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The Roughyeds



WIDNES VIKINGS

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Up Front

... with Christopher Hamilton



A PROSPEROUS New Year to everybody at today's game.

What a game to start off the New Year with, which due to the postponement of the Chorley game, means it is also our first home game of the season. Widnes have made a number of big name signings during the close season which

have seen them installed as the Northern Ford Premiership favourites. If both teams have won their Christmas games then somebody's 100% unbeaten record will have to give today.

The players have already had two impressive wins up in Cumbria and particularly the Workington performance was very professional and ruthless. Those are qualities we need to achieve each week if we want to be amongst the top teams in the competition.

The support you have given the team so far has once again been excellent and hopefully today will see you once again raise the roof!

Today is also the first time that the team will have played in the 'new' J. W. Lees kit and we hope to start it off on a winning note.

Our thanks go to J. W. Lees, Claims Network and ProSport for backing the club and we hope to repay their faith in us by providing 100% commitment both on and off the field.

Enjoy the game and get behind the team.

Best wishes,

Chris Hamilton



The Roughyeds

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FRONT COVER

**Action from the recent win
at Workington**

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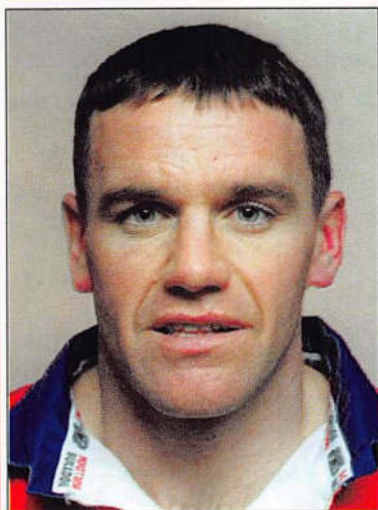
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FORD FOCUS . . . with Mike Ford



DEPENDING on the results over Christmas both ourselves and Widnes could be coming into today's game unbeaten. Our visitors have made some high profile signings and are, rightly, favourites to win the competition. Hopefully we will take the field with a full strength squad before a big and noisy crowd for what promises to be a terrific tussle.

To date we feel our performances have been very professional and we ground out a really good result at Workington. Considering the signings Town have made, together with an excellent opening win over Rochdale we were very pleased to dent their aim of going all season unbeaten at home. A good few Cumbrians were well sick at the result I can tell you! Our pack laid the foundations

with a dominating performance and newcomer Paul Norton was outstanding, displaying the work rate and toughness he had shown at Lancashire Lynx and which had drawn our attention to him.

At this stage of the season nothing much has taken shape, but it is pleasing to see Swinton and Sheffield getting some results to put themselves up with the favourites. It serves as a warning to us not to underestimate anyone and not to let our guard slip.

Obviously we are disappointed to lose Shayne McMenemy to Halifax Blue Sox, but it was always possible a Super League club would come in for him and he leaves with our blessing and our thanks for his contribution to the Oldham cause, which has been magnificent.

Meanwhile we are pleased to welcome out latest signing Danny Arnold.

I hope you have enjoyed a Merry Christmas and wish you all a very Happy New Year.

Mike

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Michael's Match



... from the pen of Michael Turner

Drawn games in Rugby League have always been a rare occurrence and increasingly so since the try was re-valued from three to four points in 1983. However, in 1985 the Roughyeds and the "Chemics" (the invasion of the Vikings still being some years off) combined to produce two drawn matches within the space of two months. Furthermore the score on both occasions was exactly the same, ten points each!

The first match was on October 27th when three Mick Parrish goals and a try from Gary Warnecke earned Oldham a point at Naughton Park in front of a crowd of 5,046 spectators. The return match was at Watersheddings on Boxing Day. The Australian Warnecke was again a try scorer for Oldham but this time the goal kicking duties were left to David Hobbs who obliged with the conversion and two penalties. The attendance was 6,811 at a match which saw a young Leo Casey on the Oldham substitute's bench. This was only his second time on the Roughyed's team sheet.

The two clubs have never contested a

major final against each other but Widnes are amongst that notorious band of villains who have ended Oldham's Challenge Cup Wembley ambition at the last hurdle. This was the first time the Roughyeds reached the last four during the Wembley era. The year was 1934 and, although Widnes were a few places higher in the league table, Oldham had knocked the Chemics out of the Lancashire Cup in the first round on their way to eventually winning the trophy against St Helens Recs at Swinton. Station Road was again the venue for the Challenge Cup semi final and the anticipated close game came to pass with Widnes progressing to the twin towers by seven points to four, there to beat Hunslet in the final.

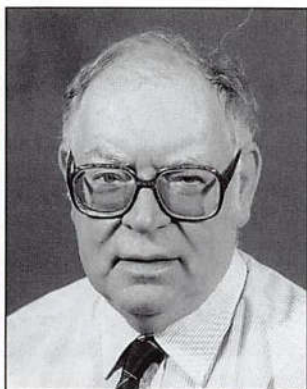
The Oldham team that day, March 24th 1934 was:

Tommy Rees, Albert Taylor, Sam Bardsley, Jack Stephens, Les Lewis; Jack Reynolds, Alex Givvons; Jack Read, Jack Scaife, Abe Clayton, Trevor (W.T.) Thomas, Fred Ashworth, Bill Butterworth.



Vintage Oldham v Widnes action. Oldham forward Bob Sloman attracts the attention of several Widnes defenders during the match at Watersheddings on February 21st 1925. But where is the ball? Oldham won the match 16 - 2.

ROGER



ROGER

THAT was the year, that was. And the first year of the new Millennium was a good one for Oldham RL Club as the Roughyeds recovered impressively from a disastrous

second season in 1999.

On and off the field Oldham did enough in 2000 to make the rest of the Northern Ford Premiership sit up and take note, even though Mike Ford's men fell at Leigh in the semi-final stage of the top-eight play-off.

The failure to make the Grand Final didn't stop Ford's inclusion among three nominees for the coach-of-the-year award in the NFP.

Nor did it prevent Shayne McMenemy winning a place in the mythical NFP team of the year.

Both were present at a superb awards dinner at Elland Road, Leeds when Roughyed's Chairman Christopher Hamilton stepped up to receive, on behalf of his club, the prestigious Club-of-the-Year trophy.

The year had started well with a 23-18 win at Gigg Lane, Bury against a Swinton side that came back strongly in the later stages to give Oldham fans a few anxious moments.

Inconsistency restricted the team's progress in the early part of the season and it was so typical of the Roughyeds in the infancy of Ford's stewardship that they should produce an awful performance at Rochdale in the fourth round of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup before pulling off an inspirational 31-20 win at Widnes only a month later.

Another sound show against Dewsbury, albeit ending in a 14-12 defeat at Boundary Park, was followed by the worst performance of the season - a 61-26 hammering at Featherstone.

Looking back, and with the knowledge of the significance of that bad, black day at the Lionheart Stadium in terms of the shrill wake up call it delivered, it is interesting to recall the line-up.

It was Sibson; Hayes, A. Gibbons, Rich, Barrow; D. Gibbons, Ford; Casey, Hough, Clegg, Holland, McMenemy, Campbell. Subs: Guest, Doran, Roden, P. Farrell.

Tom O'Riley and Tate Moseley had been and gone, but McMenemy had made his debut as a

sub at Widnes two games earlier and both Neil Roden and Phil Farrell were on the senior sheet for the first time.

All three were to make a huge impact as the Roughyeds embarked on a run of seven consecutive wins, followed by two defeats and then a spell of six wins and a draw in the eight games to the end of the normal league programme.

Despite a 16-12 defeat in Yorkshire by the team of the season, Dewsbury, Ford's men finished sixth - an extremely creditable position in the new coach's first season.

In the play-offs, they knocked out Hull K.R. at Spotland and became the first team to win at Doncaster all season when they squeezed through 24-17 after extra time.

Dreams of a Grand Final appearance were dashed at Leigh in the semi-final, but the thousands of fans who travelled to Hilton Park were left to remember a treasure trove of magic moments in what turned out to be a truly sizzling season.

Events since have indicated clearly that the Roughyeds intend to build on the progress they made in 2000.

The signing of a handful of new players has strengthened the squad, although the loss since of Jason Roach and Shayne McMenemy - one to union and the other to Super League - have provided sharp reminders that in modern times there is often little permanency about a club's playing register.

Ford's backroom staff was extended with the acquisition of Tony O'Brien as conditioner and John 'Jacko' Jackson as chief scout, while Lisa Sharratt (physiotherapist) and Dr Ian Wilkinson were brought in to form a new medical team.

Sponsorship deals with John Willie Lees, Claims Network Ltd and ProSport got the new season off to a flying start on the commercial front.

And the players responded with two excellent wins at Barrow and Workington to set them up for a crack at derby rivals Rochdale Hornets on Christmas Eve as the year 2000 ebbed towards its close.

As we toast the New Year today, let's spend a moment or two in recalling the Old Year. It was quite a year for the Roughyeds, culminating in the election of Chairman Chris Hamilton as Chairman of the APC.

Congratulations Chris....and thanks for the memory Oldham.

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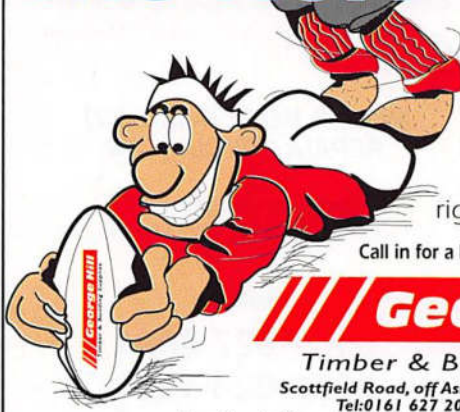
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Alliance Action

... with Haydn Walker

FIRST of all a Happy New Year to all our supporters. I have been out of commission for a number of weeks through illness and could not attend our game away at Keighley. Mike Ford and Mark Knight took charge for that game and although the result was disappointing it did see a number of good individual performances. Paul Norton and Daryl Lacey earned a call up to the first team game at Workington, and anyone who attended the game in Cumbria will know that both had top games. The message for the rest of the Alliance squad is clear - perform and Mike will select you.

Looking at the Alliance squad this season the average age is a lot younger than last season with several players graduating from the Academy team. Indeed James Wilkinson has become the first player to come through the Academy team and sign a contract. I feel sure James will be the first of many.

Over the off season Mike, Mark and myself have set up a development squad for the outstanding fifteen and sixteen year olds in the town. This will not only help establish good working relationships with the town's amateur clubs and coaches, but also stop the talent drain out of town.

I think we can look forward to the coming year with a great deal of optimism, as we are moving forward all the time.

All the best and enjoy the game.

ALLIANCE TEAM FIXTURES

Dec				
6	Keighley	A	7.30	L16-36
16	Workington	H	2.30	P
21	Rochdale	H	7.30	
Jan				
3	Hunslet	A	7.30	
10	Leigh	A	7.30	
18	Widnes	H	7.30	
Feb				
3	Whitehaven	H	2.30	
15	Hunslet	H	7.30	
22	Batley	H	7.30	
March				
17	Whitehaven	A	2.30	
22	Featherstone	H	7.30	
29	Doncaster	A	7.30	
April				
4	Batley	A	7.30	
19	Doncaster	H	7.30	
May				
3	Featherstone	A	7.30	
10	Keighley	H	7.30	
19	Workington	A	2.30	
24	Rochdale	A	7.30	
31	Leigh	H	7.30	
June				
7	Widnes	A	7.30	
13	Top Five Play Offs			
14	First Division Grand Final			



James Wilkinson signs his contract in the presence of Chris Hamilton and Mike Ford.

Probing The NFP

WEEK TWO of the new season produced two major surprises. Firstly, Sheffield Eagles, came out on top in a battle royal with Featherstone (15-12). A heavy penalty count in Rovers favour (14-11) and several Eagles sin-binnings brought severe criticism of the visitors rough-house tactics from Peter Roe. After Rovers performance against Oldham at Spotland last season the words 'pot', 'kettle' and 'black' spring to mind.

The other unexpected outcome was a Swinton win at Whitehaven (8-4). The return to action of veteran Phil Veivers was crucial for the Lions and could prove an inspired signing in the season to come.

I was pleased to have forecast a Keighley victory against Dewsbury (32-6), though surprised by the margin. the Cougars have posted an early warning to the rest that they will be a force to be reckoned with. My other bold forecast - a Gateshead win at Batley - proved blindly fanciful, the Bulldogs having no trouble in disposing of the Thunder by 24-4. Batley's big pack was too hot to handle for the N.F.P. newcomers with prop Chris McWilliam leading the way.

Although I was correct in thinking Widnes would win at Rochdale, the Hornets put up a terrific fight in a hugely entertaining game played under difficult conditions. The home side scored three cracking tries by Danny Wood, Danny Fearon and Marlon Miller to lead at half-time. However, a super second-half show by ex-Oldham halfback Martin Crompton turned the tide for the visitors.

Elsewhere, Doncaster secured an expected win (36-8) against Hunslet with new signings Brad Hepi and Paul Mansson in form for the Dragons. So too Leigh against Barrow. The Centurions new stand-off Simon Svabic scored a try, 3 goals and a drop goal and had an outstanding game in a 19-8 victory.

Finally, close result of the day was Hull K.R.'s 2-0 defeat of York, with the young Robins especially pleased not to have conceded a single penalty.

The following week went pretty much as expected, although Batley gave Doncaster a fright before the Dragons edged home 19-16 thanks to two moments of magic by Paul Mansson.

The other really tight game saw Swinton maintain a 100% record at home to Barrow (26-24), the Border Raiders staging a second-half comeback which fell just short.

Perhaps the most surprising result was Hunslet's 14-0 defeat of Sheffield. The enthusiastic Hawks were well marshalled by Rob Roberts and were full value for a win which delighted both coach David Plange and Chairman Grahame Liles.

Elsewhere there were wins as expected for Dewsbury against Hull K.R. (32-10); Keighley at York (48-14); Leigh at Whitehaven (30-8); Rochdale at home to Chorley (52-12); and Featherstone over Gateshead (68-6), with a hat-trick here for wingman Jamie Stokes.

Meanwhile, Oldham maintained their record of not having lost at Workington since the re-formation of the club, a run now extending to five matches.

Since we went to print prior to the Christmas fixtures you might be able to laugh at some of my predictions. THE big match was Widnes v Leigh on Boxing Day, a game I would have expected the Centurions to have won (sorry if that offends our visitors here today). Dewsbury will have beaten Batley, Doncaster will have beaten Sheffield, Keighley will have won at Gateshead and Barrow will have overcome Chorley. The difficult ones were Workington v Whitehaven (home win); York v Hunslet (home win); Hull K.R. v Featherstone (away win); and Rochdale v Oldham (away win). So by now you will know how good (or dreadful) my forecasting is.

As far as yesterday and today are concerned, Dewsbury should account for Hunslet at South Leeds Stadium; Keighley should beat Hull K.R. at Cougar Park; Leigh should overcome Swinton; Batley defeat York; and Whitehaven deny Chorley. The tough ones to predict are Sheffield v Gateshead (probable home win); Featherstone v Doncaster (you tell me!!); Barrow v Workington (home advantage to count); and Oldham against Widnes (and what sort of a columnist would I be if I tipped against the Roughyeds?).

GC



Paul Mansson



WIDNES VIKINGS

HAVING conceded a League double to Oldham last season (31-20 at home: 34-26 away) Widnes Vikings will come to Boundary park today in search of revenge. Having set themselves a target of promotion to Super League the Vikings will be anxious to secure two points and to that end the club has invested heavily in well known and experienced players many of whom have a Super League pedigree.

Some of the newcomers are well known to Oldham followers. MARTIN CROMPTON is a former captain of the ill-fated Bears. An Irish international, scrum-half Crompton was the major influence in Widnes opening victories against Whitehaven and Rochdale. He has also played for Wigan, Warrington and Salford and has, happily, recovered from injury sustained with the City Reds last season.



Martin Crompton



Joe Faimalo

At Rochdale it was noticeable that another ex-Oldhamer JOE FAIMALO, was looking to run onto Crompton passes out wide. The New Zealand born second-rower had an impressive game at Spotland and, having also featured at Salford, has clearly developed a sound understanding of his scrum-half's passing skills.

Faimalo's second-row partner could be the ex-Oldham and Rochdale Cumbrian CHRIS MCKINNEY. A hard-working, tough tackling player McKinney is an ideal complement to his Kiwi sparring partner.

Briefly with Oldham as a youngster was dependable fullback DAMIAN MUNRO. Formerly with Halifax Blue Sox free-scoring Munro is in his third season at Widnes and has developed into a fast and powerful attacker and sound last line of defence.

Star stand-off or loose-forward KARL HAMMOND returns to Widnes via St. Helens and London Broncos. A Great Britain international, 26 year old Hammond disapproves of the sterility and sameness of Super League and steps down to the skilful arena of the N.F.P. What a wise man!

Another newcomer this year is the widely respected MARK FORSTER. A twenty year professional with Warrington and a prolific try-scorer Forster brings his talents to a new audience at the age of 36, his enthusiasm, experience and uncompromising style no doubt sending shivers down the spine of many an N.F.P. flanker.

Centre partner SCOTT MARTIN hails from Leigh and arrives at the Autoquest from Rochdale.

He has previously appeared in Super League with Salford and should help plug a gap in Widnes midfield play compared to last season.

CHRIS PERCIVAL, the other centre, is a Widnes lad stepping up from the Vikings' Academy and Alliance teams and at 20 years of age has a great deal of promise. He is partnered by PHIL COUSSONS a speedy former Swinton and Salford wingman who will be expected to get his share of tries.

Up front the best known Viking is PHIL CANTILLON the sometime Leeds (or was it Bramley?) hooker. One of the best exponents of modern day number 9 play around, Cantillon is noted for his eye for an opening, lightning pace and try-scoring ability. You can't relax for a moment with this fellow or he'll punish you. The surprise is that he's not in Super League, especially after a record 31 tries last season.

Two tough Cumbrians complete the front row. SIMON KNOX has appeared with the Bulls and the Blue Sox and is one tough cookie. So too STEVEN HOLGATE who has plied his trade with Wigan, Hull and Halifax. And in case David Hulme wants to spell either of his workhorses he has two other big props available to maintain the pressure in home produced STEVE ARGENT, a 22 year old coming to his peak, and newcomer STEWART RHODES the ex-Border Raider who has given Oldham some pain in the last few seasons.

Completing the Vikings formidable pack is former Saint and Bull TOMMY HODGKINSON, a workaholic loose-forward who signed from Lancashire Lynx in 1999.

As back-up Widnes have another ex-Lynx man in long striding second-row STEVE GEE who can cause a few flutters in the best of defences. Australian JASON DEMETRIU also starred for the Lynx before Hornets snapped him up. A quality stand-off Demetriou could team up with Welsh World Cup star and ex-Swinton scrum-half IAN WATSON, a canny play-maker and outstanding goal-kicker. Is this a second choice pairing behind Hammond and Crompton? And that's without bringing youngsters LEE BIRDSEYE, PAUL GEORGE and JAMIE WINROW into the equation. Talk about strength in depth. Either that or coaches DAVID HULME and JOHN FORAN have a thing about halfbacks. Whatever, the two ex-Widnes players, now coaches, are determined to give the N.F.P. their best shot. Some people's favourites for the title, the Vikings provide Oldham with a major test today. It should be a cracker.



Ian Watson

Walkerbouts

... with Brian Walker

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THAT TIME of year has come around again when you will have already done the reflecting, decided on the resolutions and by now, hopefully, be looking forward with some level of confidence to whatever the new year has in store. I did my bit of reflecting and resolution making whilst lying in bed Christmas Eve morning and, as, usual rugby played a part. Having had difficulty shaking off the morning's hangover giving up the drink was an easy option and, listening to the rain pounding the window, so was drawing a line under the annoying habit of looking for an early decision match mornings on the 'battle elements' v 'ground staff'. After all any rain and both Boundary Park and Spotland resemble the park boating lake.

It was Spotland that caused my line of thought to drift back to the Law Cup victory of New Years Day 1998 and to that large Oldham contingent many of whom would just a year earlier have perhaps reflected on the season past and contemplated the new rugby year with confidence. But how could they have contemplated with anything approaching a semblance of accuracy the sequence of events that would during the next twelve months turn their rugby world upside down?

What they did know was that the Bears had finished their inaugural season of Super League in a creditable eighth position and that the forthcoming campaign in which the club would break new ground by jetting off to Australia for the new World Club Championship was just five weeks away. In fact the match against Swinton to mark the closure of Watersheddings was to be played that very New Years Day afternoon with a bumper crowd expected!

The reality, though, was soon to unfold. It began in February with the hastily and shabbily arranged disposal by 'auction' of assets and artefacts of the Watersheddings ground. The event was organised without any reverence to what had gone before and was nothing short of a disgrace. A sad way to end the life of one of the most famous rugby grounds in the world and the JCB's moving in was an act of mercy. The Old Lady, though, had pointed the finger!

In March the side was unceremoniously kicked out of the Cup by the Bulls and in the run up to the World Club Championship in June the team managed to win only three of its thirteen Super League matches resulting in Goodway's departure and Lindner's arrival.

The debacle of the summer had to be losing to Paris in France. The club managed to win just one of the remaining nine Super League matches to finish bottom of the League with Paris one place above. By the time Oldham went to play Leeds in the preliminary round of the Premiership in early September alarm bells were already ringing.

The relegated club was soon to face damning headlines 'Bears place in League in the balance', 'Bears players on bread line', 'Oldham Bears up for sale' and on Friday 3rd of October finally 'Tears for Bears' as the directors led by Jim Quinn placed the club into voluntary liquidation.

On the 27th of October the club was wound up with the Statement Of Affairs estimating a deficiency of £1,200,000 with Quinn quoted by one local paper as stating "Things would have been much different if we had moved into the new stadium in March as hoped, moving on to point the finger of blame at local businessmen, the media, players and supporters.

On the 12th of November the new club was born. By the end of the year the Law Cup had been brought out of mothballs, subjected to a rubdown, dressed in red, white and blue ribbon and on the 1st of January was presented to over 3000 spectators at Spotland.

It couldn't ever happen again? Unhappily it could at probably 70% of rugby league clubs.

KEEP GOING WITH THE RESOLUTIONS.

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Joan Wild and
Carol Stott



Ian Sinfield
John Barrett
(Time keeper)

Cook(e)ing up a storm



OLDHAM'S performance at Workington a fortnight ago was as controlled and competent as you could ever wish to see. Given that Town have made a number of top class signings and look quite formidable on paper, the Roughyeds ran the show from start to finish. The basis of the win was laid in the pack and Mike Ford's use of his four prop forwards blunted the threat of the big Cumbrian six. Meanwhile Paul Norton posted notice, as he had in the South Sydney friendly, that he intends to be a force to be reckoned with. And with the pack on top the increasingly confident

Neil Roden took full advantage, the scrum half and his halfback partner David Gibbons dictating the play and setting up the attacks. Debutant wingman Daryl Lacey played with great confidence and his exciting run from his own dead ball line late in the games deserved a try, though credit to Town fullback Neil Frazer for nailing him after a 70 yard run. Most pleasing of all, however, was the ability of the team to defend its line. It was only a remarkable feat of juggling by Graeme Lewthwaite that enabled Town to notch a try, a real fluke if ever there was one.

As today's programme had to go to print before the Christmas holidays we can't say for certain whether Oldham and Widnes enter the arena today undefeated. But whether this is so or not you can be sure that today's encounter will be a full-blooded contest between two of the best teams in the competition. Here's hoping for a good crowd, a good atmosphere and the right result.



THE dispute between Bradford Bulls Chairman Chris Caisley and League Express is remarkable for its crass stupidity. It is not my place to arbitrate on the rights and wrongs of the situation, but as an outsider I would make the following points:- 1) I have never, as a regular reader of League Express, been aware of an anti-Bulls bias 2) part of a journalist's job

is to question the decisions of those in positions of power 3) Chris Caisley is as entitled as anyone else to an opinion on the direction the game is taking, and should take in the future, and is equally entitled to have those views published 4) Mr Caisley, however, would need to make it plain, in view of his multi-faceted role, when he is expressing a personal view, when he is expressing the view of Bradford Bulls, and when, as Chairman of Super League Europe, he is expressing the views of that organisation. Other than that there is little to be said, except that it is not politic to ban newspapers from reporting your affairs. If only one voice is heard do not be surprised if you cannot get the public on your side. Remember the man with the pen has an infinite capacity for doing damage.



THE N.F.P. is a vibrant, exciting and enthralling competition. But it is not Super League. And because it is not Super League it is ignored by the national press. Of course I do not buy every daily and Sunday newspaper, but the ones I do see never cover N.F.P. matters. I do not know how to change this abysmal situation, but I do know that it would be an enormous advantage to the game as a whole - not least from the point of view of attracting sponsorship - if we could get the Press and the T.V. companies to provide at least some coverage of our competition. If you have any ideas I am sure Sir Rodney Walker would be pleased to hear from you!



OUR congratulations go to Chris Hamilton, Oldham's Chairman on his elevation to the position of Chairman of the A.P.C. I am sure Chris will attempt to bring some sanity to the financial structure of the game at this level especially as it will not be long before the N.F.P. clubs have to stand on their own two feet financially. To maintain a healthy competition we need competitive matches played between clubs which are not in danger of suddenly disappearing without trace. In view of the difficulties faced by many in recent times, and by York Wasps currently, it will take all Chris' persuasive skills to get things on an even keel. We wish him success.



Neil Roden

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DEALERS

121

Dean Cross



Q. Who has been an influence in your playing career?

From being 9 years old I have enjoyed playing rugby, knowing my dad and my family have always been there for me. As a boy I played for Leigh Rangers, then moved to Golbourne till I was 16 years old from where I signed for Widnes. At that time Colin Whitfield was the coach at Widnes and from him I learned a lot about the professional game. I feel lucky that at Oldham we have a coach of the calibre of Mike Ford, someone very focussed and experienced.

Q. Have you a favourite player?

I have always admired Mal Meninga, a player whose presence on the park gives everyone a buzz and a challenge. Presently I really rate Sean Long having played in the same game as him a while ago. He is a clever player by any standards. But I must say, having played against Iestyn Harris in a quarter-final cup game, I can tell you he is the toughest, smartest and canniest opponent I have come up against so far.

Q. Have you any personal ambitions?

Yes, I want to be on the Oldham side that gets into Super League and from there play for my country, so staying fit and healthy are another ambition, in order to achieve not a dream but a goal.

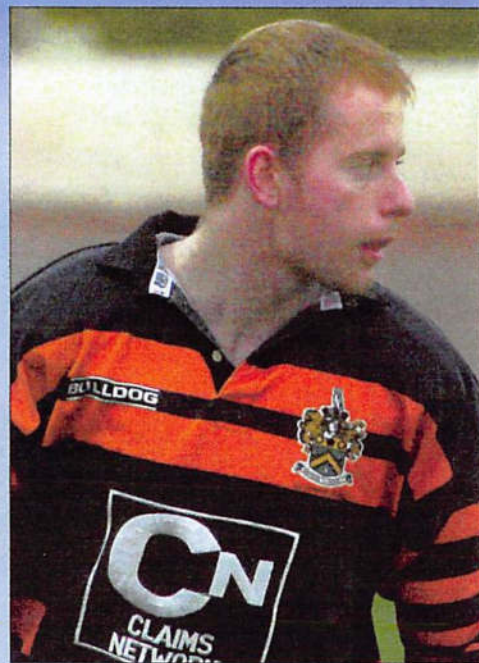
Q. Spare time, do you have any?

There isn't a lot of time to spare, with work, training and playing, but I still enjoy a game of football or badminton, which I love, and, now and again, crashing out in front of the T.V. Some time in the not too distant future, a trip to America is something I would like to undertake.

Q. Do the supporters affect what is happening on the pitch?

Definitely; the fans can really lift your spirits and that can help to get rid of tiredness. I have never experienced fans like the Oldham fans;

they are great. We have an excellent team spirit at Oldham but the fans can lift us to another level when they get behind us and make loads of noise.



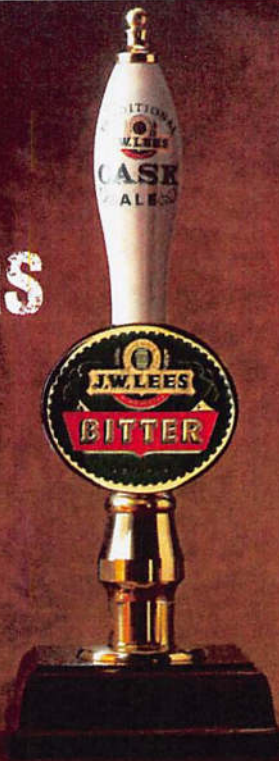
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Dean Cross



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Iva Slateloose



REPRODUCED below is a copy of Iva's Christmas present list sent to Santa.

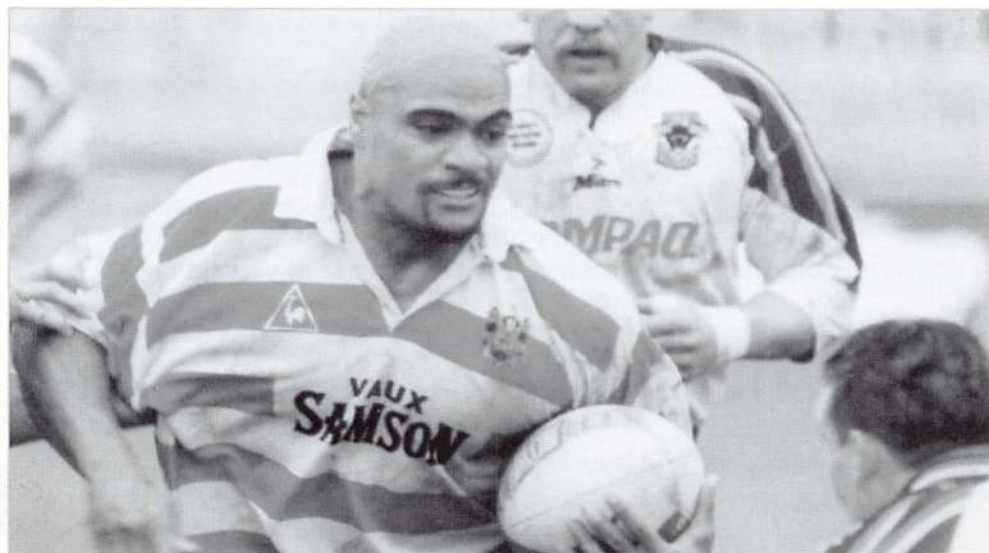
For Chris Caisley	A year's free subscription to League Express.
For Maurice Lindsay & Gary Hetherington	A cap each for their club's salaries (preferably non expanding).
For Barrow Border Raiders	A tanker full of Cumbrian air to help them play away from home.
For Rochdale Hornets	A contract with First Bus to help their players travel from Oldham at low cost.
For York Wasps	Humble pie.
For Dewsbury Rams	A nice legal book "How to apply for planning permission".
For Widnes Vikings	Two dozen pension book holders for the senior citizens they've signed.
For Workington Town	A big map of the Pacific so they can find another island to recruit a player from.
For Chorley Lynx	A crowd.
For Hunslet Hawks	A crèche: somewhere for the team to play after training!
For Gateshead Thunder	A Wakefield A to Z so they know where their players live.
For Whitehaven	A joint account with Cumbrian Crusaders Building Society.
For Batley Bulldogs	A ski tow to get back up the slope.
For Featherstone Rovers	The Peter Roe book of non-contact sports.
For Hull K.R.	A revolving platform to turn the ground through 90° thus avoiding the prevailing wind.
For Sheffield Eagles	A supply of binoculars to issue to the spectators so they can see the match.
For Leigh Centurions	Someone who knows how to draw up a contract to stop their best players leaving.
For Keighley Cougars	A cardboard cut out of Martin Wood: they'll need it if he's ever injured.
For Swinton Lions	A guided tour of Maine Road, so they and Salford can see what they're missing.
For Doncaster Dragons	Free tickets to W.W.F. bouts so they can see what a real 'House of Pain' looks like.
For Hull F.C.	A prayer mat, so they can kneel and give thanks to the Angel of the North for saving them.
For Huddersfield Giants	A motorway route map so they can find where Sheffield is.
For John Connolly	A dummy to replace the one he spat out recently.
For Greg McCallum	A properly formed scrum.
For Oldham Roughyeds	A Grand Final appearance.

For Oldham Fans and Rugby League Fans everywhere a very happy healthy and prosperous New Year.

NFP MATCH RESULTS

2000/20001 Match Results (18.12.00)

	Barrow	Batley	Chorley	Dewsbury	Doncaster	Featherstone	Gateshead	Hull KR	Hunslet	Keighley	Leigh	OLDHAM	Rochdale	Sheffield	Swinton	Whitehaven	Widnes	Workington	York
Barrow												16-28							
Batley					16-19		24-4												
Chorley															12-30				
Dewsbury																			
Doncaster																			
Featherstone																			
Gateshead																			
Hull KR																			
Hunslet																			
Keighley																			
Leigh																			
OLDHAM																			
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York																			



Former Oldham favourite Joe Faimalo

Behind the Scenes

... with Dave Roberts

JODIE WHITTLE - ACADEMY/ALLIANCE PHYSIO



What is your day job?

I work at Whelley Hospital in the Intermediate Care Centre.

And what is your job with the club?

I am Academy/Alliance physio - it's a real challenge working with young lads, but one thing I am looking forward to is the tour of Australia with the N.W.Counties under 16's next year.

What do you dislike about your job?

RAIN! - I hate going onto the pitch in the rain.

Who at the club annoys you?

Nobody, but I annoy Chris Hamilton because I'm always asking him for money and equipment. It really harasses him!

What is your long term ambition?

Obviously to enjoy my time at Oldham, but looking into the future I would like to have my own practice.

How do you see ORLFC's development?

They have done really well, going from nothing to having 3 teams and doing everyone proud by getting to the semis in the play offs.

What is your least favourite ground and why?

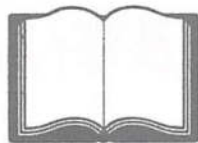
Hull KR. We had to get changed in a school and then cross through a wet field - it was raining of course!

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Amateur Album



.....WITH DON YATES

NEW YEAR'S DAY, a time for resolutions, new beginnings or perhaps for hopes of achieving long sought after ambitions.



Jake Ashworth

For Jake Ashworth that long sought after ambition is to play competitive rugby league during a sixth decade. Jake, former player and player-coach in the 1950s, 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s has yet to play in the 21st century but he keeps himself fit and is ready, eager even, to turn out and complete a playing career which began way back in 1958 with Greenacres in the Continuation League (under-17). He also played for Strinesdale at under 17 level before moving up to the Intermediate League (under 19) with St. Anne's. When that Saints team folded he joined Saddleworth Rangers and stayed with them upto and into open age competition which Jake thoroughly enjoyed. He also enjoyed his days back in Oldham with both St. Anne's and Saddleworth Rangers, his time with St. Anne's in the fledgling North West Counties League leaving him with particularly fond memories.

During those halcyon days Ashworth was twice on the winning team in a Standard Cup Final. He was a member of the Saddleworth team which defeated St. Mary's 9-0 in the 1967 final and three years later he was back at Watersheddings with St. Anne's. Langworthy Juniors provided the opposition in that final which ended in a 6-6 draw, the first drawn final since 1935. Saints won the replay 16-10 with scrum-half Ashworth landing two goals.

As Ashworth's playing career reached its twilight, he became involved in coaching. He attended a series of annual coaching courses at Lilleshall where he eventually graduated with a grade one qualification, the top qualification in those days. It was whilst on those courses that Jake developed firm friendships with several leading coaches of that era such as Graham Starkey, Albert Fearnley, Tommy Dawes, Laurie Gant, Paul Daley and Maurice Bamford.

The first club which Jake coached was Shaw in 1980 and he has since coached Tameside Borough, Newhey, British Aerospace and Watersheddings Wanderers. In 1984 Ashworth was invited to assist in the coaching of the Oldham schoolboy team which took on Hull at Wembley in the curtain raiser to that memorable Widnes-Wigan Challenge Cup Final.

Nowadays Jake has no active involvement in the game but he can be seen each Saturday stood on the touchline of one or another of our local amateur clubs. Asked whether he misses the week to week involvement with club rugby, Ashworth said, 'Yes, I do miss it and I certainly think that I can help some club out in one capacity or another.'

However, he still gets enjoyment watching the game, chatting to old teammates and swapping yarns in the bar afterwards. But he is itching to pull on a pair of boots for one last occasion, and fulfilling that ambition of playing competitive rugby league during six decades.

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It is with regret that the club has received the news from Perth, Western Australia, of the death of former player ERIC WIGGETT. A local man from Austerlands, Eric was a second row or prop forward who joined the club in 1949. The condolences of the club are extended to all Eric's relatives and friends, both at home and abroad.

**From the Chairman, Directors,
Staff & Players of Oldham RLFC
we wish everyone A Very Happy
& Prosperous New Year.**



*The New Oldham dance troupe, 'The Roughyettes', who will be performing at every home fixture.
Photo Courtesy of Karen Best, Oldham Advertiser.*



WINNARDS

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... with Simon Winnard

WHILST the new Northern Ford Premiership season for the Roughyeds has got off to an excellent start, you will once again see the gutsy supporters of one club around the grounds this year. These truly devoted RL fans will be appreciating the action with mixed emotions.

Gateshead supporters may have been coming to terms with the harsh reality of life in the NFP. However whilst premiership clubs plunder the thunder a group of die hard fans in West Leeds have had to cope with an even harder dose of Rugby League reality. The Rugby League community of Bramley is still coming to terms with another season in the RL wilderness.

When the two clubs had their applications to join the NFP assessed last summer, the men from the North East finally had something to celebrate following their untimely exclusion from Super League. However, the Bramley faithful were left disappointed, after having their request turned down because of reservations about certain aspects of their proposal particularly those concerning their intended home at Farsley Celtic Football Club.

This setback has left the Villagers even more determined to succeed and Bramley's directors met with RFL officials recently to discuss the criteria for admission to the NFP at the next time of asking. Whilst surely frustrated at their continued exclusion from the current competition, I understand that they left Red Hall confident that their bid will be successful next time around.

Despite failing to convince the RL Council of the merits of their re-entry to the professional game, the innovative plans submitted by the Bramley consortium have certainly generated more than a passing interest amongst the present NFP clubs. As well as putting together a business plan which would allow them to prosper without News Limited funding, the Villagers also

claim to have put together a development strategy which would put many Super League clubs to shame. Hardly difficult I hear you say, but still this offers tangible evidence that the club has learnt from its previous mistakes which culminated in the former club ending its days as a lowly tenant and feeder club of the Leeds Rhinos.

Club director Cliff Spracklen states, 'Part of our philosophy as a pro club coming back is that we'll be very supportive of all the amateur clubs within our area. We had the support of all the local clubs, right down to the situation where each of them would take a share in our club. Our proposal also included that our academy side would be owned by the amateur clubs, thereby avoiding the tension that we sometimes find between the pro and amateur clubs over young players, and the side would effectively be a representative team for West Leeds'.

Bramley now have until October 31st of this year to re-submit their application to have their full membership of the RFL restored. According to RFL sources, there are still various elements of the Bramley application that need to be given more thought before their case can be heard again. Not too long ago we could all too easily have found our beloved Oldham in a similar no mans land. I therefore urge our Chairman not to lose sight of that when he considers the Villagers' case as part of his new role later in the year.

On a final note, I would like to wish Shayne McMenemy all the very best of luck with his move to Halifax. Shayne's commitment to the Roughyed's cause could never be brought into question, however he has always made his Super League ambitions clear and now he will get his chance with former coach Steve Linnane at the Shay.

Cheers

Simon



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'THE DON'



ON THIS DAY . . .

Don Yates looks back to January 1st yesteryear

ELSEWHERE in this publication is a feature about Jake Ashworth, a local amateur personality who is hoping to play the game through six decades. This afternoon Oldham could field two players who have achieved an equally impressive record, that of playing professionally through three decades. Today is a significant date in the career of one of those players, prop forward Leo Casey. Because it was on this day fifteen years ago, Wednesday 1st January 1986, that Casey made his senior debut in the second-row of the Oldham team which lost a First Division match at Leeds 22-6. At the end of last season Casey had played in 121 matches for Oldham, 147 for Featherstone Rovers, 44 for Swinton, twenty for Rochdale Hornets and in two internationals for Ireland, a total of 334 matches, during which time he has never taken a backward step.

On the afternoon of Casey's debut, Wednesday 1st January 1986, our other veteran player, coach Mike Ford, was scrum-half in the Wigan team which lost 12-10 at Warrington but assistant coach John Henderson enjoyed a better day. He scored two tries for Leigh who defeated Blackpool Borough 34-8. The Widnes coach, David Hulme, also enjoyed success that day. He was scrum-half in the Chemics team which won 30-16 at St. Helens.



Edgar Brooks

Of course none of the players or coaching staff in action today were involved in the Oldham-Widnes match which took place at Watersheddings 66 years ago, on Tuesday 1st January 1935. The Roughyeds won 11-0 with tries from hooker Edgar Brooks, centre Ceidriog Davies and winger Les Lewis whilst the other winger, Albert Taylor, landed a goal. It was a great win for

Oldham against a Widnes team which included seven players who were to win at Wembley fifteen months later, including those legendary half-backs Tommy Shannon and Tommy McCue.

Thirty-two years earlier, on Thursday 1st January 1903, these two clubs met at Naughton Park and, once again, it was Oldham who won. Their 6-2 victory came courtesy of tries from winger Tommy Cash and his centre partner Dicky Thomas. Full-back Tilly landed the Widnes goal.

It was on this day in 1912, Monday 1st January, that Great Britain met Australia in the unlikely setting of Villa Park, the Aston Villa soccer ground in Birmingham. The result, by recent standards, was less unlikely. Australia ran in



James Lomas

nine tries in winning 33-8. There were three Oldham players included in the British team whilst a couple of the Kangaroos, centre Viv Farnsworth and his brother, scrum-half Billy, joined the Roughyeds at the conclusion of the tour. Viv scored one of the Australian tries whilst Oldham centre Jimmy 'Jumbo' Lomas scored one for Britain and his teammate, full-back Alf Wood, landed a goal. The other Roughyed in the British line-up was prop Bert 'Slosher' Avery.

The record books tell us that winger James Miller holds the Oldham club record for tries in a match with the seven touchdowns he claimed against Barry in October 1908. Remarkably, the South Wales club were the only opponents against whom Miller ever scored. For on Friday 1st January 1909 Miller scored two tries in the return match when Barry visited Watersheddings and were beaten 46-0. He played only five first team matches for the Roughyeds, all during that 1908-09 season, with those scores against Barry being the only occasions when he troubled the scoreboard attendant.

Fixtures

Date	Opponent	Result	Att
DECEMBER			
3	Barrow	F - A	28 - 16 1,294
10	CHORLEY	H P	
17	Workington	22 - 6	1,295
24	Rochdale	A	
JANUARY			
1	WIDNES	H	
7			
14	LEIGH	H	
21	Swinton	A	
28	Silk Cut Challenge Cup	H	
FEBRUARY			
4	WHITEHAVEN	H	
11	Silk Cut Challenge Cup		
18	GATESHEAD	H	
25	Silk Cut Challenge Cup		
MARCH			
4	HUNSLET	H	
11	Dewsbury	A	
18	SHEFFIELD	H	
25	Featherstone	A	
APRIL			
1	York	A	
8	BATLEY	H	
13	ROCHDALE	H	
16	Widnes	A	
22	Batley	A	
29	KEIGHLEY	H	
MAY			
6	BARROW	H	
13	Chorley	A	
20	WORKINGTON	H	
27	DONCASTER	H	
JUNE			
3	Gateshead	A	
10	SWINTON	H	
17	Whitehaven	A	
24	Keighley	A	
JULY			
1	Hull KR	A	

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Oldham Broadway Business Park

Oldham – a leading player at the heart of the North West

Take a look around the Oldham of the 21st century and you won't fail to be impressed with what's been achieved. There are now huge efforts taking place to ensure that the Borough remains in its rightful place at the hub of the North West region.

Two hundred million pounds and more has been invested in turning the town centre into a modern and vibrant place to shop and work. Money has also been spent regenerating and renewing areas like Westwood, Glodwick, Fitton Hill and Hathershaw, and building 23 new schools in just 20 years. An exciting new town centre Cultural Quarter is taking shape; new industry, new investment and more tourists are coming to the Borough and a state-of-the-art Business Management School is now open.

Oldham is already at the heart of the motorway network and now also benefits from the new M60 orbital route. Metrolink is also coming to the town, and the brand new £3.4 million central bus station has opened this year.



The M60 Motorway

There are many other reasons which make Oldham a desirable place to live, work and visit – its reputation for hard work, commitment and down to earth friendliness are just some of them.

Put them all together and they make Oldham a leading player at the heart of the North West.

Enquiries about projects being undertaken by the Council, or any of its policies, to the Marketing and Communications Unit, PO Box 160, Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham OL1 1UG,

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