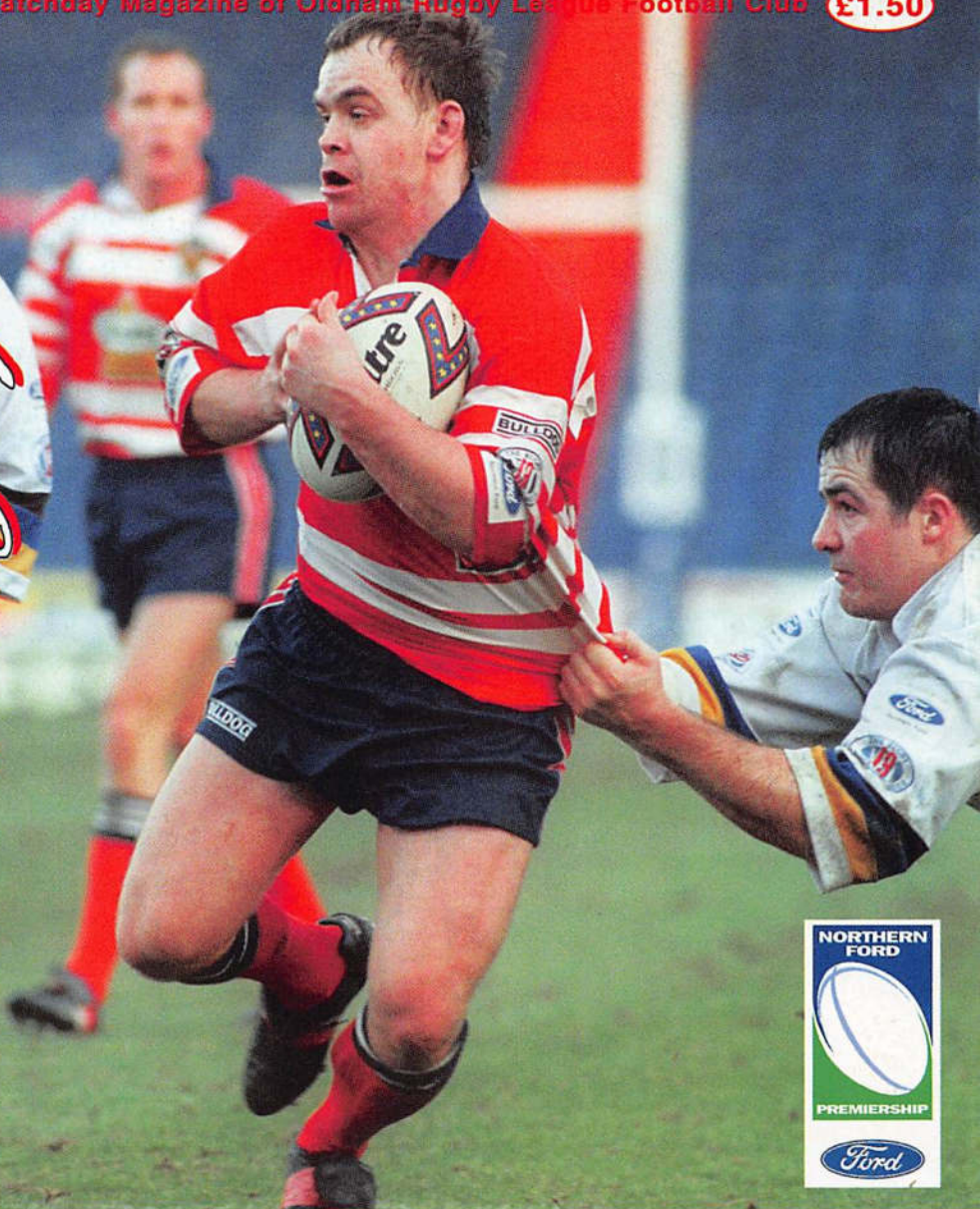


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Up Front

.....With Christopher Hamilton



AFTER BEING written off as no hopers after our defeat at Featherstone the lads responded in the right manner with a very professional performance at Sheffield last week. We are in ninth place and hopefully in a position to further strengthen our challenge for a top eight play off spot come the end of the season. Today we entertain Hunslet who show how success in sport is so very short lived.

After celebrating a magnificent win in last seasons Grand Final against Dewsbury they were denied a place in Super League and subsequent events have proved that this is a blow that is proving extremely difficult to recover from as players, fans and officials bid to overcome their disappointment. If ever people needed proof of why we should have automatic promotion to Super League then surely the negative effect of the rejection of Hunslet's Super League bid goes a long way to providing it.

Most of you will be aware that we are in the process of launching an Academy team to compete this season. This is the latest in a series of initiatives which the club has undertaken as part of our desire to plant firm foundations for the future of Rugby League in Oldham. The Academy team will provide the next cog in the conveyor belt of talent in Oldham that will hopefully assist in stopping the drain of talent from the town to other clubs.

It represents a substantial outlay for us at a time when most clubs are looking to cut back their expenditure but we see it as an important step forward and hope that you the spectators will back it in every way possible.

I would also like to thank all of you for your support over the last few matches which is becoming more and more vocal. I have said it many times before but it does make a difference and myself and the players really appreciate it.

Enjoy the game,

Chris Hamilton

The Roughyeds The Roughyeds

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FORD FOCUS . . . With Mike Ford

Haydn Walker's . . Alliance First Division Round Up



WE WERE A LOT happier this week after our win at Sheffield when I think you saw something more like the real Oldham. We can only apologise for our poor showing at Featherstone which I realise was a big let down for you, the supporters.

In the following week we went back to basics and re-assessed our goals and I think our character and discipline put us back on track. We were doubly pleased because we achieved the result at Sheffield despite injuries beginning to bite. Keith Brennan, out for the season, is a big loss but so too, hopefully for not as

long a time, are Chris Naylor, Danny Guest, Wes Rogers, Kevin Mannion and our inspirational captain Andy Proctor. In these circumstances the arrival on loan of Phil Farrell, whose work rate at Sheffield was outstanding, and Neil Roden, who has shown up well in the 'A' team, is a real boost.

As for today, Hunslet come to Boundary Park on the back of a fine win against Workington which really pleased their Coach David Plange. The 1999 Champions have a lot of good players still in their ranks like Sean Irwin, Richard Pachniuk, Chris Ross, Jamie Leighton etc., so we are not expecting them to be pushovers. Stand by for a tight game and get behind the lads as you always do.

Enjoy the game,

Mike



THE 43-18 win over Rochdale two weeks ago has been the highlight of the season so far for the Alliance team. It wasn't so much the win, but the way we won that was pleasing. Hornets, as anyone who was at the game will know, came with six first teamers and a very physical approach. Our discipline was fantastic and we did not concede a penalty until the seventieth minute. At 18-12 down at half time we turned round and ran in thirty one unanswered points. It was one of those games that happens only rarely when every single player was on the top of his form. Ian Sinfield, Phillip Farrell, Lee Doran, Chris Naylor, Simon Tillyer and Alex Peet demolished the Hornets pack. In the backs Kevin Fitzpatrick, Gavin Dodd, Dave Harris and Neil Roden ran riot.

We came down to earth with a bump a week later at Featherstone with a below par performance that saw us lose 32-6. We had chances to win the game scoring first and squandering four top chances. Injuries to Rogers, Guest, Naylor and Roden plus the slope in Featherstone's favour in the second half saw the home side deservedly beat us.

We are still pushing hard for a play off spot and providing we continue to win at home we should make the top five.

Alliance First Division

	P	W	D	L	For	Agst	DiffPTS
Hunslet Hawks	10	9	0	1	256	192	64 18
Widnes Vikings	11	7	0	4	346	185	161 14
Featherstone Rovers	10	6	0	4	285	228	57 12
Oldham	10	6	0	4	209	179	30 12
Leigh Centurions	10	4	1	5	244	236	8 9
Batley Bulldogs	11	4	1	6	183	240	-57 9
Whitehaven Warriors	7	4	0	3	191	186	5 8
Workington Town	9	3	0	6	234	191	43 6
Keighley Cougars	8	3	0	5	210	221	-11 6
Rochdale Hornets	8	3	0	5	122	210	-88 6
Barrow Border Raiders	10	2	0	8	165	377	-212 4

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In Yer Face



"Disgraceful scenes"

"Ban them!"

"Tarnishes the name of the Hull club and Rugby League in general"

"Never again must the game be subjected to the irresponsible hooligan behaviour of a mindless minority"

"We must ensure scenes like these are never repeated"

Just some of the comments trotted out this week following the pitch invasion at the end of last week's Hull v Leeds Silk Cut Challenge Cup Semi-Final.

Well, for the benefit of Red Hall and Rugby League authorities everywhere, sorry but you're behind the times. This WAS unacceptable scenes being repeated by so called 'fans' of the Hull club. So whatever measures - if - any - were taken previously clearly did not work.

On Sunday 1st September 1996 I was at Cougar Park, Keighley for the semi-final play-off match of R.L. Division One between Keighley and Hull. And guess what? There was a pitch invasion and violent scenes involving Hull supporters after their team had gone behind. And from my observation that day not one Keighley fan did anything untoward to contribute to a situation that gave stewards and police enormous difficulty to control. Exactly the same as occurred with Leeds followers two weeks ago.

And what was the policy of the R.L. at the time? Their favoured outcome was a Hull victory,

because a city the size of Hull deserved a Super League team. They were to be disappointed. But did this do Keighley any good? Well, no actually. The Cougars did not fit the grand plan: they were denied their 'place in the sun' a second time. Small town, small ground you see, apparently un-like Castleford, Halifax or Wakefield. Worse still, Keighley then had to undertake expensive reconstruction work on their ground to make it 'safe', though quite how it had been unsafe before, given any kind of normal behaviour I do not know.

And the punishment meted out to Hull I hear you ask? Well, it was so high profile that I am not aware of any points lost, fines imposed, compensation paid, reprimands issued, notices published or fans banned for life!

I remember commenting at the time if this is the club and the followers that R.L. wants in Super League they are welcome to them! And now they have them and are surprised at the outcome. No wonder David Lloyd got exasperated with this lot.

And even then Super League had to step in and bale out a failing club. And the cost? Abandonment of an expansion area which had the full and wholehearted backing of its local authority and a kick in the teeth for all the new found followers of the game. So what this time? A slap on the wrist or something more because this game was high profile and the incident seen on T.V. thereby damaging the 'image' of the game? Whatever it is, it won't be enough. In my view the club should return lock, stock and barrel to Gateshead. Now that would be positive action.



ROGER ROGER

HAVE OLDHAM acquired, in Haydn Walker, another Brian Gartland?

Brian, who passed away 18 months ago, was at his happiest when he was introducing some young unknown to Watersheddings or coaching the youngsters in the Colts team or the reserve side.

With his scores of contacts at all levels of the game in Lancashire, Brian spent nearly 20 years with the former Oldham club, to which he devoted much of his life and for which he signed on loads of lads from all over the county.

In terms of length of service to an Oldham club, Haydn is a comparative new-boy. Unlike Brian, he isn't an Oldhamer, although for the record it must be said that Brian was born in St. Helens before adopting Oldham as his home town when he married his Oldham born wife Maureen many years ago.

There are, nevertheless, many similarities in what Brian achieved for the Bears club and what Haydn is now striving to do for the Roughyeds.

A winger, Haydn has a vast knowledge of the sport not only at amateur and youth level, but also at the top echelons of the Students game.

He has worked at youth level for the Wigan, Rochdale and Hemel Hempstead clubs. He also did development work for the Hertfordshire club.

Over the years he has had a close association at club and league levels in the North-West Counties League, for whom he will play a leading role on next year's under 16s tour or Australia in his capacity as team manager.

In short, he knows the Lancashire rugby league scene inside out and that's why he was head hunted by Mike Ford when Mike took over as Oldham player coach last Autumn.

Mike had spent all his career as a player, at the top level and he needed, to fill a key role on his staff, a man who had the grass-roots of the sport at his finger tips.

In less than half a season at the club, Walker has already build a reputation for

recruiting players, so much so that on most weekends several are left kicking their heels when the Alliance team has been picked.

They won't all make the grade, but some have already been signed on pro contracts, like Gavin Dodd and Lee Doran, and others such as David Harris and Wayne Gittens have been signed on loan from Warrington and given an opportunity to take their careers on a different route.



Gavin Dodd

It was partially due to the success of the Alliance team this season, and Haydn's recruitment record, that the board took the decision, in consultation with Ford and Walker, to start an Academy team as quickly as possible.

In 1998 the newly formed Oldham club had ONE team. In 1999 it had TWO teams. There is every chance that, in 2000, it will have THREE teams and that can only be regarded as terrific progress by an emerging club that has never lacked ambition, not even in those depressing days of last season when, to all but the club's inner circle, there seemed to be little light at the end of a long dark tunnel.

A year on from there, the first team is more than holding its own in the Northern Ford Premiership, the Alliance side was fourth in its division before it took on leaders Hunslet away from home on Wednesday and the Academy team is expected to be up and running within a month.

However you look at it, that's progress.

Roger Halstead

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LIVING HISTORY

From the Pen of Michael Turner

RUGBY LEAGUE MILESTONES - A SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

1930 - 1940

THE beginning of the 1930s saw Swinton again champions in the 1930/31 season, a feat they repeated in 1934/35. However, sandwiched in-between these successes was a defeat to local rivals Salford in the final of 1932/33. The prominence of the 'Manchester' clubs at this period of time was reflected in the 1932 touring party which contained four players from Swinton (Butters, Hodgson, Wright and B. Evans) and likewise four 'Red Devils' (Feetham, Hudson, Williams and Risman). Under the captaincy of Wigan's Jim Sullivan, the tourists won the Ashes two tests to one and followed this up with a clean sweep of all eight matches in New Zealand.

In 1933 the Wigan Highfield club was relocated to become London Highfield in an attempt to establish the game in the capital. Both of their games against Oldham ended in a single point victory for the 'Roughyeds', 8-7 in London on December 20th and 5-4 at Watersheddings on January 27th 1934. Despite a respectable mid-table position the venture only lasted for one season before the club eventually moves back north to become Liverpool Stanley. The same year the touring Australians enjoyed a successful opening to their tour winning the first eleven matches. This was followed by defeat in the first test at Belle Vue and although they continued in good form the ashes were lost by three tests to nil. The following year France made their international debut going down 21-32 against England in Paris.

In Yorkshire Leeds emerged as the dominant force of the decade winning the Yorkshire Cup no less than seven times and the Challenge Cup in 1932 (v Swinton), and 1936 (v Warrington). Still the championship eluded the 'Loiners'. The nearest they came was in 1937/38 when they succumbed to Hunslet (8-2) in a fiercely contested 'derby' played at Elland Road. There would be some consolation when Jim Brough was selected to lead the 1936 tourists. Once again the ashes were retained by two tests to one and likewise

the New Zealand leg of the tour was a 100% success. For the last championship before the war another soccer ground was chosen to stage the final when Maine Road was the venue for a Salford victory over Castleford.

Three games into the 1939/40 season the league programme was abandoned due to the outbreak of World War 2.

However, by the end of September localised county leagues were set up in Lancashire and Yorkshire.

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LEEDS v. SWINTON.

Official Programme

Nº 4094

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Programme cover for the 1932 Challenge Cup final at Wigan, when Leeds defeated Swinton by eleven points to eight. Until the 2000 final to be held this year at Murrayfield, Edinburgh, this is the only time the final was brought 'back north' in peace time, since the first Wembley final in 1929.

PROBING THE NFP

HIGHLIGHT of week 11 in the NFP was a magnificent game at Boundary Park where Dewsbury Rams just overcame Oldham by 14-12. End to end rugby kept the spectators on the edges of their seats in a game which would have graced Super League for its intensity and sparkle. In the end the deciding factors were the outstanding scrambling defence of the Rams and the powerhouse running of second-row forward Sean Richardson.

Leigh Centurions accounted for Doncaster with 16 unanswered second-half points to show that the departure of Ian Millward had not upset them too much. Featherstone, meanwhile, kept up their run of success with a 42-25 win at Workington. The precocious Jamie Rooney was again in the points with two tries, 4 goals and 2 drop goals.

Hull KR overcame Swinton 54-16 with another scrum-half scoring freely, Mark Hewitt landing 9 goals and grabbing a touchdown. Widnes returned to winning ways under new Coach David Hulme, defeating York away 50-18.

Fortress Craven Park was too much for Sheffield who went down 34-16 to Barrow. The Border Raiders' home record reads six wins from six with 192 points for and 74 against. The other game in Cumbria saw Keighley defeat Whitehaven 56-10 to put real pressure on Kevin Tamati. Martin Wood kicked 10 goals for the Cougars.



Martin Wood NFP Player of the Month.

Today's visitors Hunslet struggled to overcome Lancashire Lynx 24-16 before losing

at Barrow the following week. Testing times for David Plange.

Hornets lost at Mount Pleasant 24-12 and then, in week 12, went down again, this time at Spotland to Hull KR, by 38-26. The really big result of week 12, however, was Leigh's victory at Ram Stadium. Five tries with only one goal kept the scoreline closer than it might have been for longer than necessary for a nevertheless delighted Centurions.

Widnes Vikings scored another win, 30-10 over Batley, and Doncaster Dragons were too powerful for Whitehaven, 24-14 winners at the Recreation Ground.

The battle of the bottom two saw York Wasps pull away after defeating Lancashire Lynx 26-18, much to the relief of caretaker Coach Gary Atkins and the dismay of Lynx's Steve Hampson. Good away wins were secured by Doncaster at Whitehaven and by Keighley at Swinton, but the surprise of the round was the mauling suffered by Oldham at Featherstone, reviving memories of a troubled 1999 when Rovers scored exactly the same number of points (61) against a much inferior Oldham side to that of 2000.

Last week, however, Oldham re-asserted themselves with a solid performance at Sheffield to run out 28-6 winners. Leigh secured a crucial win over Featherstone in the battle of the top two, which, with victories for Dewsbury at Whitehaven and Hull KR over Widnes, relegated the young Rovers from second to fourth. Fifth placed Doncaster accounted for Swinton 28-14 at Belle Vue, Craig Weston accounting for 16 of the Dragons' points with two tries, 3 goals and 2 drop goals.

Dark horses Keighley continue to threaten the leaders after outplaying Rochdale 26-14. Meanwhile the day's surprise result – York defeating Barrow 20-18 – did Oldham a lot of good in the battle for a top eight place. Today's visitors Hunslet racked up a fine 22-8 win over Workington and will come to Boundary Park with more confidence as a result.

This week the big games are Widnes v Keighley (an away win possible) and Swinton v Dewsbury, but Rochdale could just have an influence on the top of the table standings if they can front up to Doncaster Dragons. Yet more good games to savour in an exciting NFP season.

In Town Today



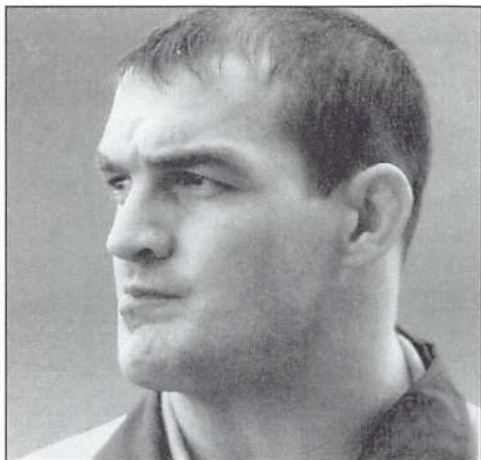
...HUNSLET HAWKS



GRAND Final winners 1999, Hunslet Hawks, like Keighley and Batley before them, found their path to Super League blocked. The consequence has been the break-up of the 1999 side and some indifferent results to date, although to be fair they have played against and lost to all the top sides ie Dewsbury, Hull KR and Keighley at home and Barrow, Doncaster, Featherstone and Widnes away. Their only win on the road was at Batley by 27-18.

The Hawks are coached by DAVID PLANGE, a Great Britain international who saw service with Doncaster, Castleford, Sheffield and Hull KR before taking over the reins at Hunslet from Steve Ferres in November 1996.

The team includes three former Oldham favourites. Captain and centre SEAN IRWIN enjoyed a spell at Watersheddings after appearing for Castleford and Great Britain. He has appeared in two NFP Grand Finals, first with Featherstone and then with Hunslet.



Sean Irwin

Hooker RICHARD PACHNIUK was allowed to leave Oldham prematurely and gave sterling service to Rochdale before moving to South Leeds. Voted NFP Player of the Season and a target for Wigan gives some idea of the quality of his football.

Prop GARY LORD is one of those players whose value is evident only when he isn't there. A grafting 'player's player', his services have been appreciated at Castleford, Halifax, Oldham, Wakefield and Batley.

After Pachniuk, the ball playing skills are provided by halfbacks JOHAN WINDLEY and WILLIE SWANN. Windley is an Academy international who joined Hunslet from Hull Sharks where he was unable to claim a regular starting spot. Swann, meanwhile, is a New Zealander who first appeared in this country for Warrington. He then saw service at Rochdale before joining the Hawks.

Elsewhere in the backs expect to see JAMIE THACKRAY a 20 year old graduate from the Academy ranks at South Leeds; STEVE PARNELL, a 19 year old ex-Academy fullback; CHRIS ROSS, a 21 year old wingman also moving up from the Academy ranks; centre CHRIS NORTH, formerly with Oldham and Dewsbury; DARREN HUGHES, a pacy and powerful centre; and AARON CAMPBELL who played on loan at Doncaster last year but is now back in South Leeds where recent reports have described him as both 'wily' and 'dangerous'.

Up front Lord and Pachniuk will be joined by STEVE PRYCE, a tough nut who joined Hunslet from York in 1994. First choice second-row is JIM LEATHAM and JAMIE LEIGHTON. Both are junior internationals with Leatham perhaps the 'runner' and Leighton the 'tackler' without doing either an injustice to their all-round game. Leighton, ex-Skirlaugh and Hull KR, was outstanding in last year's Grand Final.

Current last man down is Mick Coyle now in his tenth season with the Hawks, yet still only 28. A wily campaigner and a favourite of the fans.

Other pack men to feature this season include prop ALAN JULIAN who has been on the books at Leeds, Keighley and Bradford; JAMES WALKER an ex-Bradford Bull with a good kicking game and a fine pair of hands; and two young Hunslet Academy products in hooker MATTHEW GREEN and second-row ADAM MOORE. Additionally, recent inclusions include props PHIL KENNEDY and BEN SKERRETT, emphasising the quality of junior players making their way through the ranks as Hunslet seek to rebuild their credibility after the disappointment of 1999.

Walkerbout

With Brian Walker

PUTTING OUT THE MESSAGE



The Chairman of The Oldham Amateur League Kevin Platt points out The Standard Cup.

Two rugby league display cabinets have this week been unveiled within Oldham Civic Centre. The first display centres on the Standard Cup and the thriving amateur code in and around the town and is situated in the Rochdale Road reception area and adjacent to the Council Chamber. The second, on the ground floor of the Cheapside tower block (entrance facing the old C&A building), centres on the AJ Law Cup and of course the Oldham club.

Both professionally presented displays are ideally sited to help to keep the sport to the forefront and in both the public and political eye. GO IN AND TAKE A LOOK!



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An interview by Dave Roberts with Pat Rich



A good win at Sheffield last week.

Yes, Don Valley is a hard place to go and get a result but we came away with the two points. The pitch was awful but as I say we went for the points and got them. We had to get the Featherstone game out of our system. We have been doing extra training and have a goal to win five games running. It is going to be a hard task but a realistic one.

Why did you leave Keighley?

It was a tough decision, I could've stayed there but I liked Fordy's positive attitude, I had a lot of friends in Keighley

but I am glad to be at Oldham.

Are you happy as our kicker?

Yes! I kicked for Keighley and when I arrived here I told Fordy and he offered me the job and I enjoy it. The only down side is getting up at 8 am on Saturday mornings to practice at the college in Leeds.

Tell us about your course.

Things are hectic at the moment, I have my finals coming up in May (Law) and at the moment am burning the candle at both ends. Afterwards I am going on a course training to be a solicitor. At the moment I live two lives, one playing Rugby League, which most people here in Leeds know little about, although a few watch Leeds Rhinos and then I have my University life.

Tell us something amusing about your team mates.

We call Mark Campbell Kench. He knows what it means.

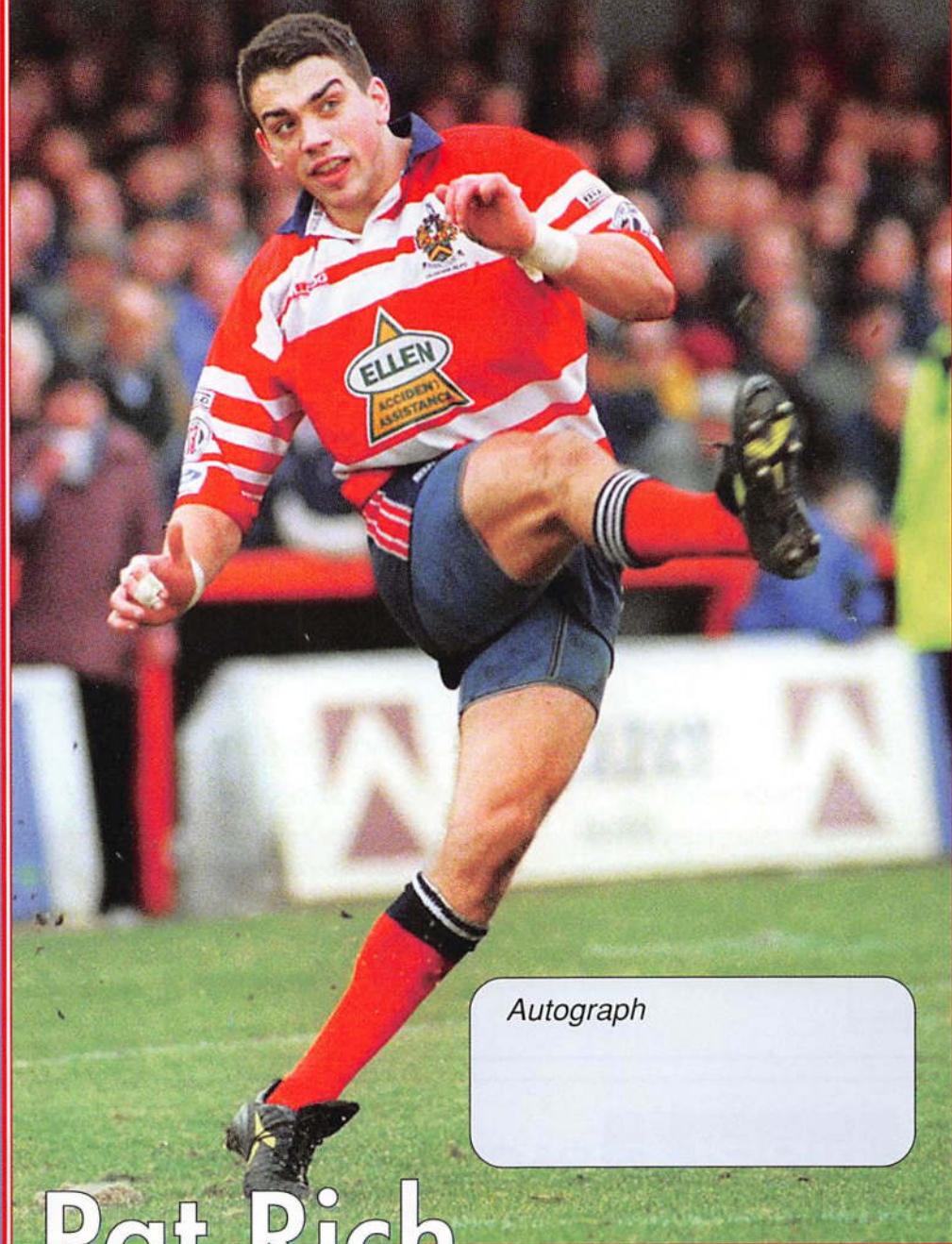
The Gibbons twins have their own language they take the first letter off a word and put it to the end and then add ae, eg yes becomes esyae and the annoying thing is they are fluent at it. Also they work on a fruit and veg stall and eat all day and have a terrible wind problem, causing some awful stench.

What are your other interests?

I don't have much time but I enjoy travelling I have a brother in Australia and would like to go over.

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Roughyeds Spotlight



Autograph

Pat Rich

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1. Instructions

Dim the lights up, boy.
Put quarter of an hour in a test tube.
I see the evening's off to a good conclusion.
You've no right to be happy in my lessons.
Close your books all boys who haven't bothered to
open them.
Turn a dumb eye and a blind ear to this.

2. Observations

Nothing ventured, nothing lost.
You don't need a boat to go sailing.
Latitude forty-five degrees centigrade.
*I'm trying to listen with one ear and speak with the
other.*
Little m is smaller than big M.
You can't even listen when we're wasting time.
Parnell was an Anglo-Englishman.
He wrote his best book before he died.
He had two brothers and two sisters, all older than
themselves.
*I said I didn't get here on time, I didn't say anything
about being late.*
Women are more maternal than men.
*You can't be sure about birth; you weren't here when
you were born.*
I like a dance band, especially when I'm at a dance.
*If you're not going to listen, you can fail your exams
without my assistance.*
I've taught you everything I know and you know
nothing.

3. Questions

Who won the seventy years hurdles?
Which is my right-hand foot?
Where is the Cape of Good Horn?
Have you read Enoch Blyton?
Does a fly-wheel have a fly-hole?
How does an automatic detention work, sir?
What is a milk bottom top?
Is Valderma really a town in Italy?
Sir, where do we get changed for the dental
inspection?

4. Translations

Pax in bello
A la carte
Labor omnia vincit
Sotto voce
Digni este favore
Apres moi le deluge
Nota bene
In loco parentis
Quid nunc
Per ardua ad astra

Freedom from indigestion.
On the Wagon
Socialism ruins everything
In a drunken voice.
Do me a favour
The shower are after me.
Flat broke
They took my father away.
My rich uncle.
It's hard work being a star.

5. The Prize Winning Poem

I have a pet hamster.
His name is Orson.
Mummy says I have to get rid of him
Because he smells.
Sometimes I take him to bed with me at night.
I smell as well.



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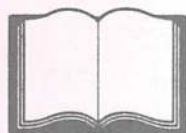
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Amateur Album

STANDARD CUP



Standard Cup

THE NEXT rugby league match to be staged here at Boundary Park is the Standard Cup Final between Saddleworth Rangers and Waterhead who meet on Good Friday morning, 21st April, kick off 11am.

This season's competition is the 96th staging of the the Standard Cup and it began in October when centre three-quarter Lee Maher

scored a hattrick of tries as Higginshaw Eagles defeated Middleton Rhinos 44-0.

Unfortunately, the Eagles suffered recruitment problems around the turn of the year and they were unable to fulfil their quarter-final tie against Shaw Rhinos. Trophy holders Waterhead travelled across town to Hollinwood where they trailed 6-4 after twenty minutes before recovering to win by 40 points to sixteen. Salem Hornets defeated Watersheddings Wanderers in another quarter final tie, but the big match was the Saddleworth Rangers - St Anne's match at Greenfield. Rangers won a superb tie 22-6, thereby gaining revenge for a league match defeat suffered against St. Anne's at the same venue just eleven days previously.

The semi-final draw produced tricky away ties for Saddleworth and Waterhead. Unfortunately for Salem Hornets, heavy rain caused their tie against Waterhead to be switched from their Breeze Hill pitch to Manor Park, the Oldham RUFC ground. Having lost ground advantage, Salem were no match for their Conference League opponents who went on to win 52-0. Saddleworth found their tie at Shaw much more difficult. In atrocious conditions, the Rhinos held Rangers up to half-time when the tie was scoreless but, after the break, Rangers were able to ease through 10-4. Good Friday's final, therefore, throws together trophy holders Waterhead and the club who have lifted this trophy a record fourteen times including six consecutive victories between 1987 and 1992. In that 1992 final Rangers defeated Waterhead 22-8 in one of four previous finals involving these two clubs. In 1976 a crowd of 2,677 saw Rangers win 16-4

but five years later Waterhead gained revenge when they defeated Rangers 9-7, thereby winning the Standard Cup for the first time. Rangers then repeated that 1992 victory when they beat Waterhead 25-12 in the 1997 final when eleven points from second-row forward Danny Tyrell swung the tie Saddleworth's way after they had trailed 12-11 on the hour.

Although Saddleworth's record in this competition is much better than that of Waterhead, it must be noted that Waterhead have knocked Rangers out of the past two competitions. Two years ago they won a first round tie at Shaw Hall Bank Road 32-12 when centre Paul Brassington (three tries) and stand off Paul Garrett (try, three goals) led the way shortly after joining Waterhead from Rangers. They have since returned to Saddleworth but that did not stop Waterhead beating Rangers 14-6 at Peach Road in last season's quarter final despite the fact that they trailed 6-0 after only a couple of minutes.

Waterhead enjoyed a tremendous season and so with Saddleworth's pedigree it should be a thrilling final and certainly not one to be missed. So make a note in your diary. Good Friday, 11am. Waterhead v Saddleworth.

ALLIANCE FIRST DIVISION FIXTURES 2000

JANUARY

8th	Whitehaven Warriors	A	W	18-16
15th	BARROW B.R.	H	W	42-2
22nd	Workington Town	A	L	26-4
27th	Rochdale Hornets	A	L	16-4

FEBRUARY

3rd	FEATHERSTONE ROVERS	H	W	34-6
26th	Batley Bulldogs	A	W	18-11

MARCH

8th	Widnes Vikings	A	L	40-6
14th	KEIGHLEY COUGARS	H	W	34-12
23rd	ROCHDALE HORNETS	H	W	43-18
30th	Featherstone Rovers	A	L	32-6

APRIL

5th	Hunslet Hawks	A	7.30
13th	BATLEY BULLDOGS	H	7.30
20th	LEIGH CENTURIANS	H	7.30
27th	HUNSLET HAWKS	H	7.30

MAY

3rd	Keighley Cougars	A	7.30
13th	WHITEHAVEN W.	H	2.30
20th	Barrow B. R.	A	2.30
27th	WORKINGTON TOWN	H	2.30
31st	Leigh Centurions	A	7.30

JUNE

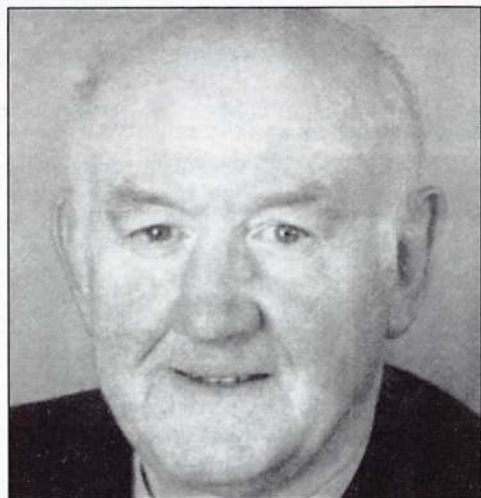
15th	WIDNES VIKINGS	H	7.30
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JULY

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Today's Guest Interview...

RAY FRENCH



Ray, What's it like working for the B.B.C.?

I love working for the B.B.C. although the job with Radio Merseyside is much more relaxed and enjoyable than match commentaries for T.V. On radio you pretty well dictate how the programme goes. You can't be tripped up by the producer showing a different shot to what you are talking about. And with the 'phone-in you get the chance to listen to people's views and to air your own.

On T.V. I can have three different people talking to me through the headphones. First there's the producer, then there's a girl keeping all the match stats and finally there's a link to the Grandstand studio to ensure a smooth transition to other items in the programme. And remember, it all goes out live, so if you make a mistake you can be sure it will be pounced on. Eddie and Stevo on Sky don't have the same problems with links to other sports and some of their material is pre-recorded. It can be very stressful I can tell you.

How do you get on with Jonathan Davies?

John & I get on really well. We have a good working relationship and like to take the mickey out of each other. I like to think we make a good team.

What do you think about all the criticism you get?

R.L. fans are very critical, but you have to realise that on Grandstand 80% of the viewers are not R.L. fans. The audience covers the whole country and you can't assume people will

be familiar with all aspects of the game. You have to try to explain things and to keep it simple; people have tuned in to be entertained so you can't always get too technical.

What's really amusing is the way some R.L. fans write to the B.B.C. I have a copy of one letter calling my commentary inept, hopeless, vile, incomprehensible, patronising etc. etc. and I wasn't even at the match! On other occasions I get copies of letters accusing me of bias. One Salford fan wrote "Dear French, I am appalled at the bias you showed towards Hull in last week's match..." The same week I had a letter from a Hull fan, "Dear Sir, Your commentary was totally biased towards Salford and gave no credit to anything Hull did..." You get resigned to fans seeing everything through spectacles the colour of their team's shirts.

You live and work in St. Helens, a town with the most successful club since the start of Super League: what's going on at the club?

Well, in the case of Ellery he just had to go. He upset too many people and St. Helens have lost too many good workers for the club who have been there for years and just wouldn't go near the place.

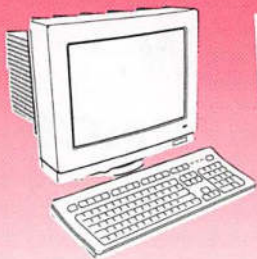
With Shaun McRea that was probably a mistake because he did so much in his time there, but he wasn't too happy after David Howes left. Howesey is the best in the game for marketing and media relations so he was a big loss too.

Will Saints leave Knowsley Road?

Yes, it's going to happen. It isn't that Knowsley Road is a bad ground, in fact it's one of the best in the league for viewing and atmosphere, but the maintenance costs on an old stadium are astronomical and a new ground will provide more up to date facilities and greater comfort for the spectators.

Finally Ray, now that Super League is in its fifth season how do you think it is progressing?

Well, at first everybody thought that the Murdoch money was going to save the game, but in fact it created as many problems as it solved because converting to full time was so expensive and players' salaries went mad. A lot of clubs were effectively bankrupt including Wigan: why else would they have had to sell Central Park to Tesco? There was a lot of maladministration. Things seem to have settled down a bit now and the competition is much stronger. Also SLE is much better run now, with much less in-fighting.



WINNARD'S

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With Simon Winnard

I WAS not so much shocked as disappointed by the disgraceful behaviour from the Hull supporters after the semi final defeat at the hands of Leeds. However, I expect my disappointment is nothing compared to that of the RL authorities who must see this as scant reward from the 'Old Faithful' for bending almost every rule in the book to ensure that Hull were given a successful side.

The ridiculous rescue plan dressed up as a merger by Mr Caisley and company saved Hull from financial crisis and almost certain closure. The cream of one of the most talented squads in last year's competition was simply relocated from Gateshead to Humberside to significantly strengthen the 'new' club's playing staff. This undoubtedly afforded the Humberside club another Challenge Cup semi final appearance.

Having mismanaged the club almost into oblivion, the old administration was then simply replaced by a similarly unsuccessful one and the 'merger' incentive money merely used to clear Hull's massive debts. Indeed, success on the field came at a price for Thunder and despite significant 'development' funding from the News Corporation coffers, they still managed to incur a £750,000 loss in only one Super League season . . . now here we could see a little bit of long term natural justice should a similar financial strategy be adopted on Humberside.

In addition to this, the Hull club still benefits from an increased quota of Antipodean imports despite being no more a development side than Wigan, St Helens or our beloved Oldham. You have only to briefly examine the highest level of the Amateur game to see that it's the Hull and Oldham teams who are pushing for honours. Rugby League at grass roots level has never been stronger on Humberside and the same can be said locally. However, the powers that be can see their way to putting together an all encompassing survival package for Hull when Oldham were all but allowed to die . . . and this is the gratitude they are given in return! One thing is for sure, I would have loved to

have been a fly on the wall in the Hetherington household that night.

Rugby League does not need its family image tarnished in this way. With limited opportunity for genuine national exposure, we can surely do without this sort of publicity. However, whilst the behaviour of the minority yob element deeply saddens me, the product on the pitch has been nothing short of superb and I am already looking forward in anticipation of a magnificent Murrayfield final and a great Rugby League weekend away.

With regards to Super League, the early indicators show that Bradford Bulls are hot favourites for the crown and the Huddersfield Giants look a sure wooden spoon bet for the second year in a row. The RL authorities however will be hoping that a remarkable improvement is made on their early season form. The embarrassment of them inventing a Huddersfield - Sheffield - Salford Giants for next year's competition would surely be too much to take . . . or would it?

Today we extend a warm welcome to the Hunslet Hawks who have seen a recent decline in fortunes due to the Super League closed shop. Last season's Grand Final victors more than earned a Super League place but were excluded on the same 'grounds' that Wakefield had been allowed clemency the year before. The Wildcats were allowed time to reach the minimum ground criteria whereas the Hawks (despite a South Leeds local authority guarantee that the necessary work would be carried out) had their claims simply rejected. That rejection has seen the vultures circle and many of their star players have departed to ply their trade elsewhere. As a result they have seen the crowds diminish and the hard work of an ambitious, hardworking club who built slowly and within their means for a successful future, suffer a major setback through no fault of their own. I say you can keep your Gateshead FC, Hull Thunder, Charlton Broncos or Anyfield Giants. Give me Hunslet, Bramley and Sheffield any day.

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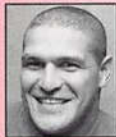
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Club Call

CLUB CALL

A big Boundary Park welcome to all supporters. It was good to get back to winning ways at Sheffield after the disappointments at Featherstone. The backing of our supporters at BOTH games was tremendous and I know Mike and the boys appreciate it.

AWAY MATCH TRAVEL

The Club is organising travel to away matches this season. We are using Barlows Coaches and you can either book directly through the Club on 0161-628-3677 between 9 and 5pm

Monday to Friday (or on 0161-627-2141 9-1pm Saturdays) or phone Joyce Pilkington on 0161-665-3175. 'Elite' Club members receive extra discounts on away travel. So there is no excuse for not being part of the 'Roughyeds Barny Army!'

MATCH VIDEOS / CLUB SHOP

As promised in the last programme we have now received some new stock at the Shop. Fleeces are priced at £24.99 and PU Jackets are £39.99. Leisure tops and Polo Tops will be here any day now. All match videos can be ordered in the shop for the very reasonable price of £9.99.

Enjoy the game.

Scott

'ELITE' CLUB

A BIG THANK YOU to all supporters who have joined our new membership scheme the 'Elite'.

Congratulations go to Mr Noel Brady who is enjoying a VIP day out for two today as the winner of the 'Elite' membership draw. The 'Elite' is the only OFFICIAL Supporters Club.

There is no deadline for joining the 'Elite'. Membership costs £15 and there are numerous benefits to be had . . . not least the fact that you are helping YOUR Club. An informal get-together of all 'Elite' members will be held at Castleton Gabriels after the 'A' team game against Batley on Thursday 13th April 2000. The meeting will be in the Clubhouse and will be open to any 'Elite' member who wishes to help the Club.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT: 0161 628 3677

REDDISH DEMOLITION LIMITED Sponsoring Junior Roughyeds

FIRSTLY may I welcome and thank Melvyn Lord of **Reddish Demolition**, the new sponsor for the ORLFC Junior Roughyeds and a wholehearted supporter of Rugby League in Oldham?

Hi to all the Junior Roughyeds and a special Oldham welcome goes out to all the Junior supporters of Hunslet Hawks.

The Mascot for today's match is **JOHN**

WOOD. John is 7 years old and his favourite player is Mark Sibson. This is the first time John has been chosen as mascot and he's really looking forward to the match.

Another Junior Roughyed who has been chosen to be the Mascot for the

first time is **PHILIP**

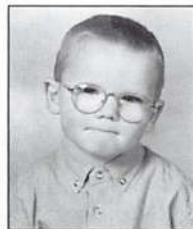
COWBURN. Philip is the Mascot at Batley Bulldogs on 16th April. His favourite player is Mark Sibson. Enjoy your day Philip.

The next Junior Roughyeds' meeting is to be held before the Swinton Lions match on 24th April.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Chris Hamilton for inviting the Juniors to hold their next meeting in the Executive Box at Boundary Park. We will have some players attending and we will be holding the Mascot draw. Plus there will be lots of fun and surprises too!



Philip Cowburn



John Wood

Debra Rafferty

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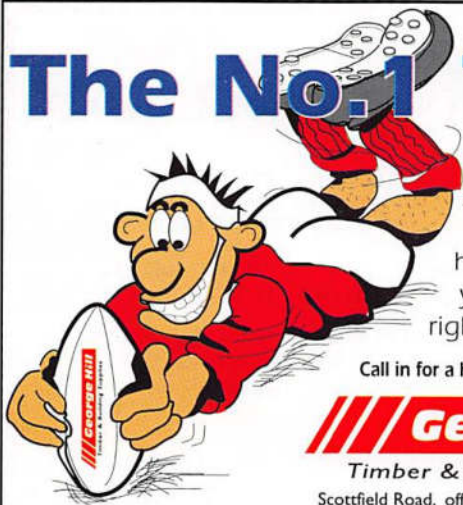
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DON YATES LOOKS BACK TO APRIL 9TH YESTERYEAR.

IT WAS on this day in 1910, Saturday 9th April, that Wales defeated England 39-18 down at Ebbw Vale. It was the first time that England had lost to Wales and was a major shock for the Englishmen. But a bigger shock awaited Hunslet winger Billy Batten who injured a knee in that resounding defeat; the injury was considered so serious that Batten was told that he certainly would not be touring Australasia with Great Britain the following summer and, in fact, he was told that he might never play again. Batten was not convinced. He tested his knee two weeks later in an amateur match in which he scored a hattrick of tries for Hemsworth. He did tour with the 1910 British Lions and two years later was transferred to Hull for a World record fee!!



Albert Avery

There were two Oldham players involved in that international at Ebbw Vale, scrum-half Tom White and prop-forward Albert Avery. The Roughyeds did not appear to miss their international duo that afternoon, Saturday 9th April 1910, when Treherbert visited Watersheddings for what proved to be their last ever match. The Welshman were

beaten 54-13, conceding fourteen tries, four of which were scored by winger Tom McLean.

It was a much more disappointing afternoon for Oldham fifty years later, on Saturday 9th April 1960. That day the Roughyeds met Hull in the Challenge Cup semi-final at Station Road, Swinton. Oldham were favourites to win that tie but some

hesitancy in defence gifted points to the Airlie Birds who went on to win 12-9. Winger Vin Nestor scored the Oldham try with full-back Bernard Ganley adding three goals.

On Easter Monday 9th April 1928 Oldham entertained Widnes who were hammered to the tune of 60 points to five. Winger Abe Johnson led the rout with two tries and 12 goals, his 30 point haul being a club record for points scored in a match.

Eric Fitzsimons was a free scoring winger for both Oldham and Hunslet. It was on this day in 1980, Wednesday 9th April, that he landed six goals for the Roughyeds when they defeated Halifax 24-5. Two years later, on Good Friday 9th April 1982, he had moved on to Hunslet for whom he landed a couple of goals although Hunslet were beaten 15-13 by Batley at Mount Pleasant in what, technically, was a home match for Hunslet. At that time the Hawks were homeless and played their home matches at Batley.

Six year ago, on Saturday 9th April 1994, the Great Britain amateur team met Russia at Keats Avenue, the home of the Wigan St. Jude's club. That match was scheduled to be played the previous evening at Central Park but was postponed because of a waterlogged pitch. The Russians were no match for the BARLA boys who won easily by 62 points to 14. Second-row forward Steve Maudsley (Saddleworth Rangers) was in unstoppable form and scored four of the 12 British tries. Another Saddleworth player, prop Gary Dobbs who is now at St. Anne's, was on the bench for Great Britain that afternoon whilst a third Saddleworth representative was physiotherapist Neil Wiseman.

Saddleworth appear here at Boundary Park on Good Friday 11am when they meet holders Waterhead in the Standard Cup Final. Rangers won the Standard Cup in 1971, Good Friday 9th April, when they beat St. Anne's 20-8 whilst eleven years later, on Good Friday 9th April 1982, Waterhead lifted the trophy when they defeated St. Anne's, the score on that occasion being 9-6.

Fixtures

Date	Opponent	Result	Att
DECEMBER			
12	ROCHDALE H (LAW CUP)	F - A	W 30-18 1,204
27	ROCHDALE HORNETS	W 23-20	3,562
JANUARY			
2	Swinton Lions	W 23-18	2,567
9	WHITEHAVEN W	W 26-22	2,446
16	Barrow B.R.	L 19-16	1,618
23	WORKINGTON T	W 30-17	2,222
FEBRUARY			
6	Doncaster Dragons	L 16-26	2,130
8	Wigan St. J (SCCC R3)	W 44-0	1,376
13	Rochdale H (SCCC R4)	L 14-30	2,168
20	Leigh Centurions	L 10-28	2,410
MARCH			
5	LANCASHIRE LYNX	W 50-8	1,522
12	Widnes Vikings	W 20-31	3,300
19	DEWSBURY RAMS	L 12-14	2,115
26	Featherstone Rovers	L 26-61	2,071
APRIL			
2	Sheffield Eagles	W 28-6	1,220
9	HUNSLET HAWKS	H 3.00	
16	Batley Bulldogs	A 3.00	
21	Rochdale Hornets	A 7.30	
24	SWINTON LIONS	H 3.00	
MAY			
1	YORK WASPS	H 3.00	
7	Hull Kingston Rovers	A 3.00	
10	KEIGHLEY COUGARS	H 7.30	
14	Whitehaven Warriors	A 3.00	
21	BARROW B.R.	H 3.00	
26	Workington Town	A 7.30	
29	DONCASTER DRAGONS	H 3.00	
JUNE			
4	LEIGH CENTURIONS	H 3.00	
11	Lancashire Lynx	A 3.00	
18	WIDNES VIKINGS	H 3.00	
25	Dewsbury Rams	A 3.00	
JULY			
2	FEATHERSTONE ROVERS	H 3.00	

Oldham RLFC fully support the let's tackle racism in rugby league campaign and welcomes all players and spectators irrespective of their ethnic or racial origins. Racism has no place in our game and racist chants are totally unacceptable. Allow everyone to enjoy the game.

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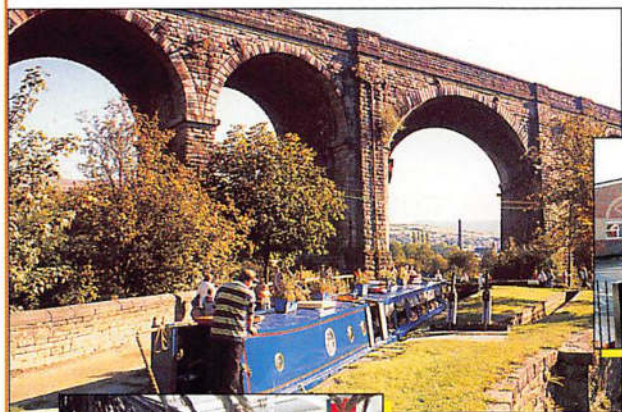
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IMPORTANT NOTICE

BOUNDARY PARK IS FITTED WITH AN EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM (LOCAL HIGH PITCH, TWO TONE SIGNAL). IF YOU SHOULD HEAR THE SIGNAL PLEASE PAY ATTENTION TO THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN. A TEST OF THE ALERT SYSTEM WILL BE MADE PRIOR TO EACH GAME, TWENTY MINUTES PRIOR TO THE KICK-OFF TIME, FOLLOWED BY THE WORDS:
"THIS IS A TEST OF THE BOUNDARY PARK ALERT SYSTEM"

Oldham – *Well placed for the challenges of the New Millennium*



Oldham Metropolitan Borough is ready to meet the many and varied challenges of 2000 and beyond.

The Council's forward thinking approach, commitment and activities have resulted in a massive regeneration and revitalisation programme of the Borough throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

This endeavour has led to an expanding, improving town centre which has benefited from £100 million investment, 20 new schools in as many years, a national award-winning multi million pound regeneration scheme, development of a new cultural quarter, a new business management school, a town centre based leisure scheme including multiplex cinema, Britain's newest Sixth Form College, a diversity of industry, the planned extension of the Metrolink tram system and much more.

All this, together with Oldham's reputation for innovation, hard work and friendliness means that the Borough finds itself well placed to meet the challenges of the New Millennium.

The Council is committed to continuing to serve the local community and in helping Oldham maintain its significant status in the North West Region.

OLDHAM 
Metropolitan Borough 

Enquiries about the Council's policies and activities, including its regeneration programmes and policies to the Chief Executive's Department, PO Box 160, Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1UG.



TODAY'S TEAMS



OLDHAM

Coach Mike FORD

Mark SIBSON

Joey HAYES

Anthony GIBBONS

Pat RICH

Warren BARROW

David GIBBONS

Mike FORD

Jason CLEGG

John HOUGH

Leo CASEY

Phil FARRELL

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Chris HOLLAND

Ian SINFIELD

HUNSLET HAWKS

Coach DAVID PLANGE

Chris COOK

Aaron CAMPBELL

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Darren HUGHES

Chris NORTH

Willie SWANN

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Jamie LEIGHTON

Mick COYLE

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David PLANGE

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REFEREE

COLIN A. MORRIS

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 **BERNIE HUNTER**

 **BRIAN KING**

 **4th D. GILLESPIE**