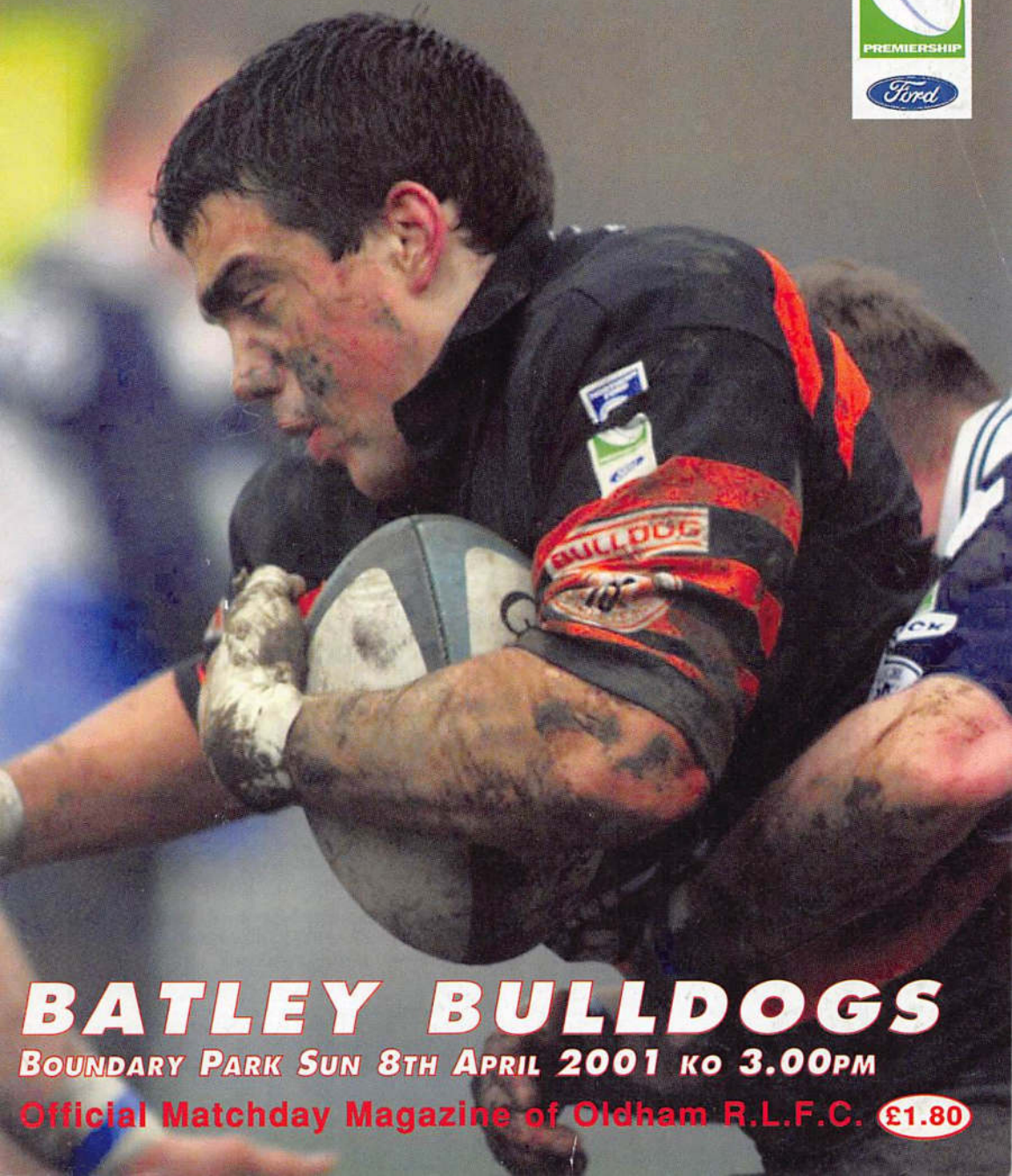


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The Roughyeds



BATLEY BULLDOGS

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Up Front

... with Christopher Hamilton



AFTER a very brief period where the many people who wish to see this club fail felt as though the wheels were going to fall off, Mike and the players have come through with two convincing performances against Hunslet and York. What those games have underlined is how there is much more of a gap this season between the top and bottom sides in the Division.

Records galore tumbled in the York victory and these

included:-

Pat Rich - Most individual points scored in a game for ORLFC (1997) Ltd - **22** - Which equalled the record he broke four days earlier against Hunslet.

13 - Most number of tries scored in a game by the New Club.

70 - Highest number of points scored in a match by the New Club (League or Cup).

64 - Equalled the highest winning margin in a game by the New Club as previously set against Queensbury in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup earlier this year.

Perhaps most importantly the 70-6 scoreline was the best ever away win by the New Club and by any professional team in Oldham since **1874** beating the previous records of 54-0 versus Barry (South Wales) in 1908 and 55-3 versus Blackpool in 1973.

So to the players, well done, even though we haven't played the toughest of opposition the points still have to be scored and I am sure that they will be alive to the threat that Batley pose today.

Let's hope that more people are here to watch!
Enjoy the game.

Chris



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1964-74, Martin Murphy 1966-82,

Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94.

FRONT COVER

Pat Rich in the thick of things again

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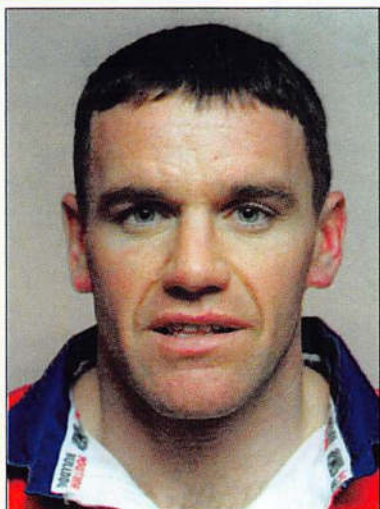
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FORD FOCUS ... with Mike Ford



SINCE our last home programme we've played several matches with very variable performances. Sheffield at home was not one of our best performances, but the Eagles are underestimated by a lot of people and are difficult opponents. They showed a lot of enthusiasm and we went into the game a bit low on confidence so the end result was a good one.

Like last year we reserved our worst performance of the season for Featherstone. We were just not mentally tough enough for this one and to be honest the scoreline flattered us. That's twice I've lost there with Oldham, although my Bramley side did win there in 1999. It's all in the mind and we make no excuses about the state of the pitch etc.

Anyway, after this we all sat down to re-assess what we were trying to do for the rest of the season and I think you saw the result in the two big wins against Hunslet and York. These two performances were not perfect by any means, but you can't do much more than win by record margins in successive games.

It was good to see Joey Hayes back in action and the form of Gavin Dodd and Keith Brennan were definite pluses. Pat Rich, too, is seeing the reward for all the practice he puts in.

We now have three tough games coming up in Batley, Rochdale and Widnes. Today's visitors Batley are just outside the top eight and will give us a test. Their strength lies at halfback with Tomlinson and Longo, and fullback Lingard is a prolific scorer so we'll have to watch out for him. It promises to be a hectic couple of weeks and three good matches.

As ever, enjoy the football.

Mike

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Michael's Match

... from the pen of Michael Turner



TODAY we welcome the boys from Mount Pleasant to Boundary Park for what promises to be another hard fought match in the ultra competitive NFP.

The match featured for a retrospective review comes for no better reason than there exists a fascinating action photo from the match, which was played over 75 years ago. The date was March 7th 1925 and the "Roughyeds" were out for revenge against a Batley team that had beaten them earlier in the season by eleven points to seven and hammered them 38 - 0 in the championship play off the previous season. This day however, would belong to Oldham who were half way through a winning streak that would run to eight successive victories.

Heavy rain prior to the game had made for poor playing conditions but Oldham immediately put their opponents under pressure and after a side stepping run from Sid Rix, half back Ben Beynon registered the first try. Shortly afterwards the roles were reversed when Rix capitalised on an astute kick through from Beynon to score. Bob Sloman was the next player on the score sheet, again following a kick through this time from scrum half, George Hesketh. This try was the first to be converted with Albert Brough doing the honours.

There was no let up from the home side who crossed again when full back Ernie Knapman followed up his own kick to score. This time Reg

Farrar converted, from the touchline. Another breakaway by Rix ended with Brough going over by the posts. A try for which he also added the conversion. Half time soon followed with Oldham ahead by 21 - 0. Oldham had completely dominated the first half and came close to scoring a further try when Hesketh was held on the line (see pic).

In the second period the Yorkshiremen, to some extent, got their game together and their best player on the day, Cyril Stacey registered a try, but not before Jack Collins had put Oldham further in front. The goal was added by Brough who concluded the scoring with a late unconverted try to leave the "Roughyeds" the victors by 29 - 3.

OLDHAM TEAM: E Knapman, A Brough, S Rix, E Davies, R Farrar, B Beynon, G Hesketh; J K Collins, R Lister, R Marlor, R Sloman, A Baker, H Hilton.

It was with regret that the club received news from South Wales, of the death at the end of February, of our ex-international forward Les Thomas. He played 58 first team matches for the Roughyeds between 1946 and 1948 and gained one full Great Britain cap against the 1947 Kiwis. The sympathy of the club is extended to all his family and friends.



Oldham scrum half, George Hesketh is denied a try by a group of Batley defenders.

ROGER

ROGER



OLDHAM'S decision to sign up Mike Ford as coach for another three and a half seasons should guarantee stability and consistency of purpose on the playing side as the club continues to build

steadily in preparation for its ultimate goal - admission into Super League.

Coaching never has and never will provide a "quick fix".

Nearly 30 years ago, long before the 1982 Kangaroos came to these shores under Frank Stanton, swept all before them, returned to Sydney as The Invincibles and left behind an indelible impression that was ultimately to reshape our thoughts on coaches and coaching, Watersheddings boss Graham Starkey would prove many times over that he was decades ahead of his time.

He was mocked for sitting up in the stand to get a better view', criticised for recording on his infamous clip-board the number of tackles each player made, and censured for daring to explore training methods other than tig-and-pass and for occasionally swapping the training pitch for a session in a sports hall or a gym.

When he actually made plans to take his players to Blackpool for a run on the beach, during a particularly bad winter when pitches were frozen solid, he was considered by many people in the sport at that time as rather eccentric.

Compared with today's highly sophisticated methods of training, coaching and player preparation it was pretty basic stuff, but it was the forerunner of things we take for granted today: coaches taking up a vantage point behind the goalposts or in a crow's nest; detailed and extensive "stats" that go far beyond simple tackle counts; weight training; bonding trips, not to Blackpool for a day, but to Florida or the Canary Isles for a week or more.

Way back in the mists of time I unashamedly flew the flag, in my Chronicle columns, for Starkey and all he stood for

because his approach to the job was new, refreshing, exciting and, most of all, based on basic commonsense.

Returning to today's game, there are many thousands of fans, a lot of them lost to rugby league, sad to say, who would argue that we have gone too far down the road on which Starkey took those first, tentative steps all those years ago; that we have, in effect, become so entangled in the web of yardage, territory and the successful completion of sets that we are in danger of forgetting that the customer pays to be entertained.

Mind you, there was nothing much wrong with those sensational Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-finals last weekend. If all games were as good as those, the sport would never have to worry again about falling gates, severe financial problems or the poaching of our stars by the RFU.

I digress. Back to Starkey. He would never attempt to inhibit a player with natural talent or ball skills. He would actively encourage Terry Flanagan to "strut his stuff" or Ray Ashton to kick over the top and regather or to throw his long, long spin passes which he would do with the panache of the great Wally Lewis.

I talk of Starkey in the context of what is happening now at the Oldham club because there are many similarities in the old Starkey philosophy and the messages that are emanating from the Roughyeds camp in terms of how Ford and the board of directors regard their respective roles as they work alongside each other for the common good.

They recognise that Ford's task is long-term; that his employment doesn't hinge on the result of next week's match; that he can do no more than get the best out of the players at his disposal; that his terms of reference are as much about establishing firm roots as about winning this season's Grand Final (acceptable though that would be); that he has a role to play that extends way beyond his coaching of the first-team squad.

Chris Hamilton and the board think like that. Mike Ford thinks like that. Together they can go a long way.

Roger Halstead

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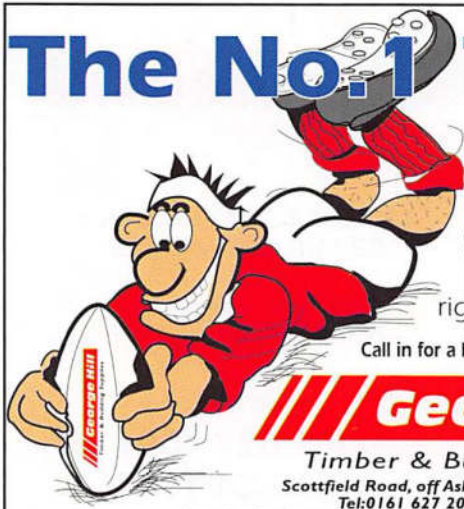
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	P	W	D	L	For	Agst	Diff	PTS
Leigh Centurions	14	13	0	1	565	128	437	26
Keighley Cougars	14	11	1	2	503	189	314	23
Dewsbury Rams	13	11	0	2	446	171	275	22
Oldham	13	9	0	4	387	177	210	18
Doncaster Dragons	13	9	0	4	265	188	77	18
Workington Town	13	9	0	4	310	264	46	18
Widnes Vikings	14	8	1	5	404	211	193	17
Featherstone Rovers	14	7	2	5	395	191	204	16

Sheffield Eagles	15	8	0	7	342	244	98	16
Hull Kingston Rovers	14	7	2	5	238	211	27	16
Rochdale Hornets	13	7	0	6	273	228	45	14
Batley Bulldogs	14	7	0	7	223	290	-67	14
Whitehaven	14	5	1	8	202	200	2	11
Barrow Border Raiders	13	5	1	7	251	334	-83	11
Swinton Lions	13	5	0	8	254	276	-22	10
Hunslet Hawks	15	3	1	11	180	509	-329	7
York Wasps	14	1	1	12	113	643	-530	3
Chorley Lynx	14	1	0	13	196	645	-449	2
Gateshead Thunder	15	0	0	15	111	559	-448	0

ALLIANCE TEAM FIXTURES

Dec				
6	Keighley	A	7.30	L16-36
21	Rochdale	H	7.30	W24-0
Jan				
3	Hunslet	A	7.30	W26-10
10	Leigh	A	7.30	L36-18
18	Widnes	H	P	
20	Workington	H	2.30	W24-0
Feb				
3	Whitehaven	H	P	
15	Hunslet	H	7.30	W44-6
22	Batley	H	7.30	W38-10
March				
17	Whitehaven	A	2.30	W28-20
22	Featherstone	H	7.30	
29	Doncaster	A	7.30	W56-16
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			

2000/20001 Match Results (01.04.01)

	Barrow	Batley	Chorley	Dewsbury	Doncaster	Featherstone	Gateshead	Hull KR	Hunslet	Keighley	Leigh	OLDHAM	Rochdale	Sheffield	Swinton	Whitehaven	Widnes	Workington	York
Barrow					18-16				44-4			16-28				5-4	6-6	28-31	
Batley	10-18				16-19	6-37	24-4	18-16								18-14			12-4
Chorley	24-38	4-39									4-56				12-30		14-48		78-8
Dewsbury	66-10	24-12	70-0			21-12	54-10	32-10				18-13							50-2
Doncaster									36-8	17-23	16-11			22-2		28-24			
Featherstone			64-6		34-4		68-6		26-14		20-30	22-8		12-15					
Gateshead					8-27			0-18	12-26	0-52			15-40			4-23	18-30	8-34	
Hull KR					0-30	6-6		40-12					12-6		32-6	10-10			2-0
Hunslet		4-13		2-34									20-42	14-0	26-16				
Keighley	60-20	66-12	32-6		22-22		24-8				6-16		20-23						
Leigh	19-8	34-8					52-4						48-0		46-4			70-0	
OLDHAM			56-2				52-6		58-4		18-44			24-16		8-19	20-12		
Rochdale			52-12	44-26	26-6							6-10					14-24		
Sheffield	40-16	34-1	60-4	6-25			38-12	11-12		16-52							26-17		
Swinton	26-24	12-34		18-20		28-25							4-8					20-29	74-0
Whitehaven			28-4			19-10					8-30		13-4		4-8				
Widnes					10-18			64-4	19-22	20-25					16-8	22-14		26-16	90-6
Workington			42-0				24-18	60-10	4-32		6-22	18-8	15-12		31-10				
York					8-26	6-37	21-4		20-20	14-48	12-84	6-70		6-48					

Probing The NFP

DESPITE the coaching change Widnes Vikings went down to a second successive home defeat a fortnight ago when Keighley, by 22-19, repeated Doncaster's feat after the Dragons had won 18-10. After Oldham's record defeat of Hunslet Hawks by 58-4, this left the Vikings outside the top eight with a lot of catching up to do.

Victory over Hunslet last week by 64-4 restored Widnes to seventh but leaves them well off the pace at the top, though the addition of Richard Agar and Matthew Long from Dewsbury and Paul Atcheson from St. Helens should strengthen their bid.



Richard Agar

Doncaster, meanwhile, added another prize scalp when they inflicted a first defeat of the season on Leigh by 16-11. Having lost at Barrow on March 12th these results suggest, together with last week's narrow defeat of Whitehaven (28-24), that the Dragons are over the worst of their tribulations - on the field at least!

Whitehaven's form continues to be in and out, wins against Featherstone and Oldham marred by defeat at home to Sheffield and the setback at Doncaster. A sustained challenge looks unlikely on the basis of such inconsistency.

Neighbours Workington Town continue to mount a serious challenge for the top eight with wins over Hunslet, Gateshead and Hull K.R. This leaves Town with an identical record to Oldham and Doncaster and is a tribute to Gary Murdoch's shrewd coaching.

Several other teams bubbling under the eight are also starting to make life difficult in the upper reaches. Hornets will be re-vitalised with the capture of outstanding scrum-half Latham Tawhai. A brilliant win against Dewsbury (44-26) was followed by defeat at Hull K.R. (12-6). But victory at Gateshead leaves them just outside the eight and sets up a potential thriller against Oldham on Good Friday.

Sheffield Eagles beat Widnes, gave Oldham a scare and won at Whitehaven and against Chorley, positioning themselves nicely for a late run.

Batley will be no pushover this afternoon after successive wins against Whitehaven, Chorley and Swinton at Gigg Lane. This leaves them in 12th place with 7 wins and 7 defeats, a side not to be underestimated.

Swinton themselves struck form with a great win against Featherstone (28-25) followed by the mauling of York (74-0) when Oldhamer Mick Nanyan scored 3 tries and 9 goals. But the Batley defeat once again emphasised the Lions' inconsistency.

Troubled York Wasps also succumbed to a delighted Chorley Lynx who posted a record 78-8 victory. Scrum half Stuart Fisher scored a record breaking 38 points, with 5 tries and 9 goals. A hat-trick, too, for ex-Oldham stand-off Mick Farrell. Further heavy defeats followed at Swinton (74-0) and at home to Oldham by 70-6. Chairman John Stabler has a lot to do to rescue the Wasps from the pit dug by a previous regime.

As far as this week, Dewsbury entertained Widnes yesterday in what is sure to have been a crucial encounter in view of the Vikings raid on the Rams staff. I still think the Rams will have won.

Today Keighley have a tricky game at Whitehaven and may struggle if Wood and Antonik,

the regular halfbacks, are out injured. Featherstone will be pushed all the way by resurgent Workington but home advantage should tell; while Hull K.R. will have similar trouble with Barrow. Leigh will consolidate top



Nathan Antonik

spot at Hunslet and Rochdale will wallop York. Swinton v Sheffield is a close call, but expect the Eagles to tough it out, as should Oldham against Batley. Finally in the battle of the basement can Gateshead post their first points at Chorley? Personally I doubt it.



BATLEY BULLDOGS

PLAYED 14, Won 7, Lost 7, is the record of today's visitors, Batley Bulldogs. In recent seasons Batley, like most clubs, have had their ups and downs, their biggest success, of course, the Trans Pennine Cup victory against Oldham. Already this season two coaches have come and gone in Jon Sharp and David Ward, the former as assistant coach at Huddersfield and the latter into the Batley Boardroom. Now led by Paul Storey, a former player for 10 years and Alliance Coach for 4, the team are performing creditably on and off the field where, under the astute guidance of Chairman Kevin Nicholas and Chief Executive Ron Earnshaw, the club is re-establishing itself on a firm financial footing which promises much for their future well-being. In welcoming the team today we wish the club well in their efforts to re-assert themselves in a rugby mad area which, unfortunately, draws too many fans to Headingley or Valley Parade.

At fullback today will be CRAIG LINGARD, the club's leading try scorer last season. Out of Sharlston, Lingard played for Featherstone schools and gained county honours before signing for Sheffield Eagles and transferring to Batley in 1998.

Right-wing JEREMY DYSON played as a junior at Shaw Cross and Thornhill, represented Yorkshire schools and BARLA Under-19s before touring New Zealand with the full BARLA squad. He subsequently appeared with Hull KR before signing for Batley in 1992.

Centre DANNY MAUN has played for Yorkshire and GB and Ireland at U18 level and caught the eye of Wigan with his speed off the mark. Released by the Warriors, he joined the Bulldogs in 2000.

Co-centre ROGER SIMPSON has frequently been a thorn in Oldham's side. Signed in 1996 from Bradford Bulls, Simpson appeared for Great Britain in 1995. He now has over 100 appearances for Batley with 50+ tries.

Left-wing PAUL GLEADHILL signed in 1998 after spells at Leeds and Featherstone. With 40 tries in 83 games he boasts a great strike rate.

In the absence of ex-Sheffield stand-off Richard Price expect to see DAVIDE LONGO at No. 6. A close season signing from Keighley Cougars, GB Academy international Longo has

also done service at Bradford, Dewsbury, Wakefield and Swinton.

The outstanding Australian GLEN TOMLINSON is the Bulldogs' chief playmaker at scrum-half. In his first spell at the Mount he scored 92 tries in 143 appearances and was a member of the side cruelly denied promotion in pre-Super League days. Subsequently a star in SL with Bradford, Hull and Wakefield before returning to Batley this season.



Glen Tomlinson

Up front two big, combative props in LEE KELLY and PAUL HICKS will start, the latter a former Wakefield Wildcat. They will flank ex-Featherstone hooker, the lively ANDY HEPTINSTALL who, like all modern No. 9s, loves nothing better than to nip over for a try or try his luck with a drop goal.

In the second row WILL CARTLEDGE has graduated through the Academy and Alliance sides to earn his place, while his partner will be well known to Oldham followers, CRAIG RICHARDS being an ex-Bear and Hunslet Hawk. He will also have run the rule over the Roughyeds when he visited Boundary Park with Queensbury, who are coached by brother Basil.

Loose-forward is RYAN HORSLEY a converted Wakefield stand-off now demonstrating a good pair of hands at the back of the pack.

On the bench will be the irrepressible MARK CASS a player in line for a benefit next season and a veteran of 157 appearances and 48 tries who will be around to give opponents a headache for some time yet.

He will be joined by SIMON JACKSON a local product, GARY SHILLABEER a powerful second-row previously with Huddersfield and Wakefield, and – most ominously – by big JEFF WITTENBURG an Australian hard man who has starred with Bradford Bulls, Huddersfield Giants and Sheffield Eagles.

Walkerbouts . . .

... with Brian Walker

APPEARANCES 2, LOST 2, SCORED 1 GOAL

OVER the years there have been droves of players who have pulled on the Oldham first team jersey and ended their Oldham playing career with a personal appearance record similar to that illustrated above. Trialists, reserve team hopefuls, those here on short term loan or quick fix deal or maybe on 'holiday' from Australia or New Zealand, Dennis Ashcroft, Martin Foy, Bill Delooze, Paul Dixon, John Mantle, Neil Holding, Albert Halsall, Sam Moore, Reece Guy, Ian Russell, Tate Moseley, droves of A. N. Others, the list almost inexhaustible, each falling into one category or another.

Was it Ealing Studios who produced the film 'The One That Got Away', the story of a German prisoner of war who, in the early forties, escaped the clutches of his British captors and after making his way out of the Cumbrian fells, was recaptured at the last hurdle in his attempt to get into the Port of Liverpool? Bert Summerscales, lifelong Oldham official, would certainly have had the answer!

Christmas Day 1942 and Oldham had been scheduled to play Leeds at Headingley in a War Emergency League fixture. They arrived with just nine players, borrowed two from Leeds and Summerscales persuaded both a Welsh visitor to swap his forces uniform for the red and white hoops and Leeds to play the match twelve aside. But Summerscales' persuasive powers that day were nothing compared to earlier that week when he persuaded a nineteen year old Vickers Shipbuilding apprentice to, despite war time restrictions, travel down all the way from Barrow and to play on, of all days, Christmas Day at Leeds in the first of two trial matches.

The boy from Barrow was to become a rugby league legend regarded throughout the rugby world as one of the best stand-off halves the sport has ever produced. **Willie Horne** didn't just fall into any of the categories mentioned earlier but into one all of his own **The One That Got Away**.

Horne played the second of his trial matches against Bradford with the



One of British Rugby League's most artful stand-offs, Willie Horne scored a club record 1818 points for Barrow (1943-59).

Chronicle reporting 'Horne worked all night before making the journey to Oldham but was wide awake throughout the game and enthusiastic to the end'. Oldham offered the half back £350 (about equal to a man's yearly wage) but Willie chose his home town club signing for just £100.

Sadly, Willie Horne one of few men to have captained Great Britain to Ashes victory, died at the end of March. He made 462 appearances for Barrow, 16 for Great Britain, 14 for both England and Lancashire and let's not forget those 2 for Oldham!

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Cook(e)ing up a storm



Neil Kelly

SO, ambitious Widnes have removed Coach David Hulme and replaced him with Neil Kelly from Dewsbury. I doubt if the expected miracle will be performed as I think Widnes still fall short of the 'big three': Leigh, Keighley and Dewsbury. No doubt the Vikings Board will set as the target a play-off place and then if the team can peak at

the right time will look to secure a Grand Final victory from whatever spot they finish in. This will certainly mean doing things the hard way but at least by recruiting Kelly they have secured the Coach with the best record in the NFP by a mile. Although with their current squad I don't see the Vikings pulling it off, one thing I do applaud is their appointment of British coaches resisting the trend set at so many other clubs. And let there be no doubt about it, Widnes would be an asset to Super League and would have no trouble in being accepted given the quality of their stadium. To that extent I wish them luck. But then again couldn't the same be said about Oldham?



I missed the rocky spell endured by Oldham in March because of holiday. But on my return in time for the Hunslet game I was struck by how quickly people became impatient. Alright, no-one likes to see their team lose and especially when the loss is compounded by some downright inept football. But Oldham have not suddenly become a bad team overnight and the performances at Hunslet and York proved it. Remember that a year ago defeat at Featherstone was the prelude to a remarkable revival of fortunes that carried the side all the way to the play-off semi-finals. Used properly this year the setbacks in March can, hopefully, have the same galvanising effect. The Coach and Directors will not forgive me for saying this but at the start of the season I could not see Oldham finishing better than fourth, principally because we do not have the power of a Malloy or a McMenemy this year and on paper (and so it has proved on the park) Leigh, Keighley and Dewsbury are superior to all the rest. What now happens to Dewsbury after the departure of Neil Kelly is in the

lap of the gods and a major change could well see the wheels come off as it were. With top sides all capable of taking points off each other third spot could become a possibility, especially as Oldham were so unlucky in losing in injury time at Crown Flatt. And, of course, the higher the finish the greater the advantage in the play offs. Mike Ford wants his side playing at their very best come July: if he can achieve that the setbacks of March will pale into insignificance. So the message is: keep the faith!



IT didn't take long for the first casualty to appear in the Super League coaching stakes. Gary Mercer's decision to give up the reins at Halifax Blue Sox was a bolt from the blue, two wins out of three being not exactly a disaster. He obviously classed losing at Wakefield as a catastrophe, though to an outsider it's hard to see why. On this basis the coaches at all the clubs below Halifax (who are sixth as I write) must feel under siege. Will we ever get any continuity in British rugby league?



THE idea that a player sent off for foul play could be replaced from the substitutes bench is brilliant in its simplicity. That way the offending player is properly punished, the referee can be seen to be taking positive action instead of placing incidents 'on report', and the spectators continue to see a genuine contest of 13 v 13. So how about it?

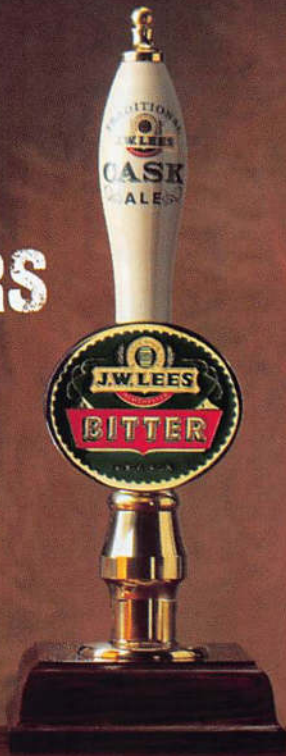


MY criticism of Stuart Cummings in a recent programme was not well received. Since Oldham R.L.F.C. (1997) was formed, however, I doubt if any programme has been more supportive of the difficult job referees have to do than this one. No-one sympathies more with officials than I do: after all I have 20 years refereeing experience myself. And just to set the record straight I thought a tremendously exciting Silk Cut Challenge Cup Semi-Final between Leeds and St. Helens was made all the better by the absolutely brilliant refereeing of Russell Smith.



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.....Gavin Dodd



Q. Where and when did you start playing rugby league?

I started playing when I was about 14 years old with local club Royton Tigers. At that time Steve Scales was the coach and it was a

great set up for our age group, I played there until I was 16 years old when I signed for the Rochdale Hornets Academy side. Our coach Shane Tupaea, was a good organiser and I enjoyed my time with them. Following Rochdale I was asked to join Bradford, which I did, Bradford is a very professional club with professional commitment and I learned a lot from Mick Potter, the coach I was assigned to.

Q. Have you any favourite players that you admire?

Yes, I really admire Darren Lockyer I think he makes a superb full back and think his attitude, skills and work rate set a top example to younger players. But Ellery Hanley must rate as my all time favourite: he was a player who always gave everything in a game.

Q. Have you any personal ambitions?

I was proud to be chosen to tour New Zealand and Australia with the Great Britain Students Squad in 2000. In New Zealand we played two tests against the National Students side and I was thrilled to be chosen as player of the series, but was disappointed when we just lost in Australia 14-8 against the Queensland Students. It was a fantastic experience and we all learned a lot. I have realised one of my ambitions now, playing for my home town club. I want to be good enough to hold my place in the 1st team, improve my game and win some trophies, mainly Super League and Challenge Cup, with Oldham. This is a dream for me, which can come true.

Q. Do you find time to relax?

Well there aren't a lot of hours left in the week, what with training, gym work and working as well, but I do enjoy the build up to the games, the anticipation and the taking part, its great and at the moment I can not envisage not being a pro. When I get the chance I like a game of golf and I watch football on the television. I enjoy holidays and have travelled to Mexico and Greece and am hoping to visit many other parts of the world in the future.



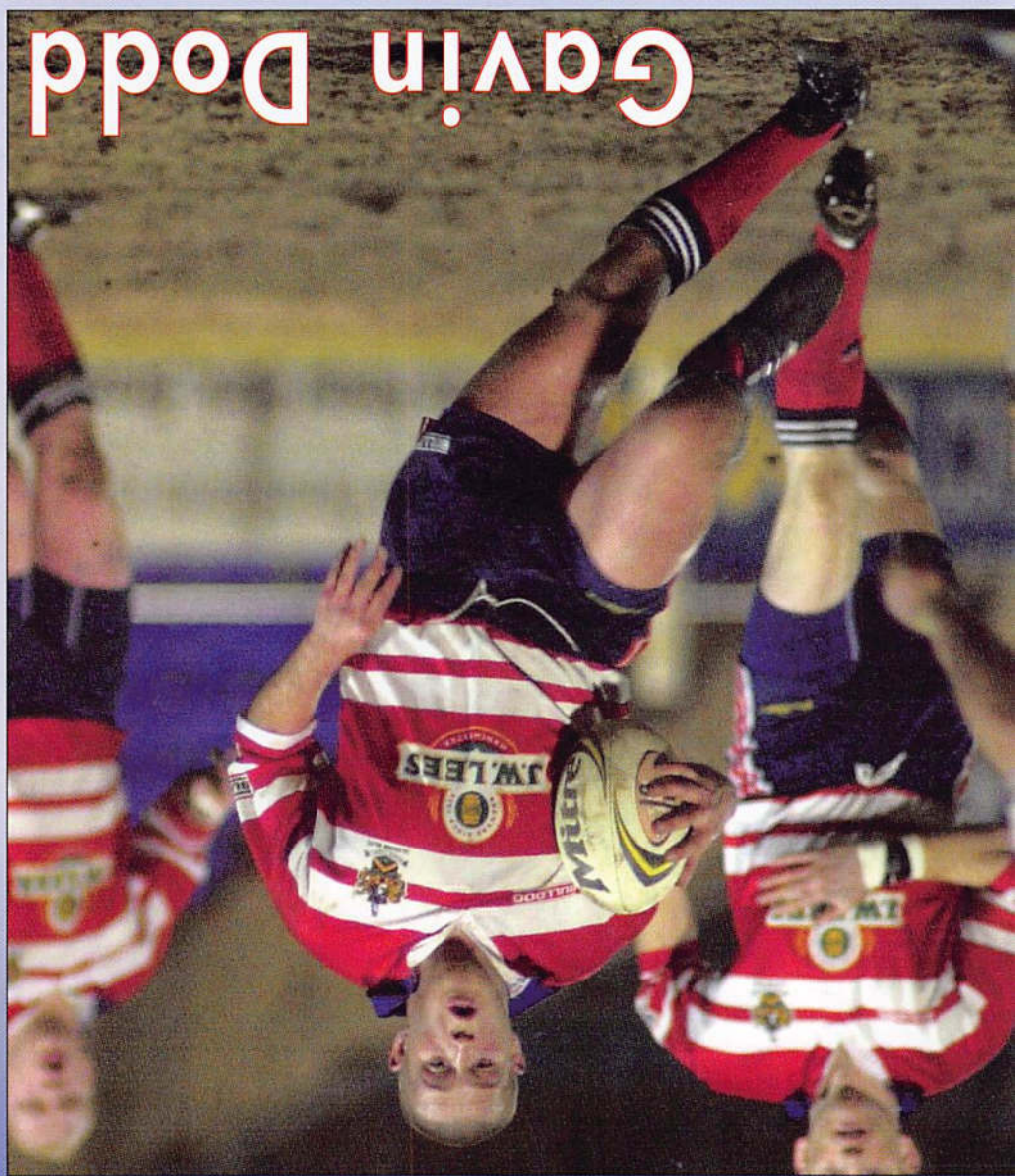
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THEY SAID WHAT?

"They just aren't going in for him at the moment, although, to be fair to the lad, he has moved house..." (Andy Ritchie) Presumably he moved the goalposts at the same time!

*"SEAN MULLINS - A very **cleaver** halfback from Australia".* I suppose he can cut right through the defence.

"If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got." There must be some logic if you can find it.
(GMP C.I.D. Officer)

"It was a surprise when George Graham was sacked. But, then, I'm never surprised about football" (Les Ferdinand) Not surprising, really

"...if anything was a deciding factor it was the mud. We've been training in this all week, whereas Oldham are used to playing on a wonderful surface...." (Featherstone Rovers Coach Peter Roe) You can tell Fev have only played Oldham at Spotland, can't you?

"It's possibly, the best bench I've had since I've been at the club..." (Salford coach John Harvey) Always nice to have a good spot to view the game, eh?

"I'm disappointed that they didn't get rewarded and sing the song at the end" (London Broncos Coach Tony Rea). What they needed, of course, was the fat lady!

"I had to look at myself in the mirror this morning and knew I wasn't doing a good enough job" (St. George - Illawarra scrum-half Willie Peters) Gillette Mach 3, mate - it's the best a man can get!

"I broke my jaw last year, did in my shoulder, broke a leg and then had a shoulder reconstruction at the end of the season. Now this (a snapped cruciate ligament in his left knee which will rule him out for the season). It's almost laughable" (Brisbane Broncos stand-off Ben Ikin) Bet you wish you had a sense of humour like that. Not.

"We are a team of mongrel cattle dogs, there's no pedigree in them at all..." (Wakefield coach John Harbin) Nothing like a bit of flattery to boost your team, is there?

"I do not want to labour the point, but it is difficult to leave the referee out of the equation..."

"It is wrong that the standard of officials should be able to determine the outcome of a game" (Keighley coach Steve Deakin) Do you think Keighley had just lost their first game of the season to the Hairnets? Too right they had!

"Fire reported at incinerator" (Dundee Courier)

"Crematorium plans put on back burner" (Selkirk Advertiser)

"We have spent three matches chasing a football" (Kevin Keegan)

"She did not mean to assault a teacher. What happened was that she was going to try and attack a child and the teacher got in the way." So that's o.k. then, isn't it?

"Your council tax benefit has been stopped, because there has been a change in your circumstances. The change is that you are dead." (Letter sent by Lambeth Council to the late William Reynolds. Mr Reynolds was told he could appeal against the decision)

"Chopper search for man in underpants." (Luton News)

"He is not leaving under a cloud" (Met Office spokesman on John Kettleby quitting as a BBC weatherman)

Junior Roughyeds

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HI TO ALL THE JUNIOR ROUGHYEDS

A warm Oldham welcome goes out to the Batley Bulldog club officials and Junior supporters.



Stefan Holmes

The Junior Roughyeds mascot for today is **Stefan Holmes**. Stefan is 7 years old and attends Watersheddings Primary School. His favourite player is Leo Casey. Have a great day Stefan.

The next Junior Roughyeds meeting is to be held on Friday 13th April before the Rochdale Hornets game. We will be holding the meeting in the Executive box at Boundary Park. The mascot draw will be held for the 7 forthcoming games. Each mascot will receive a framed photograph courtesy of The Advertiser who are sponsoring the Junior Roughyeds this season.



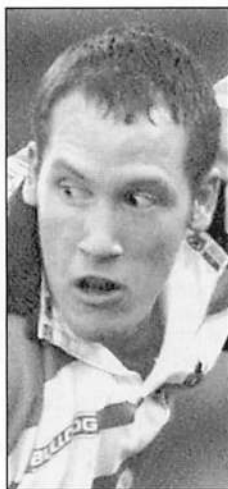
Leo Casey Stefan's favourite player

A special thanks to **Ann Marie Wright** who was the mascot at the York match on April 1st. Her favourite players are David and Anthony Gibbons. Well done Ann Marie.



Ann-Marie Wright

Debra Rafferty



David and Anthony Gibbons Ann Marie's favourite players

Our thanks also to Geoff & Marjorie Cooke of **Saddleworth Sports** who have once again sponsored socks and shorts for the Junior Roughyeds mascots.

Behind the Scenes . . . with Dave Roberts

BACKROOM STAFF – WAYNE BRIERLEY

This week BEHIND THE SCENES turns the spotlight on Wayne Brierley aged 35. Wayne's daytime job is Sales and Marketing Manager for a Construction Company

How long have you been with the Club?

This is my second season, I came from Bramley with Mike. I love the job and being involved with the Club.

What do you dislike about the job?

One thing annoys me, having to buy the coffee at home games. Mike Ford and John Henderson are the tightest men I have ever met. John being the tightest (just).



What ground offers the best and worst facilities?

Widnes has to be the best, and Keighley the worst.

What is your matchday routine?

I get up at 9.00am, have some breakfast and read the paper. Mike picks me up at about 12.00 and we go to the post game meeting. Then at 1300 I help the Kitman get set up and start getting the water ready.

At 1400 I go onto the pitch with Patrick to help him with his kicking practice and then about 1450 rub some of the players down with Vaseline. During the game it is my job to take water to players and also bring on the kicking tee.

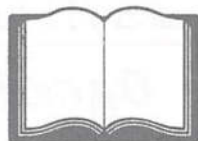
After the game I help the Kitman to clean up the changing rooms, then its down the Clayton Arms for some food and a drink. Sometimes we go into Walkabout on Yorkshire Street, then its home for an evening meal and bed by about 10.30pm.

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Amateur Album



.....WITH DON YATES

NEXT Friday morning, Good Friday 13th April at 11am, Boundary Park stages the highlight of the local amateur season when Shaw Rhinos meet Waterhead in the final of the Standard Cup competition.

Eight local clubs entered this season's tournament which began in October when Middleton Rhinos visited Salem Hornets and pulled off the first of a number of shock results which have been a feature of this season's competition. The Rhinos, from division four of the North West Counties League, beat their third division rivals 22-4. St. Annes were drawn away to Waterhead in the other first round tie but after a number of postponements the tie was eventually played at Higginshaw Road. Saints led 10-0 after only five minutes of that tie but Waterhead fought back and late dropped goals from Craig Barker and Paul Lord snatched a 20-18 victory for the Peach Road club.

The first quarter final was played in pouring rain and ankle deep mud, conditions which would have favoured Higginshaw Eagles more than the home club, Shaw Rhinos. Nevertheless, the Rhinos experienced no difficulty in splashing their way through. Robert Mills scored three of their eight tries in a 38-0 victory. Waterhead enjoyed an even easier passage through to the semi-finals, winning 62-0 at Watersheddings Wanderers despite having Michael Bradshaw sent off. Middleton Rhinos, having produced the first shock of the competition, were determined not to suffer a similar fate at home to Manchester Knights. After the seemingly obligatory postponement, the Rhinos won 52-22. Hollinwood's home

tie with cup holders Saddleworth Rangers suffered two postponements but when it was eventually played, the Pennine League outfit produced what is arguably the biggest upset in the 97 year history of the competition. Outstanding defence was the basis of their 12-4 win which was achieved with tries from Mark Johnson, Lee Kirwin and Dean Skilling.

During the early stages of the semi-final between Middleton Rhinos and Waterhead another shock looked on the cards. The Rhinos played way above themselves and went in front when hooker Steve O'Rourke, son of the competition sponsor, dropped a goal after ten minutes. However, Waterhead recovered to win 22-1 with stand-off Jon Perks leading the way with two tries and three goals. Underdogs Hollinwood again put up a gallant performance in the other semi-final against Shaw Rhinos but in the end Shaw pulled away to win 34-0 with former Oldham favourite Joe Nadiole scoring two of their six tries.

Friday's show down is a repeat of the 1999 final when Waterhead lifted the trophy after a 26-18 victory. Shaw excelled in that final against opponents two divisions higher and pulled back from 20-8 to 20-18 in an inspired 20 minute spell either side of half-time. The Rhinos have strengthened their squad during the past two years and are confident of going one step further and lifting the trophy for the first time in their history. Waterhead have different ideas in what is sure to be a close fought and thrilling encounter which will certainly provide rich entertainment for the huge crowd expected at Boundary Park in five days time.

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Commercial News

IT was great to see our supporters waving the red and white flags at York last weekend also to see the car flags on display right along the rugby league corridor (M62).

Both car flags and pole flags are on sale at the Club Shop on Union Street, along with loads more of Roughyeds' merchandise.

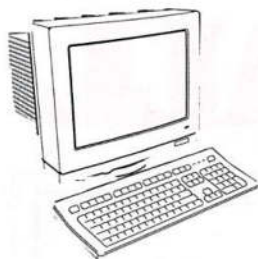
On June 3rd we play Gateshead Thunder at the Thunderdome and we will be running a trip to sample the match, the Metro, and the Geordie night life. So keep your eyes and ears open for more details.

Are you a member of the Saturday Yankee?

As well as providing income for the Club the Jackpot stands at £5,000 so for just £1 a week you would be helping the Club and have a chance to scoop the Jackpot.

After today we face a tough looking Easter weekend starting with the visit of Rochdale Hornets on Good Friday and then travelling to the Autoquest Stadium to face Widnes Vikings on Easter Monday.

So be there and get behind Mike and the lads.



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... with Simon Winnard

A RECENT press release expressed the games deep concern that approaches are being made from the Rugby Football Union to our young star players and development officers. Concern was particularly expressed that these approaches were being financed by monies made available from Sport England. It reads as follows:-

Greg McCallum, the RFL's Director of Rugby, has written to Derek Casey, the Chief Executive of the Government Sports Funding Agency to bring their attention to the fact that another sport which enjoys their funding is making overt approaches to players and officials who are registered within the Rugby League World Class programme.

McCallum said: "We have become increasingly aware that besides targeting existing top class Rugby League players, the RFU have been approaching both up and coming Rugby League stars who have been identified within our World Class plan but also making overtures to our development officers

The RFL is most concerned about these developments and the potential pillaging of both potential top class players and administrative staff. There seems to be no morality to the approaches by the RFU and would seem to us to be an attempt to stem their reported increasing player losses by picking up ready-made potential stars and star makers from Rugby League

We have been told that huge sums of money are being made available to players who are already part of our international ambitions. These stars are currently contracted to our clubs for this and future years. Probably of greatest concern to us are worrying reports that a former RFL employee has been leading this element of the RFU initiative. Should these reports prove accurate then the person concerned is totally aware of our internal workings, development programmes and funding issues.

We find it difficult to accept that any sport's World Class funded programmes should be attacked directly by another code which enjoys Sport England Funding. I have today written to Mr Casey to express our disquiet and dismay about the RFU strategy and seeking intervention and advice from Sport England to control this quite clear aggression towards Rugby League."

It seems slightly hypocritical that now the boot is on the other foot we are whinging about

this. The funding for these approaches is almost an irrelevance as we have to be competitive in the market place and it is almost the pot calling the kettle black after years of pilfering Union in their days of non-professionalism. Why was the same level of concern not addressed when some of the games top coaching talent in the form of Lydon, Larder and Hanley were pillaged in exactly the same way? Indeed, had they made sincere efforts to keep this coaching talent in our game in the first instance then these raids would now simply not be taking place. The RFL are now concerned that the very same people who were deemed not capable enough for important roles within our game have the ability and influence to identify and lure our most prized assets away.

This smacks of closing the barn door after the horse has bolted. It is criminal that our brightest young coaches have simply been allowed to leave our sport, pushed out by their Antipodean counterparts, many of them untested themselves before coming to this country. To the Rugby Football League I ask one simple question, did you really not see this coming? Quite clearly this is yet another example of the lack of forethought and a common sense approach shown by the powers that be in this country.

The skills of the modern young RL player have been widely acknowledged by the likes of England Coach, Clive Woodward from afar. Whilst Woodward surrounds himself with the top British RL coaches, quite obviously their attentions are going to be focused not only on the brightest young talent but also the development officers and young British coaches responsible for nurturing and producing that talent.

Whilst the flood of Aussies coming to the end of their careers continues to dominate Super League, many of these young home grown stars may feel that more opportunities present themselves in the other code and on the face of it, that may actually be the case. As stated on numerous occasions, British Rugby League can ill afford to lose its own people. The RFL must take a long hard look at itself and the structure of our game at present if they feel that they are unable to offer the opportunities to keep the young talent they produce.



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'THE DON'



ON THIS DAY . . .

Don Yates looks back to April 8th yesteryear

ONE hundred and two years ago, on Saturday 8th April 1899, the town of Oldham was in the grip of cup fever as Widnes visited Watersheddings for a Challenge Cup, quarter-final tie. The Roughyeds had no trouble reaching the semi-finals, running in six tries as the Chemics were beaten 20-nil. Sam Williams scored a hatrick of tries in that tie, just three of a total of fourteen touchdowns the winger registered in a cup campaign which ended with the Roughyeds becoming the first Lancashire side to lift the famous old trophy.



Sam Williams

Four years later Oldham found it much tougher to score when they met Salford three times in the space of eight days. They first met in the Challenge Cup semi-final, then four days later, on Wednesday 8th April 1903 they met in the replay before meeting once again in a league match a further three days after that. The Roughyeds failed to score in all three matches, losing the cup replay 8-0 before a crowd of 12,000 at Wheaters Field, Broughton.

Batley suffered similar semi-final heartbreak on Saturday 8th April 1911 when they lost 4-2 against Wigan before a crowd of 15,000 at Fartown, Huddersfield. There was a dramatic finish to that match when Batley centre Will Anderson equalised five minutes from time with a penalty. Two minutes later prop-forward Jim Gath was sent off, apparently harshly, and from the resultant penalty full-back Jim Sharrock was able to snatch victory for Wigan with his second successful kick.

Six years ago, on Saturday 8th April 1995, an even more dramatic meeting took place in the boardroom at Central Park, Wigan. It was

the clandestine meeting of club chairmen who accepted Rupert Murdoch's £87M SkyTV deal. It brought about Super League, summer rugby, full-time professionalism and, at the time, also accepted the concept of club mergers although the only Super League mergers which have so far taken place are the dubious amalgamations involving Huddersfield-Sheffield and Hull-Gateshead.

Twelve months later the Super League, supposedly the panacea of all rugby league ills, was up and running. The Super League programme for Easter Monday, 8th April 1996 involved eight players who could be on view in this afternoon's match. Batley utility back Richard Price was in the centre for Sheffield Eagles who won 54-22 at Workington Town in a match which, incidentally, was refereed by Steve Presley who made 215 appearances for Batley between 1976 and 1985. Scrum-half Glen Tomlinson, now back at Mount Pleasant, was a member of the Bradford Bulls team which defeated London Broncos 31-34 whilst current Batley winger Paul Gleadhill played for Leeds that afternoon. The Gibbons twins, now here at Oldham, also turned out for the Rhinos who were beaten 46-24 by St Helens at Headingley. Winger Danny Arnold scored a couple of tries for Saints in that match. Two other members of the current Roughyeds' squad, scrum-half Mike Ford and hooker John Hough, played for Warrington who were beaten 42-12 at Wigan. It was the last appearance Ford made for Warrington before he joined Wakefield Trinity who beat off the challenge of Batley after the Gallant Youths had also shown interest in signing the talented half-back.

Finally, Batley chairman Kevin Nicholas, a resident of Morley, will be pleased to recall that exactly twelve months ago, on Saturday 8th April 2000, his local amateur club, Morley Borough, recorded an emphatic victory over Oldham opposition. The Boro' defeated Watersheddings Wanderers by 90 points to six that day in a Pennine League, fourth division encounter.

Fixtures

Date Opponent Result Att

DECEMBER	F - A	
3 Barrow	28 - 16	1,294
17 Workington	22 - 6	1,295
24 Rochdale	10 - 6	3,402

JANUARY		
1 WIDNES	20 - 12	3,471
7		
14 LEIGH	18 - 44	4,747
28 QUEENSBURY (SCCC R3)	64 - 0	1,559
30 CHORLEY	56 - 2	1,210

FEBRUARY		
4 WHITEHAVEN	P	
11 HULL KR (SCCC R4)	17 - 6	2,008
18 GATESHEAD	52 - 6	1,451
25 WAKEFIELD (SCCC R5)	6 - 26	3,071

MARCH		
11 Dewsbury	13 - 18	1,453
18 SHEFFIELD	24 - 16	1,503
25 Featherstone	22 - 8	1,966
28 HUNSLET	58 - 4	1,038

APRIL		
1 York	6 - 70	514

8 BATLEY	H	
13 ROCHDALE	H	
16 Widnes	A	
22 Batley	A	
29 KEIGHLEY	H	

MAY		
2 Swinton	A	
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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APPEARANCES & SCORERS 2000-01

PLAYER	APPEARANCES	SUBSTITUTIONS	TRIES	GOALS	DROP GOALS	POINTS
M. SIBSON	12		10			40
G. DODD	5	3	4			16
D. CROSS	8		4			16
J. McNICHOLAS	1					
J. HAYES	2		3			12
A. GIBBONS	14		4			16
P. RICH	17		5	77		174
W. BARROW	4		5			20
D. LACEY	9	2	3			12
D. ARNOLD	8		4			16
D. GIBBONS	17		15			60
N. RODEN	17		10		5	45
G. BARBER	4	1	2			8
M. FORD	2	8			1	1
K. BRENNAN	1	1				
A. PROCTOR	9	5	3			12
J. CLEGG	10	7	1			4
L. CASEY	12	2				
D. GUEST	1	11				
L. DORAN		4				
J. HOUGH	16	1	3			12
P. FARRELL	17		1			4
P. NORTON	11	4	2			8
S. McMENEMY	1					
I. SINFIELD	13	2				
C. FARRELL	3	10	1			4
K. MANNION	6	7	2			8

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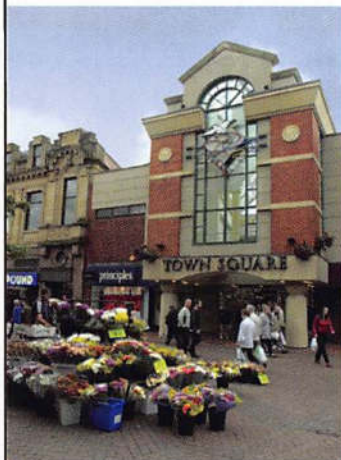
Take a look around the Oldham of the 21st century and you won't fail to be impressed with what's been achieved. There are now huge efforts taking place to ensure that the Borough remains in its rightful place at the hub of the North West region.

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



Town Centre Shopping

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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OLDHAM

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BATLEY BULLDOGS

Coach: Paul STOREY

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Joey HAYES	2	Jeremy DYSON
Anthony GIBBONS	3	Danny MAUN
Pat RICH	4	Roger SIMPSON
Warren BARROW	5	Paul GLEDHILL
Neil RODEN	6	Davide LONGO
Keith BRENNAN	7	Glen TOMLINSON
Leo CASEY	8	Lee KELLY
John HOUGH	9	Andy HEPTINSTALL
Jason CLEGG	10	Paul HICKS
Phil FARRELL	11	Gary SHILLABEER
Chris FARRELL	12	Will CARTLEDGE
David GIBBONS	13	Ryan HORSLEY
Daryl LACEY	14	Mark CASS
Paul NORTON	15	Simon JACKSON
Andy PROCTOR	16	Craig RICHARDS
Danny GUEST	17	Jeff WITTENBERG

TODAY'S

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