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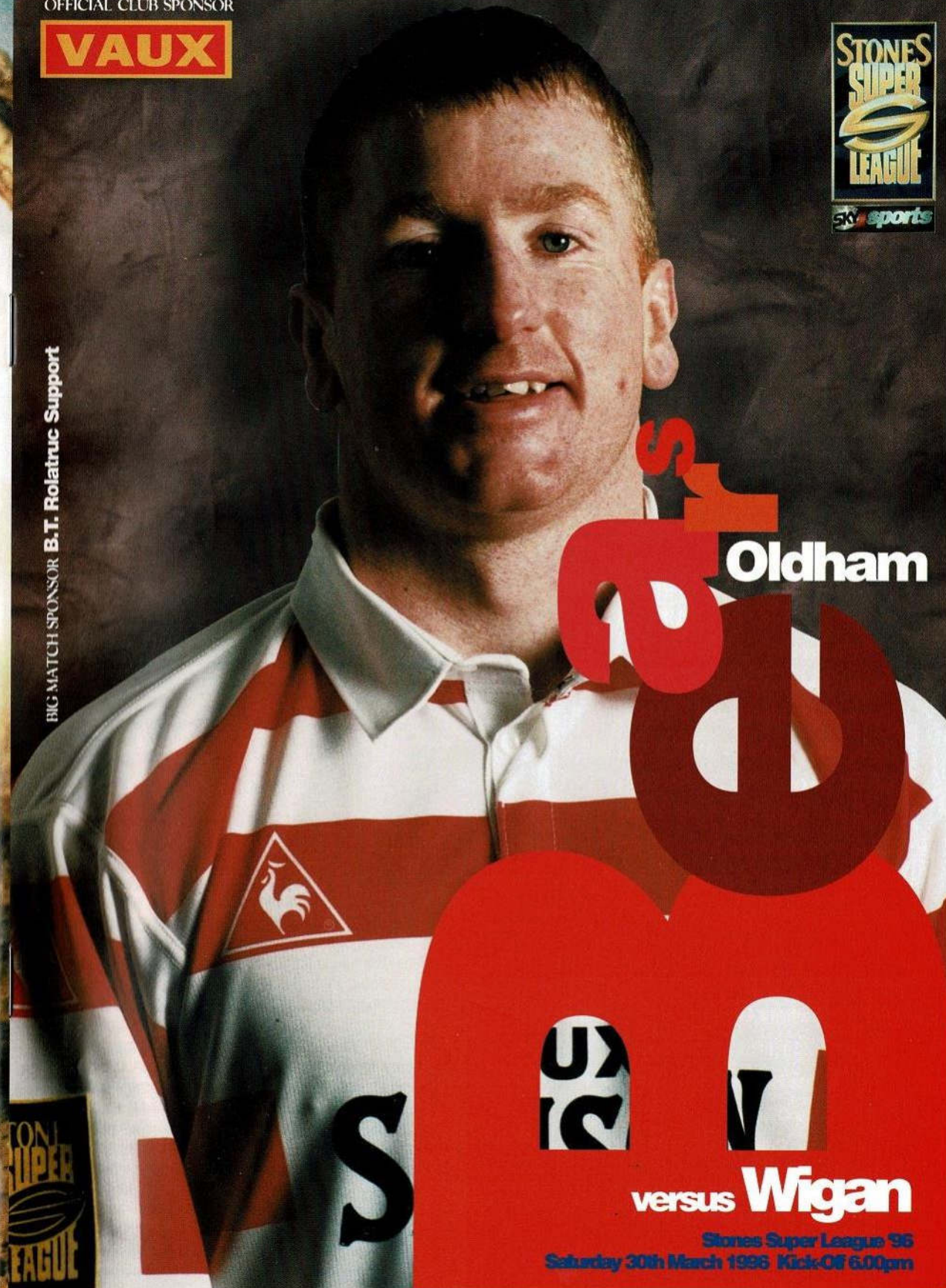
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Photos courtesy of The Oldham Evening Post
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 the clubs.

Club Directory

Oldham Bears RLFC
The Pavilion, Watersheddings, Oldham
 0161 624 4865 (3 lines) General Office
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 0891 44 00 70 Oldham Hotline
 0161 624 9615 Shop Line

RUGBY LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS

1909-10, 1910-11, 1956-57 Runners Up
 1906-07, 1907-08, 1908-09, 1921-22, 1954-55

FIRST DIVISION CHAMPIONS

1904-05

LANCASHIRE LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

1897-98, 1900-01, 1907-08, 1909-10, 1921-22, 1956-57, 1957-58

RUGBY LEAGUE CHALLENGE CUP WINNERS

1899, 1925, 1927 Runners Up 1907, 1912, 1924, 1926

LANCASHIRE CUP WINNERS

1907, 1910, 1913, 1919, 1924, 1933, 1956, 1957, 1958 Runners Up
 1908, 1911, 1918, 1921, 1954, 1966, 1968, 1986, 1989

SECOND DIVISION CHAMPIONS

1963-64, 1981-82, 1987-88

Second Division Premiership Winners

1988, 1990 Runners Up 1992

Club Records

RECORD VICTORY

63-0 v Goole, March 18th 1899 (Challenge Cup Rd 1)
 67-6 v Liverpool City, April 4th 1959 (League)

RECORD SCORE

70-10 v Bramley, Feb 12th 1995 (Challenge Cup Rd4)
 67-6 v Liverpool City, 4th April 1959 (League)

RECORD ATTENDANCE

28,000 v Huddersfield, Feb 24th 1912

Individual Records

TRIES IN A SEASON

Reg Farrar 49 1921-22

TRIES IN A CAREER

Alan Davies 174 1950-1961

TRIES IN A MATCH

James Miller 7 v Barry, Oct 31st 1908

GOALS IN A SEASON

Bernard Ganley 200 1957-58

GOALS IN A CAREER

Bernard Ganley 1,358 1950-1961

GOALS IN A MATCH

Bernard Ganley 14 v Liverpool City, April 4th 1959

POINTS IN A SEASON

Bernard Ganley 412 1957-58

POINTS IN A CAREER

Bernard Ganley 2,761 1950-1961

POINTS IN A MATCH

Abe Johnson 30 v Widnes (12 goals - 2 tries), April 9th 1928

MOST APPEARANCES

Joe Ferguson 628 Sept 1899 - April 1923

MOST CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES

Joe Lawton 134 Sept 1897 - Nov 1902

ALL THE ABOVE RECORDS ARE RELEVANT
 TO OLDHAM FIRST CLASS FIXTURES ONLY

Statement

Welcome to Boundary Park on this historic occasion for Oldham Bears and for Rugby League. As the game kicks off into a new era of Super League and summer rugby, it is fitting that our club is, as Eddie Hemmings put it the other night 'among the chosen 12.'

Not only were Oldham founder members of the organisation we now know as the Rugby Football League, but a local man, Joseph Platt, was its first secretary and one of its most influential administrators in the early years.

A century on, the club is still going strong. It has survived deep and damaging recession, two world wars and hardships which could easily have flooded it, but it is still there, still alive and kicking and now part of Rugby League's elite.

Those of us who are close to the club and all it stands for are very proud men and women indeed as we await Super League's big kick off and the wonderful opportunity it provides to take the game to new heights. But I speak from the heart when I say, without fear of contradiction, the club is nothing without its public and without its supporters.

Its success in Super League will depend on the backing it receives from the town and the local community and I have every confidence in Oldham people to hitch a lift with us on a journey into the unknown that will be as exciting as it will be unpredictable.

This evenings' pre-match entertainment was due to start an hour before kick off and a feature of all our Super League games this summer will be the quality of the pre-match build up and the entertainment that the warm summer evenings will enable us to provide.

By playing in summer of course, we are hoping to attract the attention of sport enthusiasts who, for a variety of reasons, were unable to watch rugby league on a regular basis during the winter months.

Perhaps their leisure time was taken up playing or watching soccer, amateur rugby league or rugby union, but now comes the opportunity for these lovers of winter sports to sample Super League in the summer.

To those of you who may be watching rugby league for the first time this evening, or for the first time in several years, I hope you enjoy the game and appreciate the skill levels and the high

levels of fitness of the modern day rugby league players. Rugby League people have confidence in the quality of their product, but there was a need to dress up the shop window and present it to the discerning customer in a new package. Hence our occupation of Boundary Park this evening thanks to the co-operation and assistance of Ian Stott and the Oldham Athletic board. These are excellent facilities here at Boundary Park a fitting stage for Sky Sports to begin their coverage of Super League in the UK (last night's TV game came from Paris) and first rate surroundings to host a first rate sporting event. Thank you again, Oldham Athletic.

Of course, our experience here this evening will inevitably whet the appetite for the time when we can enjoy the delights of the new stadium just across the road. These are exciting times make no mistake about that.

There is such a lot to look forward to, not least the switch to summer rugby. I have long campaigned for a switch of seasons and, like those with similar views, I can merely hope that the influence we brought to bear will prove to be beneficial to the game.

It will be a tough season for all teams in Super League and, in closing, I would like to make the point that it is at the time of greatest challenge that a rugby team most needs its support and most appreciates it. If anything is designed to make a team dig deep when the going gets tough it is the knowledge that there are thousands of folk

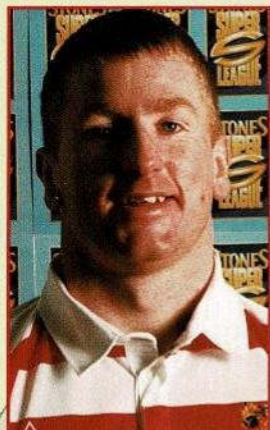
out there in the grandstands who are willing each player to strain every sinew and test every muscle.

I have the utmost admiration for the supporters of Manchester City. The Maine Road boys have been involved all winter in a battle against relegation, but have you noticed how the crowds have kept up and at some matches, even increased?

The City fans have done their team and club proud in their hour of crisis. I am sure they will be rewarded, a classic case of team and fans pulling together when the going gets tough. I think we can all learn from that.

Finally, a big welcome tonight to chairman Jack Robinson, coach Graeme West and everyone from Wigan and best wishes for an enjoyable Super League season to each and every supporter in the ground tonight.

Jim Quinn



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YOUR Points

of view...



Have you got any ideas, or maybe you want to let off steam, please write to Ray Hill, at the club address on page 2 to air your views.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you as a loyal Bears fan to express my concern for the future of the club. Whilst congratulating you and your staff on your achievements over the last few years, I feel that the way in which the club has been marketed leaves a lot to be desired. I am an 'A' level student at Oldham Sixth Form College, and recently as I was conducting a questionnaire on the effectiveness of marketing. I decided to use rugby league as an example. I interviewed one hundred pupils. I asked them if they knew of the forthcoming Superleague and of Oldham's inclusion in the new competition. Out of the whole one hundred people, only seven knew anything of Oldham rugby. I feel that if the marketing of the club is not stepped-up soon, there will only be about two thousand fans at the Wigan game.

I am also a supporter of Manchester Storm Ice Hockey Club. The only reason I became a supporter of them was due to their impressive marketing.

In little over six months, their attendances have increased from two thousand to around twelve thousand. This has been achieved through advertising on radio, in the newspapers and on the GM Buses as well as in local schools and colleges. May I suggest that similar marketing is done for your club, and soon, otherwise I cannot see our stay in the Super League being anything but a brief one. I hope you listen to my comments, and I would be grateful if you can send to me some promotional posters which I could distribute around my college.

Yours Sincerely

R.N. Whatmough

Dear Sir,

Please could you note the few ideas I have listed below for possible use at press and publicity events to promote the club, especially in the new Superleague season.

Would it be possible to have a large paper screenprinted sheet

made - (or perhaps a local college could paint for you) - on a large sheet of paper the club logo design etc. Have the paper stretched over the tunnel entrance, so that when the players run out they burst through the paper screen - it should create excellent visual impact at your home games.

I suggested this to Keighley Cougars last season and they used it and felt it was a good effect.

You could also use the above for newly signed players to burst through at their debut press events.

A polystyrene sheet painted up to look like a brick wall could also be good for the players to break through at matches.

For press photos players could appear in their kit and also wear boxing gloves and declare they will be "knockout" at a particular game or this season. Or simply say they will deliver a tough game to their opponents.

For best effect, it would be best for your players to wear 16oz gloves, they are big and would look good in press for this reason.

And for use with the above you could have a cake iced in opposition colours/team logo and have one of your team hold it up and then another don the gloves and punch the cake - and say "we'll 'crush' the opposition," etc for a gimmick.

Alternatively your team players could hold up an opposition team shirt and say we'll tear a strip off the opposition and tear the rival shirt in two.

Finally, you could possibly have a couple of standard black leather blouson jackets bought for the players and have a local painter/art college paint the club logo on the back for your team players to wear at promotions etc.

I do hope you can note and use a couple of my ideas for use in the forthcoming season to give Superleague and Oldham Bears R.L.F.C. good publicity events to promote the club.

Do please let me know your views.

Many thanks indeed.

Sincerely

Terence C Jolley

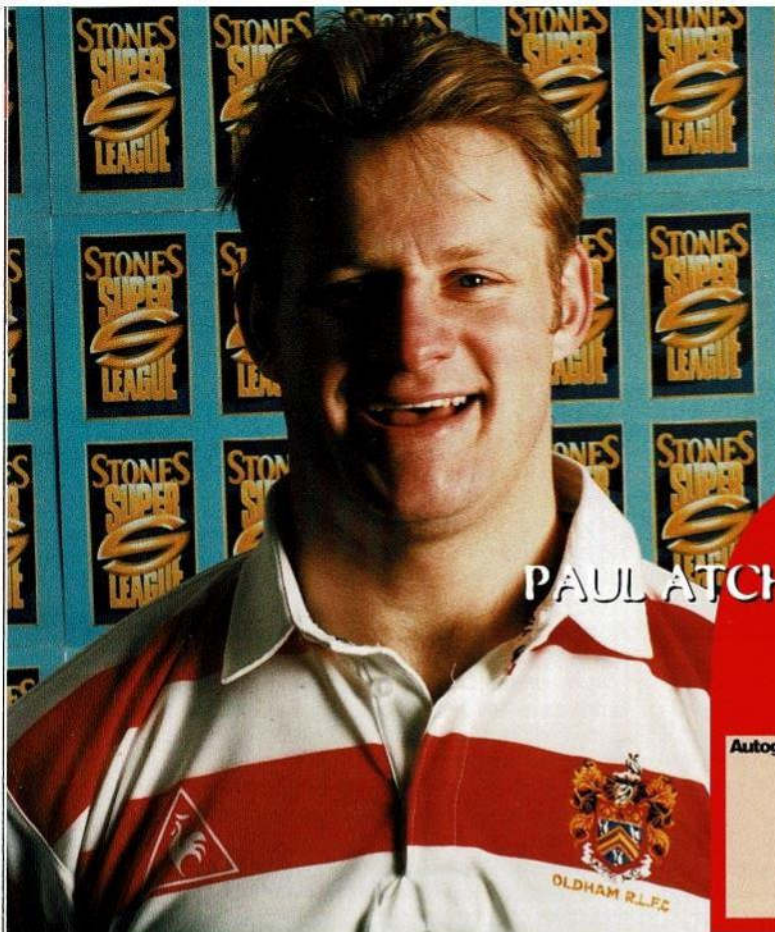
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PAUL ATCHESON

Oldham

Autograph

ANDY Goodway

Talks...



Rugby League has been given a wonderful opportunity to advance by Super League and Sky Sports and now it is up to us, those who work in the game, play the game and watch the game, to grasp that opportunity and play our part. Everyone associated with rugby league must accept some responsibility this summer for the creation of a new crowd base. We need more spectators coming through the turnstiles to cheer on our game, and in that Oldham is no different to any other team.

As far as the Oldham team and coaching staff is concerned we will do our best by working to maximum levels and attempting to realise of full potential in every game.

I think we proved during the centenary season, certainly during the latter part of the winter campaign, that we can play some good, attractive, crowd pleasing rugby league football.

First and foremost, of course, we have to be prepared to work hard and to lay down the foundation for a performance that will enable us to achieve our objective.

It isn't much use throwing the ball around with gay abandon if

you are doing it in the wrong places and the wrong times and losing every match.

We won't lose sight of the fact that we must strive to attain levels that will enable us to play winning rugby, but within that framework we will do our best to entertain.

In sport, as in life, you achieve little if you panic. A calm, clinical approach product best results and I hope that players and our loyal spectators will remain calm and dignified whether in victory or defeat.

Super League isn't a sprint. While we all desire to get off at a brilliant start over the first five or six games, we must recognise that what matters most is our position at the finishing tape after a tough, 22 match programme, not our placing as all clubs jockey for position in the opening weeks.

We showed last season how quickly fortunes can change and I think there was a lesson there from which we can all benefit.

Finally, a big welcome to our new boys Matt Munro, Andrew Patmore and Andrew Jackson. On behalf of the coaching staff I extend best wishes for their happy association with the club.

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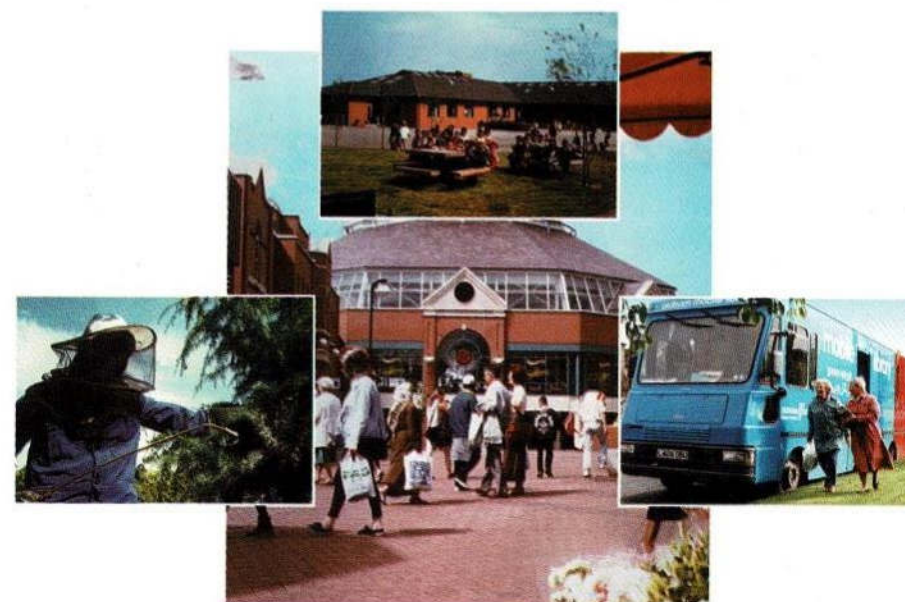
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Bears



Well Super League has arrived at last (phew) and today we welcome all supporters young and old from Wigan, we also welcome 'Postman Pat' without his cat to our first match of a very important season.

Over the last few months a lot of changes have taken place, not least our official name change to 'Oldham Bears' and the introduction of free admission to children under 12. Another change has seen the introduction of our new 'Junior Bears Supporters Club' which is open to all 'Bears' supporters up to the age of 16.

We hope to offer a fun filled packed club, with monthly newsheets, quizzes and monthly meetings, to be held locally and at times you could attend. Mascot draws will take place giving every 'Junior Bear' the chance to line up along side their team. Birthday cards specially designed and signed by your favourite player and team coach, also at each meeting players will come along and

sign autographs and talk to you (hopefully to join in games as well), there will be chance to win prizes donated by the club or sponsors. Look out for details of our first meeting in the local press.

Lots to do, places to go with the 'Junior Bears' and 10% discount on all goods bought from any of the club shops. To join the 'Junior Bears' has an initial cost of £3 this season and application forms are available from the shop in Town Square or call at Watersheddings and see Judith or Ray. Two passport size photographs will be required and a completed form for you to receive your 'Junior Bears' membership card.

Well 'good luck' to the 'Bears' today and lets hear those cheers!

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Don Yates Looks Back To A Match From Yesteryear

After all the uncertainty surrounding events in Australia during the last few months, we are now able to put legal arguments behind us and look to the future as Wigan visit Boundary Park this evening in the first European Super League match to be staged in Britain.

It is hoped that the leading European Super League clubs will be allowed to challenge the cream of Australian talent in the autumn for the proposed World Club Championship. It is appropriate therefore, that Wigan are involved in this historic occasion because it was Wigan who first instigated the idea of a World Club Championship with their promotion of the World Club Challenge in October 1987.

As British champions they threw down the gauntlet to the Australian authorities who allowed Australian Premiers Manly Warringah to visit Wigan for that momentous meeting. The match created tremendous interest and there was a terrific atmosphere as the following two teams trotted out on to Central Park:

Wigan: Steve Hampson, Richard Russell, David Stephenson, Joe Lydon, Henderson Gill, Shaun Edwards, Andy Gregory, Brian Case, Nicky Kiss, Shaun Wane, Andy Goodway, Ian Potter and Ellery Hanley. Substitutes Ged Byrne, Graeme West, Ian Gildart and Ian Lucas.

Manly: Dale Shearer, David Ronson, Darrell Williams, Michael O'Connor, Stuart Davis, Cliff Lyons, Des Hasler, Phil Daley, Mal Cochrane, Ian Gately, Ron Gibbs, Owen Cunningham and Paul Vautin. Substitutes, Mark Brokenshire, Jeremy Ticehurst, Mark Pocock and Paul Shaw.

The confrontation proved to be a thrilling encounter. Defences were on top but there was enough action to satisfy the 36,895 spectators crammed into Central Park. Manly began well and

took the lead after just two minutes when Michael O'Connor landed a penalty after Wigan were caught offside. The Australian lead lasted only a matter of minutes before David Stephenson equalised after Des Hasler was pulled out for an assault on Shaun Wane. The tough tackling continued with Cliff Lyons being dispatched to the sin bin after ten minutes.

Before he returned Wigan went in front after an incident involving Dale Shearer and Shaun Edwards. So Wigan led 4-2, a lead which they held at half time although Manly were unlucky when Shearer crossed just before the interval but he was unable to ground the ball.

The second half followed in the same pattern as the first. Tough-as-teak tackling which just kept at bay a series of attacking charges which would have breached most defences in the game. David Stephenson extended the Wigan lead immediately after the interval with another penalty and then completed the scoring with his fourth penalty five minutes later as Manly suffered a major blow as second rower Ron Gibbs was sent off. Gibbs dismissal came on the intervention of a touch judge who spotted an off-the-ball incident involving Joe Lydon. Although the scoring had finished, the action certainly hadn't.

Manly exerted severe pressure on the Wigan line in the closing stages of the match especially on the hour when Brian Case spent ten minutes sat in the sin bin. However Wigan were able to hold out and so took the title with their hard earned 8-2 success.

In all it was a great match, a great occasion and a great boost to the British game after the batterings which the home nation had suffered against Australian sides in the years leading up to this memorable encounter.

Let us hope that Anglo-Australian relations will resume later this year so that fans on both sides of the globe will be treated to matches as pulsating as that historic clash in 1987.

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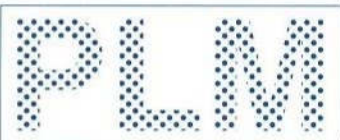
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WELCOME TO BARRY AND HIS GUESTS - HAVE A GOOD DAY

On this day....

Don Yates recalls this day in history.

On this day sixteen years ago, Wigan and Oldham were not even in the same league. But it was the Roughyeds who ended Sunday, 30th March 1980 in better shape for, as Wigan lost 16-5 away to Bradford Northern in the First Division, Oldham beat Doncaster 46-2 at Watersheddings in a Second Division match. Prop Steve Herbert and winger Geoff Munro each scored three of Oldham's ten tries whilst Eric Fitzsimmons, on the other wing, landed eight goals.

It was on this day in 1988, Wednesday, 30th March, that Halifax qualified for Wembley with a 4-3 semi-final replay victory over Hull before a crowd of 25,117 at Elland Road, Leeds. Winger Chris Anderson was the Halifax hero. He scored the only try of a hard fought tie which had ended pointless the previous Saturday. Popular utility player Peter Smethurst gave many sterling performances for several clubs, including both Wigan and Oldham. It was on this day in 1973 that he made his debut for Wigan after being signed from Leigh earlier in the month. He turned out in the second-row and played a significant part in Wigan's 10-9 home victory over Swinton, the club with whom he had begun his career.

Still on the transfer front, it was on this day in 1985 that

Oldham strengthened their squad with a double swoop into the transfer market. They signed David Hobbs from Featherstone Rovers and Paul Dixon from Huddersfield. Neither player was to stay at Watersheddings for long. Hobbs made sixty appearances before moving to Bradford Northern two years later whilst Dixon's move was for a loan period which came to a conclusion four weeks and five matches later. Another player to move on this date was Scott Martin, Salford's star centre who joined the Red Devils from Leigh exactly 12 months ago today.

It was on this day in 1933, Wednesday 30th March, that England met Other Nationalities in a high scoring international at Lonsdale Park, Workington. A crowd of 11,000 saw England race into a 21-5 interval lead and then fend off a determined come back by the exiles to eventually win 34-27. Neither Oldham nor Wigan had representatives in the England team but Wigan's Jim Sullivan landed six goals for Other Nationalities whose pack contained Len Mason (Wigan) and Trevor Thomas (Oldham).

Finally it was on this day in 1986 that Parramatta defeated Illawarra 12-8 in Australia's big Winfield Cup match of the day. Parramatta went on to lift the Australian Premiership during that 1986 campaign.

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BEARS Question

Time...

with Andrew Patmore

FULL NAME: Andrew John Patmore

DATE OF BIRTH: 23/5/68

BIRTHPLACE: Kempsey NSW Australia

WEIGHT: 6'2"

WEIGHT: 95Kilo

NICKNAME AT CLUB: Paddy

OCCUPATION: Teacher/Footballer

HOME: 10 Roundhill Way, Waterhead, Oldham

and Picnic Point Sydney Australia

CAR: Nissan Micra

MARRIED: To Sharlene

CHILDREN: No

FAMILY: Mum dad and younger brother (22)

WHAT WAS YOUR AMBITION AS CHILD? To play first grade for Canterbury Bankstown in the Winfield Cup

WHO WAS YOUR BOYHOOD HERO? Rod Reddy (St. George)

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST THRILL IN RUGBY? Play for Canterbury Bankstown in the Winfield Cup play-offs

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT IN RUGBY? Anytime I don't play to my ability

WHICH PRESENT DAY PLAYER DO YOU ADMIRE THE MOST? Brad Clyde

WHO IS THE GREATEST PLAYER THERE HAS BEEN? Peter Sterling, Mick Cronin

WHAT IS THE BEST PART OF YOUR JOB? Rugby gives you the opportunity to experience the spectrum of emotions from great heights of winning to fear to the long of defeat. It makes people (and me) better humans.

WHO IS THE TOUGHEST OPPONENT YOU HAVE FACED? Michael Beattie (St. George)

IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY, WHAT IS THE FIRST THING THAT YOU WOULD BUY? A Harley Davidson

WHAT IS YOUR BEST QUALITY? Reliable/level headed

WHAT IS YOUR WORST QUALITY? Getting down on myself about little things

APART FROM YOUR OWN CLUB WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE GROUND? Sydney Football Stadium

WHICH IS THE LEAST FAVOURITE GROUND? Campbelltown Sports Ground (Wests In Sydney)



WHAT OTHER SPORTS AND HOBBIES DO YOU HAVE? Golf, coaching juniors, go-kart racing
WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL EVENING OUT? A few beers a nice Italian meal and a bottle of red with close friends

WHAT IS THE MOST DANGEROUS THING YOU HAVE DONE? Swimming in the Northern Parts of Australia (Darwin) in rivers known for crocs

WHAT DANGEROUS THING WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO ATTEMPT? I'm a speed freak so anything to do with going fast would be great.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST PHOBIA? High places I hate those high rides at theme parks.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION? Games balls from players player awards

WHICH FAMOUS PERSON WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET? Dr David Suzuki

WHICH WORLD FIGURE DO YOU MOST ADMIRE? Dr David Suzuki

AWAY FROM RUGBY, WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BEST SPORTING ACHIEVEMENT? A hat trick as a junior cricketer

WHAT IS THE FUNNIEST MOMENT YOU HAVE SEEN ON A RUGBY PITCH? A member of the crowd decided to join our defence line and filled in for three tackles before the referee and security noticed him.

DO YOU HAVE AN UNUSUAL FOOD THAT IMPROVES YOUR GAME? Sago and Fruit

WHAT IS THE ODDEST PIECE OF TRAINING THAT YOU HAVE DONE? Fire walking, walking on hot coals to improve mental toughness.

IS THERE A DREAM YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ACHIEVED IN A SPORT OTHER THAN RUGBY? To get my golf handicap to single numbers

FAVOURITE TV PROGRAMME: Home Improvements, Married With Children

FAVOURITE TV STAR: Tim Taylor (The Tool Man)

FAVOURITE FILM: Shaw Shank Redemption

FAVOURITE FILM STAR: Robert Denero, Andy Garcia

FAVOURITE SOAP OPERA: Neighbours

FAVOURITE SOAP CHARACTER: Taylor from Bold and the Beautiful

FAVOURITE CITY: Sydney, Brisbane

FAVOURITE POP STAR: REM, Oasis

FAVOURITE SINGLE: "Brown Eyed Girl" Van Morrison

FAVOURITE LP: "Throwing Copper" By Live

FAVOURITE FOOD: Pasta or Steak BBQ

FAVOURITE DRINK: A nice cold beer or cold juice after training

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TREATMENT ROOM NEWS

Chris McKinney has made progress in recovering from a groin strain picked up in training.

Gary Burns has also been on the treatment table for attention to a thigh strain.

Mike Neal has not yet completely recovered from an ankle injury and Chris Parr is making excellent headway in his battle for fitness after major surgery for a double hernia

repair. Chris' injury occurred in the final game of last season.

The others have happened during the tough training sessions the boys have been put through in preparation for the Super League.

Let's look forward to an injury free Super League from today!

RING NOW FOR THE LATEST NEWS 0891 44 00 70

OLDHAM BEARS MATCHDAY MAGAZINE

15

BEAR

Facts...

What a great night the Centenary Show Case turned out to be. Eddie Hemmings hosted the evening and over 200 people turned up.

There were great prizes on offer including a trip for two to this years Silk Cut Challenge Cup Final.

There were also stars of the fifty's including Bernard Ganley, John Etty, and many more. During the evening they showed vintage footage of Oldham's great 50s side. During the night the Oldham playing squad were handed their jerseys No 1 to 25 with their names on the back this proved very popular and to round the evening off we presented "Buster Bear" with his new jumper for the start of the Super League.

We would like people to write into the club if you have any good ideas, or you may want to let off a bit of steam, lets hear what you have to say about any matter regarding

Oldham rugby. Who knows if its not too political we might even publish it in our next programme this is going to be a new feature in this seasons programme, so com'on get your pen out and start writing.

Are you going to Paris?

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GMR'S Malcolm

Lord... Here we go again!

What a time of change in our game! And to be fair not all the changes have filled me with confidence.

There's the effective banning of the Aussie Super League, the two scheduled games between Bath and Wigan, can you imagine it? Rugby League players at Twickers and of course the Silk Cut Challenge Cup, without Wigan, some would say the most significant of all.

Summer rugby is most definitely with us, the kick off times vary from day to day but whatever happens hopefully it works and its here to

stay, and what's more it looks like we will be able to continue with both the Regal Trophy and

the Silk Cut Challenge Cup which personally I am all in favour of.

My fervent wish is that it all has the required effect and we end up with a much higher more national profile game being watched by a lot more people.

My main worry is, that sometime in the not to distant future, should one or more games create such interest nationally we might end up having to pay a premium as some did for the Bruno/Tyson fight.

My sincere best wishes go to Gus O'Donnell and I hope everything turns out right for him in the end and I also send my best wishes to Ian Bleasdale at Salford and Joe Lydon at Wigan both of whom are enjoying well deserved Testimonials this year.

I have a feeling there are still battles to be fought before we can all relax about the state of our game but to one thing I am sure of is its still the best.

Either carry on or start watching, you could do a lot worse!

Malcolm Lord
BBC GMR

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GRAHAM Beales

"A" Team



Welcome to the new Super League season our last League match against Saints was disappointing, with such bad weather training was at times very difficult. The players worked hard against Saints but the game slipped away from us in the last quarter. Our next game in the same week at Hull, in the Cup, was the same as the game with Saints. A bright start and we were unlucky not to have scored on three or four occasions. The young Roughyeds really took the game to Hull, fortunately for Hull had injuries to Wilde, Prescott and Eastwood who all left the field at half time and Oldham had been the best side in the first forty, very confident in the dressing room at half time the players were ready for the next half. We started well but as the game progressed holes in the defence started to appear and Hull took full advantage. Players were getting injured but with no subs to replace them the players battled very hard. Eventually Hull ran away with the game in the last quarter.

I would like to thank all trialists and Academy players who have played in the A team from mid season and look forward to this season which will hopefully be injury free.

G.Beale

OLDHAM BEARS ALLIANCE CHAMPIONSHIP FIXTURES SEASON 1996

Thursday	28/3/96	Wigan	Away	7.30
Thursday	4/4/96	Halifax	Away	7.30
Thursday	11/4/96	Leeds	Away	7.30
Thursday	18/4/96	CASTLEFORD	HOME	7.30
Thursday	2/5/96	ST. HELENS	HOME	7.30
Thursday	9/5/96	Bradford	Away	7.30
Thursday	16/5/96	SALFORD	HOME	7.30
Thursday	23/5/96	HULL	HOME	7.30
Thursday	6/6/96	Warrington	Away	7.30
Thursday	13/6/96	WIGAN	HOME	7.30
Thursday	20/6/96	HALIFAX	HOME	7.30
Friday	28/6/96	Hull K.R.	Away	7.30
Thursday	4/7/96	LEEDS	HOME	7.30
Thursday	11/7/96	Castleford	Away	7.30
Thursday	18/7/96	St. Helens	Away	7.30
Thursday	25/7/96	BRADFORD	HOME	7.30
Thursday	1/8/96	Hull	Away	8.00
Thursday	15/8/96	WARRINGTON	HOME	7.30
Friday	23/8/96	Salford	Away	8.00
Thursday	29/8/96	HULL K.R.	HOME	7.30

NEWS From

R.L.H.Q.



European Super League is here and promises an action packed season right up until the hooter sounds to end the Premiership Finals at Old Trafford, Manchester on 8th September.

The Super League season, involving the game's top twelve clubs, ends on 30th August and will be immediately followed by the Premiership play-offs involving the top four clubs.

The champions will play the fourth placed side with the runners-up taking on the club that finishes third. Both games will take place on Sunday 1st September and the winners will contest the final at Old Trafford, Manchester a week later.

At the same time there will be a Divisional Premiership tournament with the finalists battling it out in a curtain raiser to the Premiership Final at Old Trafford.

Sunday 1st September 1996

Super League No. 1 vs Super League No. 4

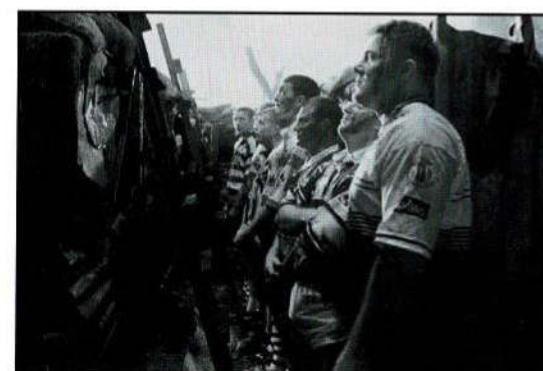
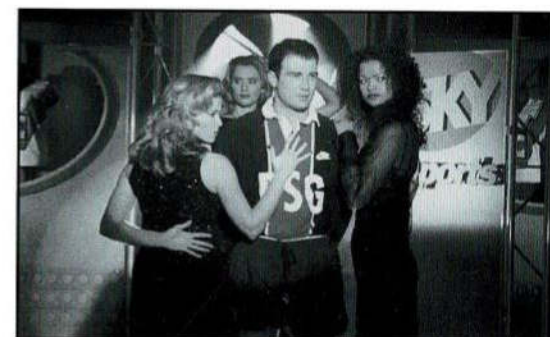
Super League No. 2 vs Super League No.3

Sunday 8th September 1996

Winners of match No. 1 vs Winners of match No. 2

Played at Old Trafford, Manchester

It is proposed that the First Division champions will play the Second Division title holders while the runners up in the First Division will face the third placed side.



Super League promotional Video stills courtesy of Sky Sports

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Evening Chronicle

OLDHAM, TUESDAY, JULY 20, 1993

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WELCOME Wigan to

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GARY CONNOLLY - Utility Back

Originally signed for St. Helens Rugby League Club from Blackbrook (St. Helens). Recognised as one of the top backs in International Rugby League. At home in either the full back or his favourite centre position, Gary has outstanding attacking and defensive qualities.

JASON ROBINSON - Winger

A Great Britain international nicknamed Billy Whizz who always proves difficult to tackle. Played half back in his amateur playing days, but has now made the right wing his own. Was voted Man of the Match in the 1995 Silk Cut Challenge Cup Wembley final, scoring two sensational tries.

MICK CASSIDY - Forward

Signed from Amateur Rugby League Club Wigan St. Judes. An all round adaptable forward with strong pace and determination making opposing teams wary of him. Mick was bitterly disappointed to be knocked out during the 1994 Silk Cut Cup Final against Leeds, but has since bounced back with some sterling performances in the Stones Centenary Season.

VA'AIGA TUIGAMALA - Back

A famous All Black international who played his first game for Wigan on the wing, later to transfer to centre. Gained his second Challenge Cup winners medal in April 1995 against Leeds. He is a powerful runner who has adapted well to the game of Rugby League. With his speed and skill making him a favourite with the spectators, if not the opposition.

MARTIN OFFIAH - Wing

Originally signed from Rosslyn Park Rugby Union Club (London) and transferred to Wigan from Widnes for a record signing fee of £440,000. One of the all time greats of the game with an exceptional turn of speed and an eye for a try.

MARTIN HALL - Hooker

Transferred to Wigan from Rochdale Hornets Rugby League Club and has adapted well to the Wigan hooking position. Mr Consistent, Martin is one of the games great competitors. His constant hard work has gained him recognition at international level with Wales.

TERRY O'CONNOR - Forward

Originally signed by Salford from Widnes Amateur Club. St. Maries after successfully touring New Zealand with BARLA. Transferred to Wigan where his sights are set on gaining the highest honours the game has to offer.

SHAUN EDWARDS - Half Back

Signed from Amateur Rugby League club Wigan St. Patricks. Favourite position scrum half. Captained England at both codes at schoolboy level and holds the most winners medals in the games history. Demands perfection from both himself and his colleagues. A player with vision and constant alertness.

HENRY PAUL - Back

Signed in the 1993/94 season. Good all round Rugby League player on line with some of the great names from New Zealand who have played for the Wigan club. His ability to read a game reflects in his personal skills and commitment gaining him invaluable experience at international level.

KELVIN SKERRETT - Prop Forward

Transferred to Wigan from Bradford Northern he is a Welsh and Great Britain international. A powerfully strong running prop and a gifted player, ranks amongst the best.

SCOTT QUINNELL - Forward

Signed professional from Llanelli Rugby Union Club having gained international caps for Wales in that code. Recognised as a forward with the strength and speed to worry any defence, he has the potential to be a great force within the game, and will be looking to maintain a regular place in the Wigan First team this season.

KRIS RADLINSKI - Back

Another of the young players who has come through the junior ranks at Wigan. Kris showed maturity beyond his years capping a great year by winning the Harry Sunderland Trophy at Old Trafford, being the first player ever to score a hat trick in a Premiership final. Went on to star in the England line up for the Halifax Centenary World Cup.

SIMON HAUGHTON - Forward

A double international at schoolboy level, also appears in the Guinness book of records for scorer of most tries ever in a season. Already established as a regular member of the first team squad, Simon looks to have the makings of one of the greats of the game.

ANDY FARRELL - Forward

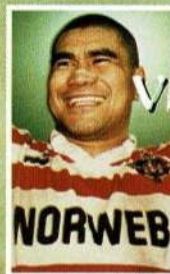
Andy missed the end of the Centenary season due to an operation on a niggling injury. Hopefully now back to full fitness the multi talented forward is a great asset to the club especially with his kicking ability, as he proved by stepping into the kicking role when Frano Botica moved to Auckland Warriors.

GRAHAM WEST - Coach

Signed for Wigan from New Zealand as a professional Rugby League player. He has had an illustrious career with Wigan both as player and coach. He advocates an outstanding professional approach to the game of Rugby League and is the perfect Ambassador for the game. Graeme has the unparalleled achievement of coaching Wigan to the Grand Slam in his first season in charge. Voted Coach of the Year by Sky TV viewers recently.



HENRY PAUL



VA'AIGA TUIGAMALA

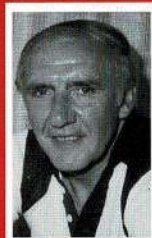
MARTIN OFFIAH

Jason Robinson





Academy...



We are nearly ready to kick off our new Summer season which should be quite interesting from a point of view of playing in better weather than what we are used to. Also it should provide us with a better standard of rugby, nobody likes to play in some of the conditions we have had to cope with in the past.

We are all looking forward to it. The boys are all looking very fit and have trained really hard during the close season, doing a lot of work on the weights.

We are also looking forward to starting our apprenticeship scheme which starts in July and we already have about half a dozen boys ready to take advantage of it. This scheme will obviously be a great way for the boys to hopefully become full time rugby players eventually, and doing a lot of work with the first team squad will obviously do them a world of good. If we are to become a force in this new Super League we see the scheme as the only way to make sure we have a good crop of youngsters coming through because you can't always keep going out and buying players.

You have to produce some yourself and we feel the investment will pay dividends in the future of our club.

Yours in Sport Brian Gartland

OLDHAM BEARS JJB SPORTS ACADEMY FIXTURES SEASON 1996

Day	Date	Team	H/A	Kick-Off
Monday	1/4/96	ROCHDALE	H	7.30pm
Friday	5/4/96	HULL K.R.	H	1.00pm CR
Monday	8/4/96	Batley	A	3.30pm
Saturday	13/4/96	SALFORD REDS	H	4.00pm CR
	20/4/96	BLANK WEEKEND		
	29/4/96	JJB SPORTS ACADEMY CHALLENGE CUP FIRST ROUND		
Sunday	5/5/96	Widnes	A	1.00pm CR
Monday	13/5/96	HUDDERSFIELD	H	7.30pm
Sunday	19/5/96	Sheffield Eagles	A	4.00pm CR
Sunday	26/5/96	KEIGHLEY COUG.	H	1.00pm CR
Monday	3/6/96	SWINTON	H	7.30pm
Sunday	9/6/96	DEWSBURY	H	4.00pm CR
Sunday	16/6/96	Rochdale H.	A	2.00pm CR
Sunday	23/6/96	Hull K.R.	A	4.30pm CR
Monday	1/7/96	BATLEY	H	7.30pm
Sunday	7/7/96	Salford Reds	A	4.00pm CR
	15/7/96	BLANK WEEKEND		
Monday	22/7/96	WIDNES	H	7.30pm
Monday	29/7/96	Huddersfield	A	7.30pm
Sunday	4/8/96	Keighley Coug.	A	4.00pm CR
Sunday	11/8/96	Swinton	A @ Radcliffe Borough	3.30pm
Sunday	18/8/96	Dewsbury	A	3.00pm CR
Tuesday	27/8/96	SHEFFIELD	H	7.30pm

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Total	Stage	From East
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2.1	2.1	
		From West M62 Junction 31 (A655) Follow signs Castleford A655 (edge of) Castleford At roundabout take 2nd exit In 1.2 miles at roundabout take 2nd exit In 0.2 miles at roundabout take 2nd exit into Wheldon Road unclassified for Castleford RL Ground (on right)
1.1	1.1	
2.9	1.8	

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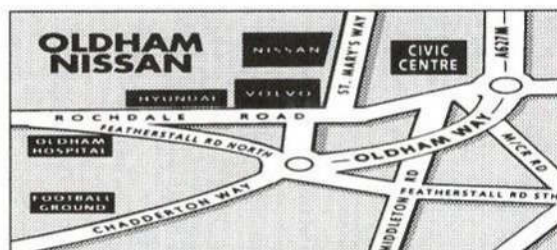
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WHAT'S **New**

Today Don

Welcome Back

Towards the back end of the short Centenary season, the Rugby Football League indicated that one programme, issued from headquarters each week, would cover all Super League matches that weekend. Since then there has been a re-think and so the Oldham matchday magazine lives on. We hope it fulfils your requirements and that you find it interesting. If you have an idea which you think will brighten up this publication, let Ray Hill know at Watersheddings and we will try to incorporate your idea into the programme. The majority of contributors to this programme do so on a voluntary basis and we think that they do a reasonable job. We hope you think so too, so keep supporting the Bears and keep buying the programme.

Quote Of The Day

In revolutions, power always remains in the hands of nobodies. So said George Danton on receiving the death sentence in 1794.

Sporting Gaffe

Those rugby union chaps are always good for a quote and one which was heard on Irish radio during the recent Five Nations series was, "so near and yet so close came the Irish to success".

Happy Birthday

Prop Paul Norman celebrated his 22nd birthday last Monday and utility back Wally Gibson will be 29 next Friday. Congratulations to both.

Diary Dates

Dates and venues for the three European Championship matches are as follows:

Wednesday 12th June England v France At Gateshead
Wednesday 19th June France v Wales At Paris
Wednesday 26th June Wales v England At Cardiff

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Thoughts from the Terraces...

So here we go. And you can't say it is not different. Saturday evening with pre match entertainment, at Boundary Park! I cannot remember when we last kicked off a season against Wigan either, but I suspect their strength will be one aspect which is unchanged. Still, you never know. What a boost to the whole Super League it would be, not to mention to our prospects, if we could get two points out of tonight's game. We shall see!

What a nightmare few weeks for the game there has been in Australia. By chance I have been speaking to a couple of Aussie RL fanatics recently, and it is difficult for us to understand the degree of depression, incomprehension and disillusion amongst our down under equivalents. There seems to be general sympathy for the ARL Athurson-Quayle position, which I must admit I share, in spite of being strongly in favour of the general Super League philosophy. But there is also great, and entirely understandable, worry that their apparent intransigence has done irreparable damage to the 13-a-side code, at least in the Antipodes. Surely, they argue, some form of compromise could have been found in order to keep the ARL in control of the game, but also to accommodate both Packer and Murdoch desires to have RL on their TV networks? Eventually surely, this is bound to happen. So why allow millions to be wasted in court fees, and the 1995 season to be decimated? This is the charge which the ARL management will have to answer in the end.

Of course there is still a major southern hemisphere influence in our Super League, indeed, if anything, it seems to be increasing again. On the field, more sides, Oldham of course included, have been topping up their squads with Aussies, Kiwis and South Sea islanders. And off the field, the birth of the new era can hardly be said to represent a triumph for the emergent breed of British coaches. Counting Mr Murphy as a half, there are only three and a half, out of the 12 Super League clubs. Wouldn't it be good to see Sheffield, Warrington, Castleford and Oldham be the four teams contesting the World Club Championships (if they happen) in September? Mind you I should think the odds against would rival those on tonight's lottery jackpot winner being here at Boundary Park. The Observer last week predicted fourth, seventh, eighth and ninth places respectively!

I have a feeling that Super League crowds will indeed show the upward trend which, as they say, is devoutly to be wished. If our game is to stand any chance of prospering into the next millennium. What will be interesting to see, though is whether or not there is a similar trend in

Division One and Two. Looking at the clubs involved, Division One looks likely to be highly competitive, whilst Division Two might well see an early breakaway of two or three clubs at the top. I suspect, certainly the Swinton-Bury Lions look to have recruited well, and if Huddersfield stays fit, I wouldn't be at all surprised to see them just pipping Hull KR come the end of the season. However, given the record over many years of crowd apathy in Bury, it is difficult to envisage them averaging any more than a puny 1500 or so even then. On the other hand, I suspect that those who anticipate Salford strolling away with the cherished Division One promotion spot will be sadly disappointed. Widnes' cup feats during the Centenary season showed what they are capable of when their motivation is right, and away trips to Whitehaven, Hull, Keighley, Wakefield, Featherstone and Huddersfield will not be easy ones for anyone. I wouldn't be surprised to see the sort of nail-biting fight to the finish for a Super League place in 1997 which should be guaranteed to raise crowds all round. Let us hope so.

Everyone has to be positive about Super League, I know. And I agree, really. But it would be wrong to ignore some of the clouds already looming. Season ticket sales are predictably down all round, and after Bradford's superb performance last week no doubt Leeds as well as Wigan will be bemoaning the loss of Wembley revenue. The Murdoch money seems not to be stretching as far as was first thought. And people suddenly seem to have realised that it is stupid to finish the season at the end of August. While eleven competitive home games averaging, say, six thousand spectators generates more match day revenue than thirteen or fifteen averaging four thousand, it does not seem sensible to waste the six months of October to March completely. Surely this is where the Challenge Cup should come in? It would be criminal to abandon the tradition which it represents and sheer folly to throw away its revenue earning potential. And two months of winter RL starvation have already made me, and I know many others too, dread the prospect of a full five or six months of it each year. If Mr Lindsay ever returns from his new friends in Australia I suggest that this now needs to be his top priority in England. We need a meaningful new format for the single prestigious cup competition. How about a regionalised mini-league first stage in October, which could possibly be extended to finish with final group matches over the Christmas period, followed by March quarter and semi finals and the traditional end of April final? Over to you, Maurice!

Ian Wilson



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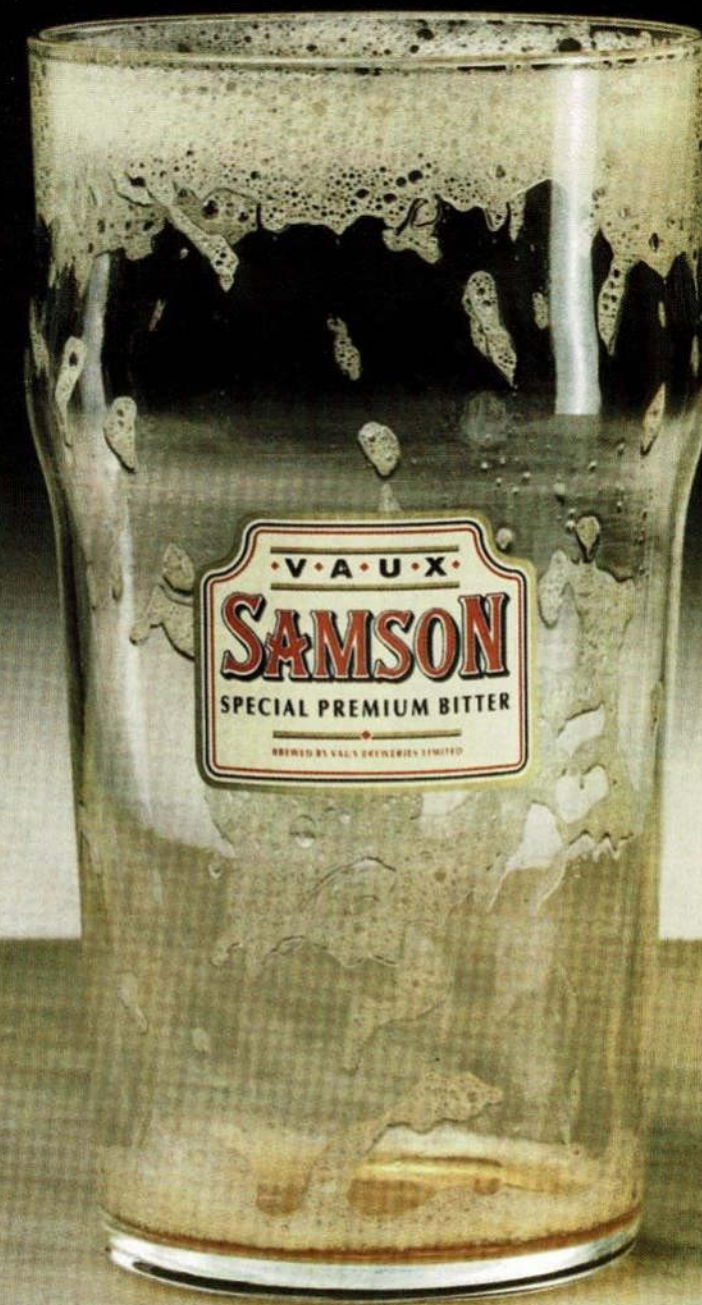
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STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

This evening's match is the 235th meeting between Oldham and Wigan. Of the previous 234 clashes, Oldham have won 86, Wigan have won 142 and six matches have ended all square. As far as league matches are concerned, there have been 170 matches. Oldham's memorable victory last December was their 66th such victory whilst Wigan have won exactly 100 league matches and four have been drawn. Oldham's biggest home win over Wigan came in season 1898-99 when the Roughyeds won 43-0. The best away performance came in 1955-56 when Oldham won 48-23 at Central Park. Wigan have twice defeated Oldham 54-2 at Central Park, in 1934-35 and then 1986-87. Oldham's biggest home defeat against the Riversiders came just two years ago, 1994-95, when Wigan won 58-10 at Watersheddings. Results during the past ten seasons are as follows.

1986-87	Oldham 6	Wigan 27	(Lancashire Cup Final at St. Helens)
	Oldham 10	Wigan 8	(Challenge Cup)
	Wigan 54	Oldham 2	
	Oldham 6	Wigan 24	
1987-88	did not meet		
1988-89	Wigan 40	Oldham 18	
	Oldham 4	Wigan 12	(Challenge Cup)
	Oldham 21	Wigan 27	
1989-90	Oldham 19	Wigan 18	(Lancashire Cup)
1990-91	Wigan 38	Oldham 15	
	Oldham 16	Wigan 30	(Challenge Cup semi-final at Bolton)
	Oldham 4	Wigan 10	
1991-92	did not meet		
1992-93	Wigan 48	Oldham 8	(Lancashire Cup)
1993-94	Wigan 38	Oldham 12	
	Oldham 8	Wigan 16	(Regal Trophy)
	Oldham 6	Wigan 50	
1994-95	Oldham 10	Wigan 58	
	Wigan 46	Oldham 0	
	Oldham 20	Wigan 48	(Challenge Cup semi-final at Huddersfield)
1995-96	Wigan 42	Oldham 12	
	Oldham 28	Wigan 26	

WIGAN'S LAST VISIT TO WATERSHEDDINGS

Sunday, 17th December 1995 Stones Centenary Championship
OLDHAM 28 WIGAN 26

half-time 12-20 attendance 3540

Oldham tries Afi Leuila (2), Martin Crompton, Chris McKinney & Gary Burns.
goals Francis Maloney (4)
Wigan tries Martin Offiah (2), Scott Quinnell (2) & Simon Haughton.
goals Henry Paul (3)

Oldham: Paul Atcheson; Afi Leuila, Paul Topping, Darren Abram, Adrian Belle; Francis Maloney, Martin Crompton; Craig Richards, Chris McKinney, Jason Temu, Ian Gildart, David Bradbury & Howard Hill.

Substitutes Gary Burns, Chris Parr, Paul Crook & Paul Norman.

Wigan: Kris Radlinski; Jason Robinson, Inga Tuigamala, Gary Connolly, Martin Offiah; Henry Paul, Craig Murdock; Kelvin Skerrett, Martin Hall, Terry O'Connor, Simon Haughton, Scott Quinnell & Andy Johnson.

Substitutes Rob Smyth, Neil Cowie, Andy Craig & Mick Cassidy.

Compiled by Don Yates

THE PLAY-OFFS

The Stones Super League Premiership semi-finals are scheduled for Sunday, 1st September with the final at Old Trafford on Sunday, 8th September. The Super League World Club Challenge quarter-final double header will be staged at Elland Road, Leeds on Saturday, 14th September when the European Super League Champions take on the fourth placed Australasian club and our runners-up face the third placed club from down under. The winners of those matches meet at Old Trafford the following Friday, 20th September in the World semi-final. The eventual winner of the Old Trafford semi-final meets the winner of the Australian play-offs (which feature our third and fourth placed clubs). That Grand Final will be at a venue in Australia on Saturday, 28th September. If you do not understand that system then just start saving up. It could be that the Bears will be playing in Sydney next September!!

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Rd	Date	Team	Venue	Time	Score	Att	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.	18.	19.	20.	21.	22.	23.	24.	25.
1	Sat 30 March	WIGAN	H BSKYB	6.00pm			Paul Atcheson	Scott Ranson	Darren Abram	Paul Topping	Robert Myler	Francis Maloney	Martin Crompton	Ian Gildart	John Clarke	Jason Temu	Gary Lord	Joe Faimalo	David Bradbury	Howard Hill	Affi Leuila	Stephen Gartland	Paul Davidson	Chris McKinney	Ian Sherratt	Adrian Belle	Michael Neil	Chris Parr	Gary Burns	Andrew Patmore	Matthew Munro
2	Fri 5 April	HALIFAX	H	3.00pm																											
3	Mon 8 April	Paris	A	3.00pm																											
4	Sat 13 April	LEEDS	H BSKYB	6.00pm																											
5	Sat 20 April	Castleford	A	6.00pm																											
	Sat 27 April	SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP FINAL																													
6	Sun 5 May	St Helens	A	3.00pm																											
7	Fri 10 May	BRADFORD BULLS	H	7.30pm																											
8	Sun 19 May	Sheffield Eagles	A	6.00pm																											
9	Sun 26 May	WORKINGTON	H	3.00pm																											
10	Sun 2 June	London Broncos	A	6.00pm																											
11	Sun 9 June	WARRINGTON	H	6.00pm																											
12	Sun 16 June	Wigan	A	6.30pm																											
13	Sun 23 June	Halifax	A	6.00pm																											
14	Sun 30 June	PARIS	H	6.00pm																											
15	Sun 7 July	Leeds	A	3.00pm																											
16	Sun 14 July	CASTLEFORD	H	6.00pm																											
17	Sun 21 July	ST HELENS	H	6.00pm																											
18	Sun 28 July	Bradford Bulls	A	6.00pm																											
19	Sun 4 Aug	Workington	A	3.00pm																											
20	Sun 11 Aug	LONDON BRONCOS	H	6.00pm																											
21	Fri 16 Aug	Warrington	A	7.30pm																											
22	Sun 25 Aug	SHEFFIELD EAGLES	H	6.00pm																											

STONES & THE SUPER LEAGUE

As sponsors of the new force in Rugby League - the Stones Super League - Stones Bitter is looking forward to this dawning of a new sporting era in this 1996 season. With the support of Stones' sponsorship, and the ongoing partnership with the Rugby league and Sky Sports, it is envisaged that the Stones Super League will be the biggest summer sporting event in this country. Stones' commitment and dedication to Rugby League over the past 100 years has led to a thorough understanding of the game and its supporters. During this period Stones has been responsible for many ground breaking initiatives and has been instrumental in the development of the Stones Super League through "Framing the Future" document.

Stones are excited about the opportunity of working with all the Stones League clubs, the Rugby League and Sky Sports, all of who intend to rocket Rugby League clubs into the 21st Century.

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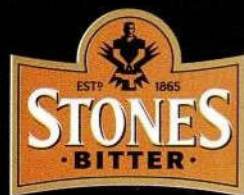
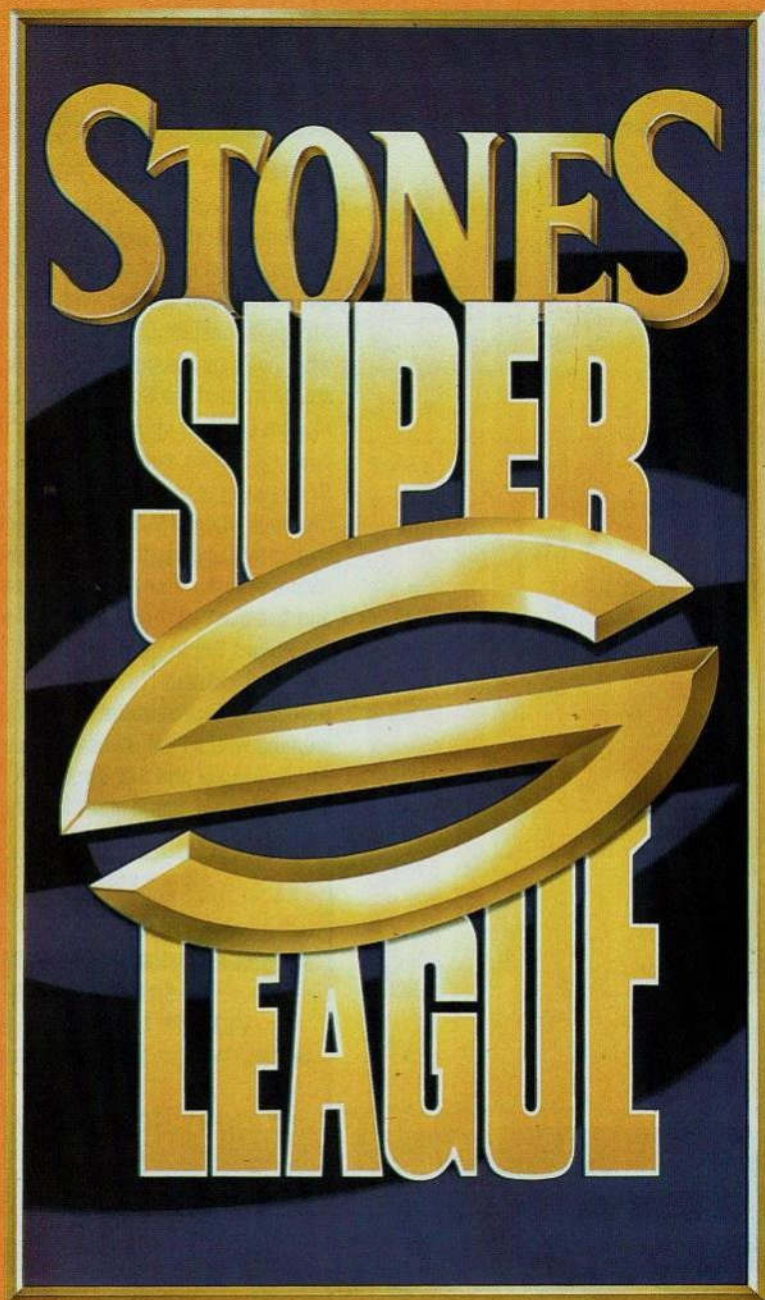
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JOHN CLARKENumber 10
JASON TEMUNumber 11
GARY LORDNumber 12
JOE FAIMALONumber 13
DAVID BRADBURYNumber 14
HOWARD HILLNumber 15
AFFI LEUILANumber 17
PAUL DAVIDSONNumber 18
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MATTHEW MUNRO

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NEWS From

Down Under...

SURGEONS at a Sydney hospital have sewn back the ear of South Sydney star - and one match Sheffield Eagles wonder - Darrell Trindall. It had been bitten off in a nightclub scuffle with a former Souths player. The two footballers came to blows a week ago in an upmarket club in the eastern suburb of Coogee.

Trindall came off worse for wear because he was nursing a broken hand sustained in the Charity Shield clash with St George two weeks earlier. He can thank team-mate Nathan Wood for the fact that surgeons were able to re-attach the ear.

Wood picked it up from the floor and put it in a glass of ice before rushing Trindall to hospital.

Souths' football manager Alan Jones contacted one of Australia's leading micro-surgeons who raced to the hospital to sew the ear back on.

ST GEORGE DRAGONS

No club has been hit as hard by the Super League crisis as St George.

First, because of the uncertainty in Australia, Brian Smith quit to take up a new challenge with the Bradford Bulls.

Then his replacement, Rod 'Rocket Reddy', defected to the Adelaide Rams in the Super League before a ball had been kicked in anger.

Many of their stars departed to the rebel competition - even though some apparently still had contracts with the Dragons.

Gordon Tallis, Jason and Paul Stevens, Nathan Brown, Anthony Mundine, Rod Maybon, Noel Goldthorpe, Tony Priddle, Damien Chapman and Chris Quinn

(although there is now talk of Brown and Mundine returning to the fold).

Graeme Bradley followed Smith across the world to Bradford.

But new coach, David Waite, who took Newcastle to its first semi-final spot is unfazed. He believes he will unearth some new youngsters.

One who seems to fit that bill is 19-year-old halfback Ben Kusto who in the trials has stamped himself as a player of the future.

But it is to the future that Saints' supporters must set their sights. This won't be their year.

NEWCASTLE KNIGHTS

The Knights gave notice of a big season with a comprehensive victory in the World Sevens.

But the victory did not come without cost.

They will be without one of their vital playmakers, halfback Andrew Johns, for the early part of the season.

The Knights have lost several first-graders during the off-season, including three-quarters Nathan Barnes and Robbie Ross and forwards Mark Sargent and Robbie McCormack.

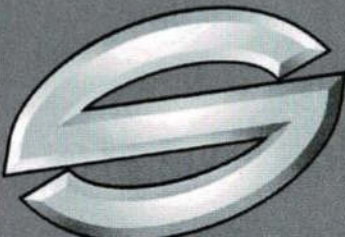
But they've been boosted by the arrival of England's World Cup hooker Lee Jackson and promising young prop Glen Grief from Wests.

Other World Cup stars in their ranks are Matthew Johns, Robbie O'Davis, Paul Harragon and Adam Muir.

And centre Jamie Ainscough should have been in the Cup squad, too.

We'll just have to wait to see if Mal Reilly's million-pound 'loyalty' bonus was worth it.

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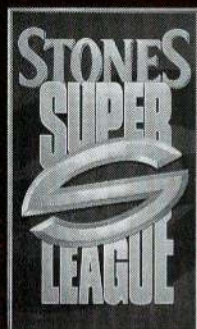
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The game now has a bright future and together we have an opportunity to place it where it belongs - on a world stage.

As for the season ahead, teams have no doubt been rigorously training to win the prestigious title of the inaugural champions and this summer will surely prove to be more competitive than any previously known in the history of the game.



Maurice Lindsay, Chief Executive of the Rugby Football League and Jonathan Nye, Head of Sponsorship at Bass Brewers, toast the new Stones Super League sponsorship.

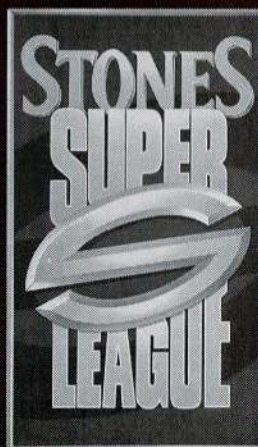


Ready for action - Stars of the Stones Super League at the official launch.

attracting new supporters to the game and it is our belief that once they have discovered the game they will remain hooked for life.



With the kick off to the season, Stones is sure that a new era in sport is being witnessed and with the help of supporters and clubs alike Rugby League will be rocketed in to the 21st Century.



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QUICK QUIZ

1. What is the new full title of Halifax RLFC?
2. Name the assistant coach who resigned from Warrington pre season?
3. In Sky TV's new advertisement, which teams are described as ? Flair and ? Pride?
4. What is the name of this season's new Australian Rugby League tournament?
5. What is the name of St. Helens coach?
6. Wigan played Salford last Sunday 24/3/96 in a Testimonial match for which player?
7. Which former Oldham player signed for Swinton, pre-season?
8. In which South Wales town, is the new Rugby League club to be set up in?
9. Which player was named as captain of Paris for their first game against Sheffield Eagles?
10. To what have First Division Batley just changed their name to?

1. Halifax Blues RLFC 2. Clive Griffiths 3. Paris and London 4. The Optus Cup 5. Shaun McCreae 6. Ian Bleasdale 7. Leo Casey 8. Aberavon 9. Pierre Charnon 10. Batley Bulldogs

ANSWERS

The Welsh Connection (TM)
Copyright, Kelvin Jones 1996

It's here, Super League has arrived and I am sure it will prove another big boost for Rugby League in Oldham. Since the end of the Centenary Season there has been plenty of activity both on and off the field. From my point of view the most significant event has been my change of position to become Director of Student Rugby League which was a job that came out of the blue. I was simply preparing for the Renault Oldham Schools Cup and the Town Team Cup Finals when the opportunity to take over from Bev Risman came along. I was not very happy about leaving Oldham at such an exciting time but in the end I thought this was a chance too good to miss. I was also happy that Brian Gartland would be able to carry on the most important aspects of the programme and that he will do a wonderful job.

The Renault Oldham Schools Cup is well under way and progressing towards the finals which will be held at Watersheddings on April 23rd and April 24th.

The Under 15's Town Team were unfortunate to lose to Wigan in the final of the Lancashire Cup but they may well get a chance to make amends if they reach the final of the Denis Davies Trophy.

Unfortunately the Under 16s game in the final of the English Schools Cup was postponed because of snow and frost. That game will be played in the very near future.

So as I sign off these final Development notes I would like to thank all the many people who helped me during my stay in Oldham and I wish the Bears every success in Super League.

Today sees the start of a new column by Oldham Evening Chronicle Rugby League writer Roger Halstead

The best wishes of all rugby league fans will surely be with Wigan when they meet Bath in the game of the century, one under Union rules at Twickenham and the other under League laws at Maine Road.

Almost a year has passed by since I wrote in the Oldham Evening Chronicle in a piece headlined: "Stand by for the merger to beat all mergers" that we should enjoy the Rugby League centenary season because not many years would pass before we were watching Hull v Harlequins or Bath v Bradford Northern.

Little did we know then that Northern would soon emerge from the Odsal shippen in the shape of the Bulls or that the gentlemen of Bath would gather the club membership together and vote by a landslide to form a limited liability company.

How times change Orrell taking over Central Park, Leeds diving into partnership with the local RU club and now comes Bath v Wigan.

These historic clashes between the giants of the two codes will have their critics, yet there is a certain fascination at the prospect of seeing Wigan emerge from the Twickenham tunnel to get their

minds and bodies around the complexities of the ruck, maul and line out.

I fear for Bath at Maine Road, yet I have the sneaking suspicion that Tuigamala, Quinell and Co will give the West Country men a good run for their money at HQ.

It is difficult to argue with those who claim that Wigan's commitments this summer should be exclusive to Super League. However, one has got to wonder how Wigan received approval to play Bath and enter the Middlesex sevens, while Bradford were discouraged from taking on Leicester and St. Helens were told the Middlesex sevens were not for them.

No matter, Wigan will be flying the flag for league and it is important for the 13-a-side sport's image and credibility that the Central Park men do us proud, as I am sure they will.

To be honest, they can't lose. We all know Bath won't live with "our lads" in the League game at Maine Road, I wonder if Union folk are equally confident of success when the big two clash at Twickers. Somehow I doubt it, despite constant claims in the Union press that tactical sophistication in rugby football begins and ends with the 15-man code.

Go to it Wigan, and show them that real rugby football is about running, passing and scoring tries.

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