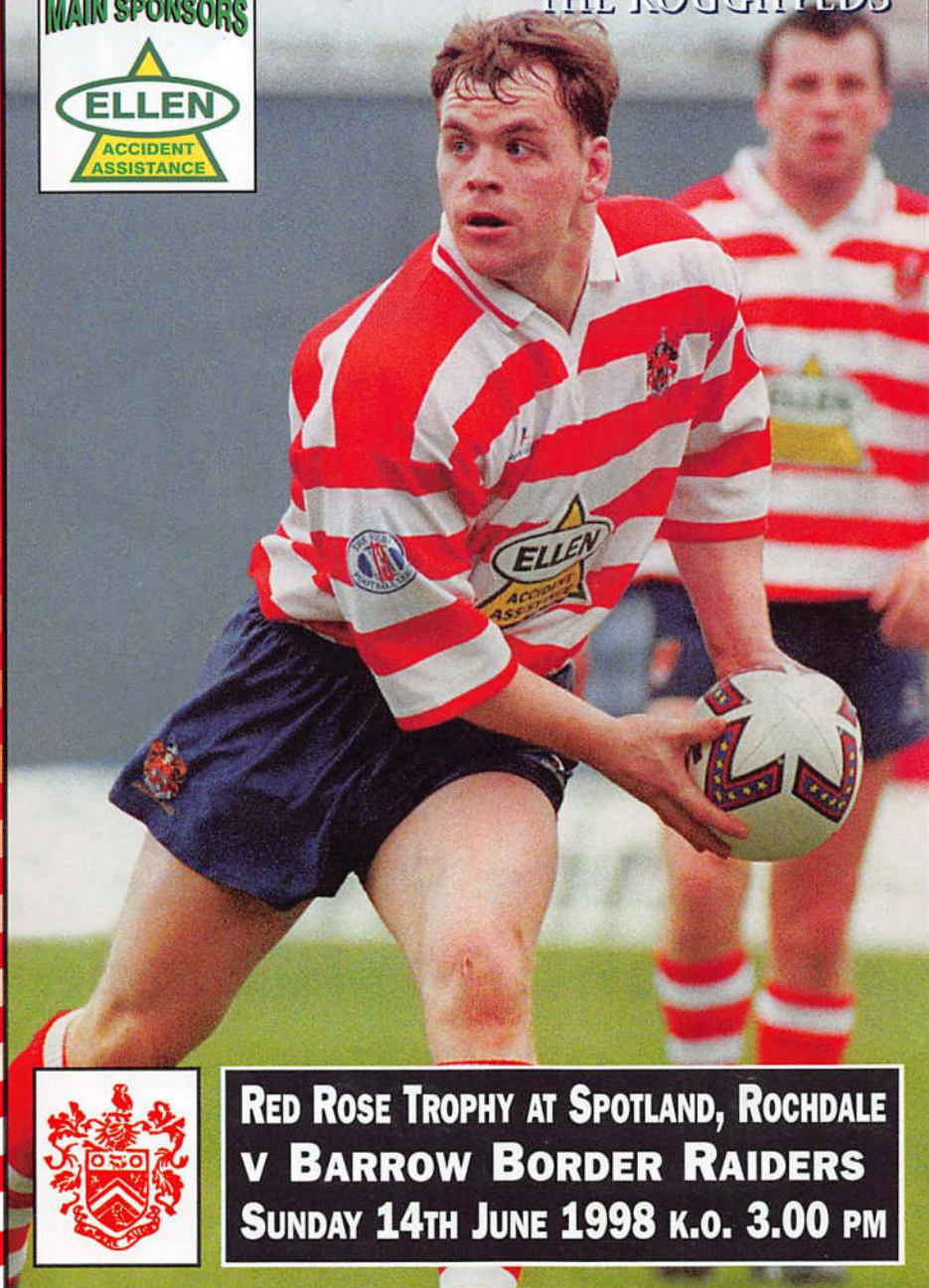


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Chairman's CHATTER

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

WELCOME to our second 'home' ground of the season, Spotland.

After three consecutive away games it is good to be again playing in front of our own fans although the support we have seen at the away matches has made the players feel as though in fact they are playing at home. It will be interesting to see how the players cope with the pitch, as the tightness of the division has placed greater emphasis on making the most of home advantage. Your vocal support can be more significant than you realise - you only have to listen to the comments of the opposing coaches to realise the lift you give to the players. **It does** make a difference to the performance and there is no doubt that the players we have at this club appreciate the way you get behind them.

It would be remiss of me not to mention thanks from all at the Club to the Dene Park Stadium Company and Ray Taylor of Rochdale Hornets for allowing us to play the three games at Spotland and for their assistance with the matchday organisation. The ground is, without doubt, of an excellent standard and is a credit to all concerned. I only hope that sufficient numbers

of you are here today to take advantage of the facilities! We have tried to account for the needs of everybody who attends our matches at Boundary Park and if we do encounter one or two hiccups I hope that you will be understanding of our situation.



Today's game sees us at the top of the Red Rose Championship and whilst welcoming everybody connected with the Barrow Club I hope that the result this afternoon means you have a miserable journey home! On the evidence of the game between the two sides at Boundary Park this will be a tough encounter and although they have suffered two defeats in their last two games I am sure they will arrive today fired up to reverse that trend.

I have said in my previous notes that the key factor this season would be consistency and with the side having two good results from the last two games we hope to go some way to achieving that by winning the next two games within the space of six days, both of which are obviously here at Spotland.

Many thanks for your number one support!

Best wishes.

Chris Hamilton



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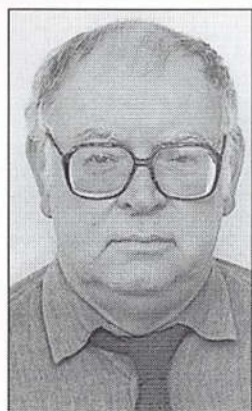
A J Law Cup Winners 1998

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS MATCHDAY MAGAZINE DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF OLDHAM RLFC (1997) LTD.



Roger

Oldham Evening Chronicle's HALSTEAD



THE half-way mark in the second division campaign sees new-boys Oldham doing very nicely, thank-you. Before today, they were top of the Red Rose subsidiary competition with three points out of a possible four and lying third in the second division behind leaders Bramley and Lancashire Lynx.

With the Lynx due to play the Roughyeds

here at Spotland next Friday night, Paddy Kirwan's men face a crucial five days which could make or mar their prospects of promotion at the first attempt.

But let's deal with one game at a time and talk about the switch of 'home' venue from Boundary Park to Spotland – a move forced on the Oldham board because of the closure of Oldham Athletic's ground for close-season repair work to the pitch.

I say 'forced' because Oldham would obviously have preferred to stay in their home town if only for the convenience of their loyal fans, who have followed them through thick and thin this season to Leeds, Preston, York, Workington (twice) and Doncaster.

Only three games have been played at Boundary Park out of nine second division clashes, but the Roughyeds' supporters have never tired of getting behind the wheel or climbing into their buses in order to back the team on its travels.

Bramley, Lancashire Lynx, York, Workington and Doncaster have all reported their season's best attendances thanks to the red and white army and it is no secret that officials of both the RFL and FASDA have noted with more than a passing interest that Oldham have the crowd potential to go on to much higher things.

Chairman Christopher Hamilton has never missed one opportunity of paying tribute to the loyalty of those who support the team and the club and I know the board will be watching anxiously today and comparing the Spotland attendance with those at Boundary Park.

The blunt truth is that Oldham had no option but to seek an alternative venue for the 'home' games against Barrow (today), Lancashire Lynx (next

Friday) and Workington on July 5, but having said that I know the directors come to Rochdale content in the knowledge that Rochdale Hornets and stadium personnel will do their utmost to make Roughyeds' fans feel welcome and wanted. It wasn't without reason that Chris Hamilton stood up at the public meeting that launched the new club last autumn and moved a vote of thanks to the Hornets for all they had done to help their new neighbours in their formative weeks and months. Use of the Spotland stadium was quickly made available by the Hornets and their chairman Ray Taylor, and there were no hard feelings when Oldham decided to take up the option of using Boundary Park.

This was evident by Rochdale's helping hand – not for the first time – when it emerged that Boundary Park would be closed in mid-season for renovations.

Facilities for fans here at Spotland are good, and one big advantage for many supporters is that they have the option of standing, if they so wish.

Unlike many of you, I was unable to be present at Spotland on New Year's Day when the Roughyeds took the field for the first time and did enough to beat the Hornets and lift the Law Cup.

It was a lump-in-the-throat occasion for everyone associated with the rise of the new club and if the backing for the red and whites in today's game comes anything close to matching the support it received on the first day of the year there will be even more reason for the chairman to issue his weekly thanks to those on the terraces.

Barrow, still without a Red Rose point after defeats by Workington at Derwent Park and Lynx at Craven Park, will be determined to avenge their narrow reverse at Boundary Park when the Roughyeds pinched it near the end with **THAT** try by Chris Eckersley.

It was an exciting finale to a cracking match in which a somewhat dubious try by Dean Marwood looked enough to give the Barrow boys a win until Eckersley struck with only minutes on the clock.

It was a heartbreak moment for Barrow, but a thrill-a-second end to the game for Oldham fans, who urged the winger on yard by yard over his length-of-the-field run.

Great wingers of the past, such as Barrow's Bill Burgess or, before that, Frank Castle would have admired Eckersley's match-winner . . . and there is no doubt that today's Spotland visitors will be setting out their stall to see that Eckersley doesn't get similar opportunities this time.



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Don Yates On This Day

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

DON YATES RECALLS THIS DAY IN HISTORY

TODAY Oldham break new ground with their first home league match here at Spotland. Twelve months ago, on Saturday 14th June 1997, the Roughyeds were breaking new ground much further afield when they met North Queensland Cowboys down under at Townsville in their opening World Club Championship match. Unfortunately, the tournament did not bring much success for the English clubs and Oldham lost that match 54-16. John Clarke, David Jones and Afi Leuila scored the Roughyed tries with Luke Goodwin landing a couple of goals.

Twelve months previously, on Friday 14th June 1996, Barrow were in action when they met Doncaster at Craven Park in a Second Division match. A bus breakdown caused Doncaster to arrive late and the match, believe it or not, kicked off at 9pm and finished at 10.36pm!! It was a good, exciting encounter which Doncaster won 21-20. A dropped goal from scrum-half Alex Green early in the second-half eventually proved decisive.

It was on this day in 1958, Saturday 14th June, that Great Britain met Australia before a 68,777 crowd at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Those 1958 tourists were one of the strongest ever and Britain were firm favourites to win but the Kangaroos caused a major upset by winning 25-8. The match was as good as over by half-time with the Lions 18-0 in arrears. It was to be Britain's only defeat in Australia on that tour as they recovered to lift the Ashes. Playing in the centre positions for Great Britain that afternoon were Phil Jackson (Barrow) and Alan Davies (Oldham).

Seventeen years later, in 1975, Australia won the World Championship and it was during those Championships, on Saturday 14th June, that they met Wales, again at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Four days previously Wales had defeated England in Brisbane and they looked jaded from those efforts and unable to raise their game in order to contend with a Kangaroo team who were able to register a comfortable 30-13 victory. A feature of that match was the kicking of Australian centre Mick Cronin who landed nine goals from ten attempts. At scrum-half for Wales that afternoon was Oldham half-back David Treasure.

In 1994 France toured the South Pacific taking in tests against Papua New Guinea, Australia and Fiji. The opening match of that tour

took place on Monday 14th June when France met the Highlands Zone of Papua New Guinea in Minj. Both sides scored two tries in that match but France were able to win 16-14 thanks to the goal kicking of hooker Patrick Torreilles of Pia who landed two conversions and two penalties. Unfortunately that was the only victory registered by France on that tour, their remaining six matches all ending in defeat.

Some of the most intense matches to be played 'down under' are the State of Origin clashes. One such encounter took place at the Sydney Football Stadium on Wednesday, 14th June 1989. That evening Queensland beat New South Wales 16-12 after a bruising match in which both Queensland loose-forward Bob Lindner and scrum-half Alfie Langer suffered broken legs.



David Treasure

Finally, it was on this day in 1996, Friday 14th June, that the Sydney Bulldogs announced that they would be leaving the Parramatta Stadium and returning to the Belmore Oval, which had been their home from 1935 to 1995, as well as reverting to their original title of Canterbury. Surprising what a strong impulse tradition is. Up the Roughyeds!!



Comments from THE COACH

WELCOME to Spotland. After 3 consecutive away games both myself and the players are looking forward to a home game. Many thanks to the Rochdale Board and Stadium Company for allowing this game to proceed.

One of the key features of the last three weeks, and indeed the whole of the second division, has been the inconsistency of the Referees. For a game that is making such massive strides at all levels, the second division must be the most competitive ever, so we really do have to ensure that the standard of refereeing is improving at the same pace as the standard of play.

At York I felt the referee had decided before the game started that he was going to single out Joe Nadiole and Afi Leuila. In the event, the sending off of Afi, at 2-2, quickly followed by the sin binning of Sean Cooper, cost us valuable points. We seemed to be penalised unfairly for foul play, when it was obvious that the York game plan was to intimidate us. Having said that about the referee, we need to be bigger than the referee and prepared to overcome all obstacles. The defeat at York was disappointing following on from a great home win against Barrow.

At Lancashire Lynx we started with much more passion and probably made our best start in terms of controlling the game. New signing Andy Proctor made a big impression, as did Mickey Edwards who always goes forward. Unfortunately,



we did not turn territorial advantage into points and Lynx made us pay with two tries against the run of play to lead 12-6 at half-time. Again we started the second half well but allowed Lynx a breakaway try to go 18-6 down. The lads then showed a

lot of character to hit back. The introduction of Ian Sinfield and Paul Round had immediate impact with Roundy putting in Stephen Wilde and Ian Sinfield providing the break for Neil Flanagan to score.

At 18-18 we dominated the last 10 minutes and should have won the game. Wayward kicking and glory hunting from acting half back cost us a point but there were a lot more positives than negatives against a team who will have a big say in who is promoted.

On our second visit this season to Derwent Park our defence was magnificent, particularly in the first half, the defence providing the platform to win the game comfortably in the end. Leading 10-0 at half time we should have won the game 20 minutes into the second half. Instead, we took our foot off the accelerator and allowed Workington to come back to 16-10 during a 10 minute lapse.

A drop goal from Chris Wilkinson put the game out of Workington's reach with 10 minutes to go. Victory was sealed with two late tries from Graeme Shaw and Chris Eckersley to give a 27-10 scoreline that reflected a fine performance.

Paddy Kirwan



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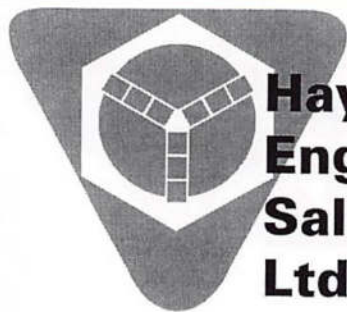


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"THE ROUGHYEDS"

HI TO ALL THE JUNIOR ROUGHYEDS

Once again we send out a warm Oldham Rugby League welcome to all the Players, Supporters and Junior members of Barrow.

Our mascot for the day when we played Barrow at home on May 17th was Aaron Gaskell. Aaron comes to the Rugby with his grandma and grandad.

This is what Aaron thought of his day:-

MY DAY AS OLDHAM'S MASCOT

"The night before I was the mascot I was very nervous and could not sleep. I even told my mum and brother I didn't want to do it.



Aaron Gaskell

On the Sunday I was excited and when I was getting ready everyone said I looked very smart. When I got to the ground I was still a little nervous and couldn't stop shaking.

I went in with my grandad to get into position for my big entrance. Oldham came out first and I led the team out. This felt great and I felt important when the crowd was cheering. I stood in the circle and shook hands with the officials and Batley's captain and I didn't feel nervous anymore. I tossed the coin and the game started. That was the end of my part. It was a very good day."

by Aaron Gaskell.

We would like to send out **Happy Birthday** wishes to the following Junior Roughyeds who have birthdays in June.

Russell Cawdron	7th June
James Greenwood	7th June
Frankie Byrne	8th June
Gary Wall	9th June
Nicholas Watterson	10th June
James Mills	19th June
Steven Wall	26th June

Welcome to our Mascot for the day **James Greenwood**. James is 7 years old. He attends Springhead Infants School and plays rugby for Saddleworth Rangers U8s. His favourite Oldham player is Jason Clegg.

Debra Rafferty

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Dave Parker M/C RU, Lancs' RU, Oldham & GB RL

Guest Writer

GEORGE DAVID PARKER born in Barrow in Furness signed for Oldham in 1960 from Manchester RU where he had captained both the club and Lancashire sides. A clever footballing loose forward (one of the most stylish forwards ever to play for the club) Dave was to play 198 first team games between 1960 and 1967. Captaining the club, Dave was also to gain County and full International honours representing GB twice in 1964 both against France.

Dave retired from the game at the beginning of the 1967/8 season due to the recurrence of a knee injury.

It is almost 40 years ago that I made the decision to turn professional and my greatest concern in doing so was what would happen if I



didn't make the grade. Happily the decision I made resulted in seven years of top class rugby league which I thoroughly enjoyed and left me with a number of vivid memories.

In the changing room before the first time I played against St Helens I was told very pointedly by one of our team - "You make sure that Vince Karalius doesn't touch me." Early in the game it was necessary for me exercise that instruction and I quickly moved into the gap between the two people concerned when all of a sudden I was hit by a brick wall and everything turned upside down. As I picked myself up the relevance of the changing room comment became apparent. However, over subsequent seasons I like to think a certain amount of mutual respect developed between Vince and me, but he was one of the hardest players I ever came across. Some years later when he had moved to Widnes I felt I broke even when I managed to collect one of our

own kick offs by Geoff Sims and score, beating Vince on the way.

Another one of my favourites was Peter Smethurst. What a great team man: He always gave 110% and always made four or five tries per season for me. When he gave me the signal and went to acting halfback I could almost tell you where I would score usually with most of the opposition still following Peter. In those days there was no six tackle rule, so if you could retain possession for seven or eight minutes the opposition usually became very frustrated and ended up losing concentration and making mistakes. And Peter was a past master at adding to the frustration and confusion.

But what about that semi-final again Hull KR at Headingley in 1964? What a game and we should have won. Unfortunately, Harry Poole's elbow closed my left eye early in the game. So, in the second half, I didn't see Mike Elliott in support on my left, with only one man to beat, because my left eye was closed. That would surely have given us the winning score. Being clever afterwards is easy isn't it, but in any case Len McIntyre's drop goal eventually saved the day for us.

Naturally, being selected for Great Britain was a very proud moment and I was pleased when I scored a try in my second game. But getting into that team must have been helped by being able to play with confidence in a good team at Oldham where we tried to play good quality rugby in an entertaining way. Time has however, marched on and now that 14 year olds can beat me on the outside, all I can do is re-live those happy sporting memories.

Dave Parker



Don Yates . . . Statistically SPEAKING

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

BEFORE the current season began, Oldham had not met Barrow in a league match for ten seasons. This season the two clubs meet four times with Barrow providing the opposition to Oldham in consecutive home matches, albeit at venues which are something like five miles apart. This afternoon's match is the 167th meeting between Oldham and Barrow. The Roughyeds have won 103 of the previous 166 clashes with Barrow having won 57 and six have ended in draws. Oldham's biggest home victory over Barrow came in September 1961 when the Shipbuilders were beaten 40-0 at Watersheddings in a league match. In December 1952 Barrow registered their biggest away win over Oldham when they won a league match at Watersheddings by 24-8. The Roughyeds' biggest win up at Craven Park came in September 1989 when they won a first round Lancashire Cup tie by 46 points to two whilst Oldham's biggest defeat at Barrow came in April 1944 when the Shipbuilders hammered Oldham 49-0. For those supporters who regard Spotland as a neutral

venue, despite today's match being a home game for Oldham, this will be the second meeting of Oldham and Barrow on neutral territory. In 1954 Barrow beat the Roughyeds 12-2 at Swinton in the Lancashire Cup Final, but more about that match elsewhere in this publication.

RESULTS OF PREVIOUS OLDHAM-BARROW MATCHES IN REGIONAL COMPETITIONS

1900-01	Lancs Sen. C.	Barrow	3	Oldham	6
		Oldham	8	Barrow	2
1918-19	Lancs League	Oldham	12	Barrow	3
		Barrow	17	Oldham	12
1939-40	Lancs League	Barrow	22	Oldham	14
		Oldham	7	Barrow	2
1962-63	Western Div.	Oldham	17	Barrow	0
		Barrow	13	Oldham	15
1963-64	Western Div.	Barrow	15	Oldham	9
		Oldham	32	Barrow	5

DETAILS OF BARROW'S LAST VISIT TO OLDHAM IN THE WESTERN DIVISION

Saturday, 21st March 1964

At Watersheddings

Oldham 32 Barrow 5

Oldham: Tries Trevor Simms (3), Jack Pyecroft (2), John Donovan, Geoff Sims & Peter Smethurst
Goals Frank Dyson (4)

Barrow: Try Mick Ducie
Goal Keith Irving

Oldham: Frank Dyson; Geoff Sims, John Donovan, Peter Smethurst, Trevor Simms; Vin Nestor, Jack Pyecroft; Charlie Bott, Len McIntyre, Tug Wilson, Stuart Whitehead, Geoff Robinson & Dave Parker.

Barrow : Eddie Tees; Bill Burgess, Jim Challinor, Eddie Whitehead, Bob Wear; George Matthews, Dave Black; Ivor Kelland, Maurice Redhead, Mick Ducie, Keith Irving, Mike Sanderson & Brian Backhouse.



Trevor Simms



Neil Barker, Manchester Evening News GUEST WRITER



TONY Barrow is never afraid to speak his mind and he rattled a few cages the other week with an interesting topic of discussion.

Coming from the old school, Tony fondly remembers the days when just one ruling body laid down the game's rules and regulations.

Things ran smoothly, the game flourished but radical change loomed large on the horizon when Rupert Murdoch's mega-bucks surfaced.

Beforehand, it was the job of the RFL's Leeds HQ to set standards, implement change and deal with all aspects of the game.

Nowadays, the picture is not so clear and Tony felt the time was right to air his views.

He banged the drum for a return to the old style of having one body representing the game as the sole source of power.

It took a brave man to take such a stand but he was ably supported by clubs outside Super League who still wrongly carry the label of being the game's poor relations.

When one takes time to reflect on Barrow's view, you can see the logic in his call for a rethink.

Barrow queried the need to have a variety of

committees and a number of highly paid individuals in seats of power carrying out accompanying tasks.

Needless to say, Barrow's blast gained tremendous support from clubs standing alongside his Swinton Lions.

As for Super League, games have been better this term but the same can also be said of matches in the first and second division.

Barrow also sounded off at the number of imports who continue to flood the British game.

He admits certain overseas stars stand out for class but hit out at clubs for recruiting simply for the sake of bringing in new, untried talent.

Like many domestic coaches, Barrow is all for developing home grown talent and felt rising stars could end up in the cold if a big money unknown got a chance to progress ahead of him.

Nine times out of ten, the mystery men turn out to be flops.

It was another interesting observation and it merely confirmed a worrying trend that still exists in all forms of professional rugby.

Clubs operating on a shoestring budget cannot afford to overstep the mark.

Men like Tony Barrow talk a lot of sense. They have been around, stood the test of time and realise what's needed to keep the sport's head above water.

Neil Barker

Iva Slateloose

Guest Writer...Coachspeak

Is it me or is it them?

"I think we showed a lot of spirit to limit their tries to just one, other than the early one." *(ie Two)* John Monie

"I took Henry Paul off at half time because I wasn't happy with the service he was giving, or his input into the game." *(He was garbage)* John Monie

"I wouldn't accuse a referee of any deliberate bias." *(He was biased)* John Kear

"Two of three tries that referee Hewitt disallowed were scored legitimately. I'm not whinging..." *(I'm whinging)* Frank Endacott

"To my mind the replay shows that Bradley hit him with the forearm and not the elbow..." *(So that's alright then)* Matthew Elliott

"I don't want to dwell on the Huddersfield game..." *(But I'm going to)* Darryl Van De Velde

"I don't know if it is a British thing and I don't like slandering anyone over here..." *(It's British thing. British players just can't tackle)* Stuart Raper

"They (Wigan's players) wanted to score tries every time they got the ball." *(And there was me thinking that was the object of the game!)* John Monie

"I'm not saying nothing, but their try did come from a very, very ordinary decision." *(I'm saying everything)* The Ref got it wrong) Royce Simmons

One From an administrator:-

"I don't want to be seen to be telling my New Zealand colleagues what to do..." *(This is what they should do)* Ken Arthurson

And to finish one we can all agree with:-

"We got what we deserved, losing pay and no Points." Andy Gregory

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Robert Gate GUEST WRITER

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

TO SCRUMMAGE OR NOT TO SCRUMMAGE? THAT IS THE QUESTION.

SCRUMMAGING? What's that all about then? We still have scrums in Rugby League, don't we? Well, I suppose it depends what you mean. Twelve blokes do still occasionally get into a huddle but no one takes much notice and nothing interesting or untoward happens. Unless things go drastically wrong, the team putting the ball in gets to keep it for six tackles. That's all there is to it, period. Why bother, I ask myself?

Earlier this season I was at a Super League match and the following happened in the space of about 50 seconds. (The names have been changed to protect the innocent.) Gladiators' winger lets a Pirahna kick roll into touch ten yards from Gladiators' goal-line. He could easily have picked the ball up but why should he, as he knows his team will get the ball from the scrum?

The scrum goes down and Gladiators 6'2" scrum-half puts the ball into his own feet while the referee gazes across the top of the scrum and waves at the Pirahna back-line telling them to stay on-side. He doesn't give a toss what is happening at the scrum. Unfortunately, the 6'2" scrum-half knocks on with the effort of having to stoop so low to pick up the ball. Even this ref cannot miss it. The scrum re-forms. This time the Pirahna scrum-half, about 5'7" and actually resembling a scrum-half, has the feed. He swings the ball in his right hand past the loose-forwards' feet, whilst the referee naturally is shouting and waving at the opposite back-line to stay on-side. The ball never leaves the scrum-half's hand, never remotely touches the scrum and he tears round the other side of the dozing dozen and flashes under the posts for a try. The ref, the touch-judge and the in-goal official hold their customary summit and the try is awarded.

Welcome to the modern game. As far as this aspect of the modern game goes, you are welcome to it but leave me out of it.

I dare say that Rugby League is still better than most other sports as a spectacle but it is no good pretending that it is perfect. Many of us, who have been watching the game for a long time and are not of the politically correct persuasion, know that the game was 'better' when scrummaging was authentic. It is quite a frightening thought that anyone who has been introduced to the game in the 1990s has never actually seen a competitive scrummage. It was in the 1989/90 season that old-fashioned scrummaging was subjected to euthenasia. Bent feeding became compulsory, pushing was passé and scrum-halves agreed never to touch one another again. "Your feed, your ball, Claude. Our feed, our ball."

All right, I know the scrummage was competition for cheats and sometimes it went on for a bit too long. I always regarded it as part of the fun. If your team's cheats were better at cheating than the other team's, you got the ball. In a perverse way the right to cheat made it fair. There was skill in cheating and the scrum was a true contest. What is more, the scrummage ensured that the game was accessible to all shapes and sizes of player, not to mention the different intellects and mind-sets. Besides, it meant that there could be no such animal as a 6'2" scrum-half.

More than anything, however, the scrummage was a time and place of unpredictability. No one could be sure what would happen next – precisely and tragically the opposite of what passes for today's scrummage. Would the referee allow that scrum-half to carry on getting away with murder? Would that hooker use his hands or his feet to get the bloody ball? Would that open-side prop even let it get to the hooker? What the hell was happening? Never mind, we've got the ball! In other words the scrummage was the focus of intense anticipation. Nowadays when a scrum goes down near the goal-line (well, ten yards out at best) there is absolutely no sense of tension. No one is screaming blue murder about having to win the scrum. Scrummaging may have been regarded by some as shambolic in the past. Now it is merely symbolic.

Earlier I said that the game had committed euthenasia on the scrummage. Perhaps we should now come clean and bury the body once and for all. I always thought charades was a different game.



From The EDITOR

I WAS impressed recently by the honesty of St Helens' Coach Shaun McRae. Commenting on his team's defeat by Halifax, McRae said: "I think everybody thought that Halifax's win at Bradford was a shock. We still have this ideology in our game that there are only two or three clubs that are entitled to beat you. As soon as we get rid of that egocentric point of view we may be a little better".

McRae's statement sums up what is wrong with Super League and its presentation by BSkyB. Outside of a select group of top clubs – originally Wigan, St. Helens, Bradford and London, the last named now replaced by Leeds – the other sides are seen merely as cannon fodder. Some time ago I bought Sky's video review of the Super League 1996: I watched it once and immediately sent it off to my brother-in-law in Australia because it was so incredibly biased towards the teams listed above.

To some considerable degree this explains why I have enjoyed first and second division rugby more in 1998 than Super League in previous seasons. Both the current first and second divisions are extremely competitive with any club capable of beating any other so that results are very difficult to predict. All of which adds to pre-match anticipation and the excitement of the game itself.

On the whole I do not get the same feeling with Super League, and it cannot help when Huddersfield Giants, having been fast-tracked into the top flight, are asked to operate – like Oldham – without the same financial support from BSkyB as every other team. If we really want competitive football then every club should start on a level playing field. How can one coach or club be judged better than another if the basic organisation of the game

favours some against others? Of course how those resources are then used is one of the vital factors in determining the outcome of matches and ultimately the final placings in the League and that is the true test of the competence of club management and administration. For too long the odds have been stacked against certain clubs. The average fan will never understand why Paris or London should receive financial support denied to Batley or Highfield. Nor will he fathom why some clubs can have unrestricted overseas imports and others not. Nor can he comprehend the tortuous definition as to why an Australian or New Zealander ceases to be a 'foreign' player on grounds of residence over a period of years. Such confusion has only served to undermine the credibility of Rugby League among its traditional, core following and, worse still, makes it highly unlikely that clubs like Wakefield, Hull KR or Swinton will ever again be able to compete for the top honours in the game.



TALKING POINTS

I NOTICE League Express Man-of-the-Match for York Wasps against Oldham Jamie Benn was recalled by Castleford to play in Super League against Salford the following week.

Leeds Wingman Leroy Rivett has signed for Bramley on a permanent transfer. However Leeds retain the right to recall him at any time. Permanent?

I see 'Bramley's' Barrie McDermott came on as sub for Leeds Rhinos to play a starring game against Huddersfield Giants and Chris Caisley thinks second division clubs can't produce players good enough for Super League!



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From the Supporters Club

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

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Looking to the future, we are considering the possibilities of organising a special Christmas Shopping Weekend to either Bruges or Paris, including a trip to a Hypermarket on the outskirts of Calais on the return journey. The trip will include a one night stay on the continent and a Channel crossing by Le Shuttle.

Itineraries for both trips are now available and if you are interested please contact either Alice (633 6780) or Trevor (628 8006) for a copy and further details.

AWAY TRAVEL

We will be organising coach travel to all away matches this season, with coaches departing from the Black Horse public house on Ripponden Road, Watersheddings. Seats on the coaches can be reserved by contacting Joyce (665 1832) prior to match day.

Members of the main branch of the Supporters Club receive a discount on the above prices.

Please contact Joyce (655 1832) for details of the departure time and prices for the future away matches.

These coaches are scheduled to arrive at the match within a reasonable time prior to kick-off and depart for home immediately after the match.

ROUGHYED REWARD

This year the half time draw will be known as the Roughyed Reward and will again be sold by the main branch of the Supporters Club. As in previous years the winner will receive 50% of the total ticket sales at each match. The winning number will be drawn at half time and the holder of the winning ticket will be presented with their prize on the pitch.

Please look out for the Roughyed Reward team at today's match and please buy a ticket or two. Remember the more you purchase, the bigger the prize, the more it helps Oldham Rugby League Club.

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From the Pen of . . . Michael Turner

OH BROTHER!

BEING as Barrow are our visitors for the second consecutive "home" fixture, the notes here are for a topic other than the opposition of the day, except to welcome back the "Furness" men for what is likely to be another close encounter.

When Joe Nadiole made his debut in the match against Bramley on May 4th, he increased the number of pairs of brothers to represent the club to 17. He was, of course, following in the footsteps of brother Tom who played for the club in the 1980's.

The first set of siblings to pull on a shirt for Oldham Rugby League Club were Jim and Jack Whittle. This was back in only the club's second ever game in the Northern Union in September 1895.

Perhaps the most notable pair are the Australian internationals Billy & Viv Farnsworth who notched up 171 senior appearances between them in the period before and after the First World War. In

more recent times Paul and Gary Lord each played 93 times for the first team although their careers did not overlap.

The highest total goes to the **Flanagans** with Terry, 281 and Kevin, 78 appearances respectively and when you consider that their father, Bill, played 31 times and cousin Neil is the current club captain and turned out on 32 occasions for the old club, Oldham RLFC has certainly benefited well from the **Flanagan** dynasty.

Other notable brother combinations to represent the club are:-

FOY: Des & Martin

GODDARD: Peter & David

HILL: Cliffe & Dave

JARDINE: Adam & Billy

LIDDIARD: Glen & David

MITCHELL: Billy & Jack

Of all the players listed Billy Mitchell played the most number of times for the club with a total of 310 senior appearances between 1938 and 1954.



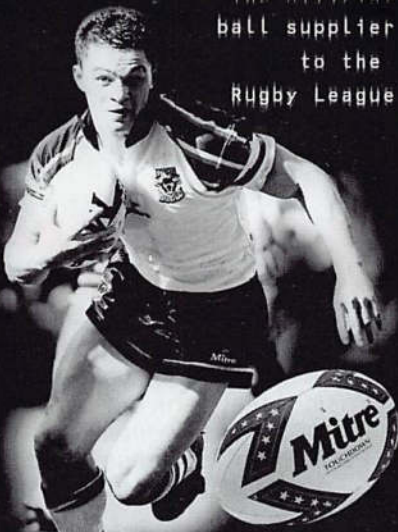
Oh My Lord! Yorkshire born brothers Paul & Gary Lord who each played 93 times for Oldham.



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Don Yates Down Memory Lane

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

Don Yates looks back to a match from yesteryear

ALTHOUGH Barrow joined the professional ranks in the year 1900, it was over fifty years before they lifted their first trophy. The Shipbuilders had been beaten Wembley finalists in 1938 and 1951 but as the team commenced the 1954-55 season, it was thought that the Barrow team, although experienced, was perhaps getting past its best.

They began the season here in Rochdale, losing the league match 17-15 at the Athletic Grounds. That defeat did not bode well for Barrow's Lancashire Cup campaign which also began with a trip to the Athletic Grounds. Stand-off Willie Horne was in inspired form in the cup-tie, his two tries and two goals eased Barrow through by a margin of 13-10. On the same day Oldham beat Lancashire Amateurs 57-17 with young winger Johnny Noon scoring four of the 11 Roughyeds tries and Bernard Ganley landing a dozen goals. In the quarter-finals Oldham beat Lancashire Cup holders St Helens 20-9 at Watersheddings whilst Barrow ran in ten tries in the 36-0 victory over Widnes at Craven Park.

Barrow then had to visit Leigh in the semi-finals, another ground where they had lost in the opening month of the season. Once again Willie Horne came to the rescue. He scored the only try of the match and also landed a goal in Barrow's 7-2 victory. The following night scrum-half Frank Pitchford scored a hat-trick of tries as the Roughyeds pulled off a rare 20-13 win up at Workington.

The final was staged at Station Road, Swinton and despite heavy rain on the day of the match, a crowd of 25,204 were in attendance to watch the following two teams:

Barrow: Colin Poole; Derek Hinchley, Phil Jackson, Dennis Goodwin, Frank Castle; Willie Horne, Ted Toohey; Les Belshaw, Vince McKeating, Frank Barton, Jack Grundy, Reg Parker and Bill Healey.

Oldham: Bernard Ganley; Dick Cracknell, Roly Barrow, Alan Davies, Terry O'Grady; Frank Daley, Frank Pitchford; Harry Ogden, Jack Keith,

Ken Jackson, Charlie Winslade, Sid Little and Bryn Goldswain.

The heavy conditions probably suited Barrow more than they did Oldham but both sides had a reputation for playing fast, open rugby. Oldham were top of the league and with eleven straight wins behind them were favourites to win despite the conditions. But Barrow had Willie Horne directing operations and what a magnificent job he did that afternoon. It was not a one-man performance, however, for each and every member of the Barrow pack grafted unselfishly and the Shipbuilders had two other heroes in centres Phil Jackson and Dennis Goodwin.

It was Dennis Goodwin who broke the deadlock after 15 minutes. An Oldham handling error saw Toohey gain possession and put the 16th centre through a gap. A dummy and Goodwin was over despite the attention of three Oldham defenders. Although Willie Horne missed the conversion his field kicking constantly drove Oldham back and he then landed a dropped goal to further frustrate the Roughyeds. Oldham's misery continued, things just would not go right for them, and when another handling error led to a try from Reg Parker which Horne converted, Oldham looked dead and buried at 10-0 down. Before half-time Bernard Ganley landed a penalty but even this failed to ignite an Oldham revival. Barrow continued to play error free rugby throughout the second half which remained scoreless until a late penalty from Horne made the final score 12-2.

Although the Oldham performance was a disappointing one, Barrow must be given every credit for the way they dealt with both the Roughyeds and the wet conditions. Six Months later Barrow pulled off an even more memorable victory when they won at Wembley to crown a season which must go down as their best ever. Let us hope that it isn't too long before success returns to the Furness area which still remains a hotbed of the rugby league code despite the lack of recent success.



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"THE ROUGHYEDS"

Bob Mordell, Rosslyn Park, England RU & Oldham RL GUEST WRITER

HOW dare the Rugby League let it happen!! Oldham Rugby – the beloved focus of the Town's community, allowed to fold! But the Oldham folk would not be beaten and the Club is back.

The Rugby League authorities did not realise the feeling that the Town had for the Club, they did not know the Oldham that I came to love and they did not have the memories that I and the Oldham faithful have. Like . . .

Frank Diskin who first approached me about joining Oldham all those years ago in 1979 . . . It only seems like yesterday that I first sat in the dressing-room before my trial game with Martin Murphy's boots flying past my ears – he wasn't happy that a Southern RU Softee had taken his mate's place in the team. All was forgiven afterwards . . .

Graham Starkey running us up Courthill until we dropped . . .

The youngsters from the Colts . . . Terry Flanagan, Ray Ashton, Andy Goodway, Mick Worrall – establishing themselves in the team and then going on to International honours . . .

Old heads like Bill Francis, Ken Gwilliam and Bob Blackwood showing the youngsters *plus* the, by now 2 Southern Softies, Mordell and Alexander how the game should be played . . .

The Oldham spectators. I loved the crowd, their banter, their support, their humour. I was hooked from the very first time that I ran onto the field . . .

Alex Givons who looked after our boots and training kit – he knew Rugby League inside out and had seen it all in his time. He did not always like what he saw at Watersheddings in those days and soon let us know if we didn't toe the line. Yet he was always the first to praise us when things went well . . .

The Parkfield Hotel where I stayed when I first joined the Club and then houses in Derker Street and then Whinberry Way, Moorside . . .

The Oldham weather – I remember driving along the M62 in bright sunshine, turning off and coming in Oldham to discover blizzards. Another time having to dig my car out of three feet of snow the morning after a clear spring night . . .

First Division rugby and immediate relegation although we almost beat Leeds at Headingley, Widnes at Naughton Park, Bradford at Odsall and St Helens at Knowsley Road. A great learning experience for the Southerners and the youngsters alike . . .



Bob (left) with Adrian Alexander

Playing with Lockwood, Hogan, McCurrie was another learning experience that was to stand us in good stead the next time we went up to the First Division . . .

Winning the Division 2 Championship with 30 wins out of 32 . . . Beating Cardiff the new team, full of Welsh RU Internationals, first away and then at home the following week . . .

The semi-finals of the John Player Trophy against Hull at Headingley having previously beaten mighty Leeds at Watersheddings . . .

Playing at Boundary Park in 1981 (we were 15 years ahead of our time). At the time it had undersoil heating and Watersheddings was frozen solid so we played battle at the football ground . . .

Returning to Division One much better equipped to stay up and in fact finishing eighth . . .

That was to be my last season as a Roughyed, but even today living back in London I still feel a sense of belonging. There is still a part of Oldham in my heart.

You just don't forget the people of Oldham, as the Rugby League authorities have now discovered. The Club is back on its feet and once again looking for success. I hope the Club goes from strength to strength and continues to embarrass those who thought that Rugby League could do without Oldham. It can't! I'm Oldham me . . .

Bob Mordell

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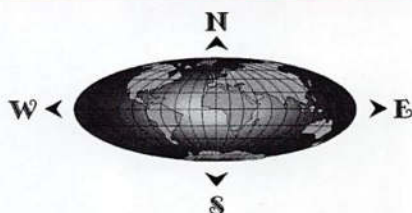
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Guest Writer

"THE ROUGHYEDS"



THE press dubbed it the groundhoppers at the Grasshoppers when Oldham met the Lynx at Preston RU's ground a fortnight ago, but there was a bit of artistic licence at work there.

I say that even though today's game is the first of a short summer season at Spotland for the Roughyeds, and there was the excursion to Hyde Utd last year. But there's nothing unusual about such an arrangement in modern day Rugby League or indeed over the hundred odd years of the sport, certainly not unusual enough to earn Oldham a 'groundhoppers' tag.

If you grew up like I did in an era when Huyton and Hunslet were the only outfits to switch grounds, you have a mental image of every club having been in situ since the year dot, but nothing could be further from the truth. Just look at the history books. Barrow had three different grounds before moving to Craven Park in 1932, Bradford used to play at Park Avenue, Bramley (of fond memory) had of handful of residences including the quaintly named Barley Mow, Cas were once tenants at 'Sandy Desert', Hull KR's previous homes include Gillett Street, known as 'Flag Edge Touch' and the Boulevard (I kid you not!) And the list goes on.

Bringing matters up to date I reckon that more than half of the present clubs have upped sticks (literally) in the last decade or so, and at least another half a dozen more have plans to follow suit in the not too distant future. Time was when league fanatics could name every ground in the RFL

whereas they would surely struggle today.

In some cases the changes have been for the good. For instance very few people would mourn the old Crown Flatt when they compare it to the new version. And though the memory of famous old grounds like Station Road, Fartown, Thrum Hall and, for that matter, Watersheddings, will always bring a lump to the throat of the sentimentalists among us, the fact is that each and every one of those 'stadiums' had passed its sell-by date by the time it was taken out of use.

And it is not as if Rugby League is unique in this phenomenon. You only have to look at soccer where a host of clubs have moved in the recent past, some to super new stadiums, others as tenants with rival outfits. One of the most romantic stories of last season was Charlton's return to the top flight at the Valley after several years in the wilderness. Will we ever see Oldham back in Super League at the Watersheddings? It is a nice thought, but there are one or two practical difficulties! Not quite so many as Wigan will face, mind you, if they ever try to return to Central Park. You can imagine the commentary . . . "and the Warriors have their backs to the frozen food department and are attacking the fresh fruit and veg end . . ."

A final word on this groundhopping business. If anyone tries to tar Oldham with that brush again, just remind them about Sheffield Eagles' 1989/90 season. Bramall Lane, Hillsborough, Thrum Hall, Belle Vue, Tattersfield, Oakwell (Barnsley) and Saltergate (Chesterfield) all played host to the Eagles and it hasn't done them much harm in the long run, has it?

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View on the 'Big Screen' : The previous weekend's Roughyeds Game!

Commences 8.00pm Prompt

HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR THE CLUB!

167 Union Street (opposite the Evening Chronicle Offices)

Tel. 0161 627 3999

A designated Roughyeds Players & Supporters Area! - (John Smiths Smooth £1.20 Pint!)

Prize Sponsors Required

On Thursday, 9th July, the Club will be holding a
Fund-Raising Golf Tournament
at Oldham Golf Club.

Prize Sponsors Required

It will be a 4-Ball Betterball - Stableford competition with a 2.30pm Shotgun Start.
Entry will be £200 for a team of 4 or £110 for a team of 2.

***Included will be Lunch on arrival, a 5-course Evening Dinner
and obviously prizes galore!***

*For tickets or enquiries please ring
any Club Official on 0161 628 3677*

Brian Walker on 0145787 5084 or

Chris Roberts (Oldham Golf Club Captain) on 0161 633 5399

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I HAD a communication from a Leeds based fan commenting on the exclusion of Darren Robinson from the team the last time Oldham met Barrow. Subsequently Darren was first choice for the Lancashire Lynx game where he was unfortunately was injured.

Team selection is, of course, a matter for the coach and Paddy's justification is no doubt that Oldham beat Barrow in a tough, forward dominated game.

Nevertheless it was refreshing to find a fan sufficiently interested to get in touch. There haven't been too many of those in recent years.

If you have any comments on any aspect of OLDHAM RLFC (1997) please contact the Editor at:- 93, Chew Valley Road, Greenfield, Oldham OL3 7JJ **Phone/Fax: 01457 872515**



Taking Oldham *forward*



Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council is the driving force behind the continued regeneration and revitalisation of the Borough.

Council endeavour has enabled Oldham to become a centre of real opportunity within the North West region.

It has made possible a new and still expanding Town Centre, 14 new schools in as many years, Oldham Sixth Form College, a multi-million pound programme of building and environmental regeneration, thriving and growing development sites and much, much more.

The Council values its role in serving the local community - and in taking Oldham forward.

OLDHAM 
Metropolitan Borough 

Enquiries on 0161 911 4708

TODAY'S SPONSORS

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Greenalls Pubs & Restaurants

WILLIAM "BILLY" MITCHELL

One minute silence will be observed prior to today's game to honour the memory of Billy Mitchell who died on June 5th, aged 76, playing 310 first team games between 1938 and 1954 and also team trainer. Our thoughts are with his family.

Michael Turner will cover Billy Mitchell's RL career in Fridays Lancashire Lynx programme.

TODAY'S OFFICIALS

TODAY'S REFEREE
Mr R. Cornish



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TOUCH JUDGES
Mr P. McLaughlin
Mr R. A. Ingham

OLDHAM

Coach: Paddy Kirwan

1	Stephen WILDE			
2	Richard DARKES			
3	Afi LEUILA			
4	Sean COOPER			
5	Chris ECKERSLEY			
6	Chris WILKINSON			
7	Neil FLANAGAN			
8	Andrew PROCTER			
9	John HOUGH			
10	Graeme SHAW			
11	Ian SINFIELD			
12	Joe NAIDOLE			
13	Mick MARTINDALE			
14	Adrian MEAD	16	Nathan VARLEY	
15	Jason CLEGG	17	Paul ROUND	

BARROW

Coach: Stuart Wilkinson

1	John McKELLEHER			
2	Gary RUDDY			
3	Phil ATKINSON			
4	Ian HALSALL			
5	Glen HUTTON			
6	Mike KAVANAGH			
7	Dean MARWOOD			
8	Shaun WALLIS			
9	Darren HOLT			
10	Stuart RHODES			
11	Geoff LUXON			
12	Neil SHAW			
13	Darren CARTER			
14	Peers BENT	16	Gary SPENCELEY	
15	Ian RAWLINSON	17	Stuart MAGORIAN	

Today's Mitre Matchball Sponsor
LANSDOWNE ROOFING SUPPLIES LTD

After the Match visit
MR. WRIGLEYS