

New Zealand's world-rated Junior Kiwis are to make a month-long tour of Britain this autumn highlighted by a first-ever appearance at Wembley Stadium.

The cream of New Zealand youth rugby will meet the Great Britain Academy side for the first time in a full length curtain raiser to the Great Britain v New Zealand First Test under the twin towers on Saturday 16th October.

The Wembley doubleheader is the centrepiece of a nine-match itinerary which opens in Hull on Thursday 23rd September and finishes at Wigan on Thursday 21st October with the staging of the second Academy International at Central Park.

Of the nine fixtures seven will be against Academy opposition, the remaining two versus a BARLA International XIII and a BARLA Presidents XIII.

As well as the two Academy Internationals at Wembley and Wigan, the Junior Kiwis will meet Lancashire and Yorkshire Academy sides, plus the Trophy winners and runners-up in last season's Academy League and Challenge Cup competitions.

Chief Executive Maurice Lindsay said: "This is the most demanding British fixture list produced for a visiting Junior Kiwi squad, meeting Academy opposition for the first time since its formation in 1991. Coupled with the two BARLA representative encounters, the nine-match visit assures that the renowned Junior Kiwis will meet the best of British youth during what promises to be a memorable tour.

"The Junior Kiwis will also provide the Great Britain Academy side with an indication of the strength of opposition to be expected on their inaugural tour Down Under next summer in another major landmark in the short, yet dynamic, history of the Academy."

### TOUR ITINERARY

| Date    | Opposition                                                | Venue          |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 23 Sept | Hull<br>(Academy Cup Runners-up)                          | Hull FC        |
| 27 Sept | BARLA Presidents XIII                                     | TBA            |
| 30 Sept | Lancashire Academy                                        | St Helens      |
| 4 Oct   | Wigan<br>(Academy Champions)                              | Wigan          |
| 7 Oct   | Yorkshire Academy                                         | Featherstone R |
| 11 Oct  | Warrington<br>(Academy Cup winners and League runners-up) | Warrington     |
| 16 Oct  | Great Britain Academy                                     | Wembley        |
| 18 Oct  | BARLA International XIII                                  | Whitehaven     |
| 21 Oct  | Great Britain Academy                                     | Wigan          |

### POINTSCORING SEQUENCE

John Wasylw of Keighley Cougars opens the new campaign with the longest points scoring sequence stretching back to 17th February 1992 when he scored three goals in the 18-16 Third Division home defeat of Scarborough Pirates.

The winger scored in every one of Keighley's matches last season and his scoring sequence now covers a total of 44 matches.

Paul Bishop seeks to continue his record of having scored in every match for Halifax since the former St Helens half back made his debut for them in the first game of last season. His scoring run covers 33 matches.

### TRYSORING SEQUENCE

Ian Thomas of Huddersfield carries tryscoring sequence covering five successive matches into the new season. The winger touched down in Huddersfield's last five matches of 1992-93 as follows:

1 - 2 - 2 - 2 - 1

# JUNIOR BLUES

**Hi Kids,**  
Hope you all enjoyed your Summer Holidays. We welcome everyone from Oldham, and hope you enjoy the goal kicking competition between the Junior Blues and Junior Reds — today's curtain raiser. More of these types of event are planned for during the season, more news of them later.

Congratulations to Paul Bishop, named Supporters Club Player of the Season 1992/93. Paul is pictured below with Junior Blues helper, Kim, shortly after being presented with his trophy.

Our membership is still growing — we now have 108 members. There's always room for more, £2.50 covers the whole of this season. We have monthly meetings at McDonalds and kick arounds. There's also parties and trips. At our July meeting we had lots of players to see us. Young Daniel Fleming, (who was enrolled at one day old by his dad!), was quite at home with Mark, Steve, Michael and Paul — Just look! Already Daniel comes to every home game with his dad.

I feel we must say a big 'Thank You' to Michael and Leigh Stansfield, of Stansfield Transport for providing us with the 'float' for the Gala. Our theme was 'Snow White and the Seven Rugby Players'. It was the first time we had done



"Player of the Season"  
1992-93

anything on this scale, but the hard work and last minute rush was rewarded by the turnout of you Junior Blues and Players and the overall success of the day. I hope you can cheer our lads today as loud as you sung on that float!!! Anyone wishing to come to Hull with us on September 5th please make sure we have your money today. The cost is £2 for Junior Blues and £3 for adults.

Time is also running out for booking seats to Wembley on October 16th. Tickets are £3 for Junior Blues members, £8 for everyone else. At present the fare is £9.50 each, but it is hoped that some refreshment can be provided too. Anyone wishing to go is asked to contact Janet on Halifax 358330, as soon as possible.

We still need plenty of sponsorship to keep the costs down to parents. Our biggest aim is to provide mascots for home and away games. If you, or anyone you know of is willing to sponsor, contact Janet in the first instance, for an informal chat.

Our next meeting at McDonalds is now on September 7th, 7pm. This has been brought forward a week, due to the September break holiday.

If you want to keep receiving newsletters we need news, jokes, etc. You can write to the Junior Blues at the address at the front of this programme.



"Daniel Fleming"  
McDonalds July '93

## TODAY'S MASCOT

Leading the team out this afternoon as the first mascot of the 1993/94 season is Miss Helen Whitworth, whose 8th birthday is tomorrow!

Helen goes to St Marys RC School in Halifax and loves coming to Thrum Hall to see her favourite player — Mark Preston! Let's hope he scores a couple of tries especially for Helen this afternoon!

Have a nice day Helen, and many happy returns for tomorrow from all the players, staff and supporters here at Thrum Hall.



# LOOKING BACK WITH GARY DIVORTY

Most rugby league players would claim to share, or have shared, a special relationship with their first coach, perhaps fondly remembering the spark of motivation which was fanned by his influence, or remember the discipline and values which were first instilled in much the same way as a sergeant major hones his new recruits into shape. Gary Divorty, however, can perhaps claim a relationship deeper than most, as his first coach was his father! Born in York in 1966, it was at Hatchett Road Junior School where Gary was first introduced to the oval ball.

"When I first went there it was all soccer" he remembers "but my dad was a keen rugby player who played for a local amateur side, and he came to the school to start an under 11's team. At the time I was about 8 years old and I used to enjoy watching my dad play — so I got involved and it went from there."

Interestingly enough, Gary's first position was loose-forward, a spot he has played in throughout his career. Whilst a young boy, he would go and watch his local York side — his hero at the time was Dave Barons, although John Holmes at nearby Leeds was to become his idol as Gary's awareness of the top sides grew.

Leaving Junior School, Gary signed on for Heworth, being one of only two 'Big' amateur clubs in his area at that time, as he explains, "Rugby League in York didn't really pick up until I was about 12 when youth sides started springing up. There was Dunnington and Heworth who were the top sides who went into the West Riding League. So I joined Heworth, and also went through the York boys teams at under 11's, 13's and 16's."

Gary gained County caps and played for BARLA'S national youth team whilst with Heworth eventually gaining BARLA'S highest accolade — becoming a tourist to New Zealand in 1983, alongside such now-famous colleagues as Garry Schofield, Richie Eyres, Dave Creasser and Deryck Fox. On his return, he signed pro forms with Hull, despite an offer from Leeds who were the glamour club of his childhood, and had been the subject of his ambition since an early age.

"Hull and Leeds both wanted me but Leeds didn't offer me a contract" he explains. "At the time Leeds was a bit 'old-boyish', they said sign and we'll see you right but Hull actually came up with a good offer, so myself and Garry Schofield signed with Hull and I ended up having six good years there."

It's ironic then that the situation should go full circle in 1989, when after picking up a Yorkshire Cup winners medal, 2 runners-up medals, a John Player losers, a Premiership losers and a Wembley losers medal with the Airlie Birds, David Ward should come in with a good offer which would take Gary to Headingley at last.

"I didn't want to leave Hull" says Gary, "but they weren't offering contracts, and I needed that security. With Leeds' offer was the prospect of a job (Gary worked for the club lottery) and that was a major factor, in case I had a bad injury which stopped me playing."

By now, Gary was married, and his young family were a priority to consider. Following the arrival at Headingley of firstly Doug Laughton, and then Ellery Hanley (a loose forward) Gary again began to fear for that security.

"It was a great relief to be approached by the Halifax board, and I didn't need much persuading." He recalls, "I spoke to Mike Ellis on the telephone, we had a meeting and that was that!"

Since his arrival at Thrum Hall twelve months ago, he has been a cornerstone in the pack. His professionalism and workrate are highly impressive and his defence is solid. Perhaps the missing link could be a revival of an international career which never quite got off the ground?

"To play for your country you have to first play well for your club", is Gary's immediate thought on that subject. "We've had a good off-season, we've signed some fine players, and all I'm thinking about now is getting back to the business of winning some honours for the club, the fans and myself. What comes will come — for now it's the new season and the first game and that's what I'm thinking about!"



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## Gary Lord

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