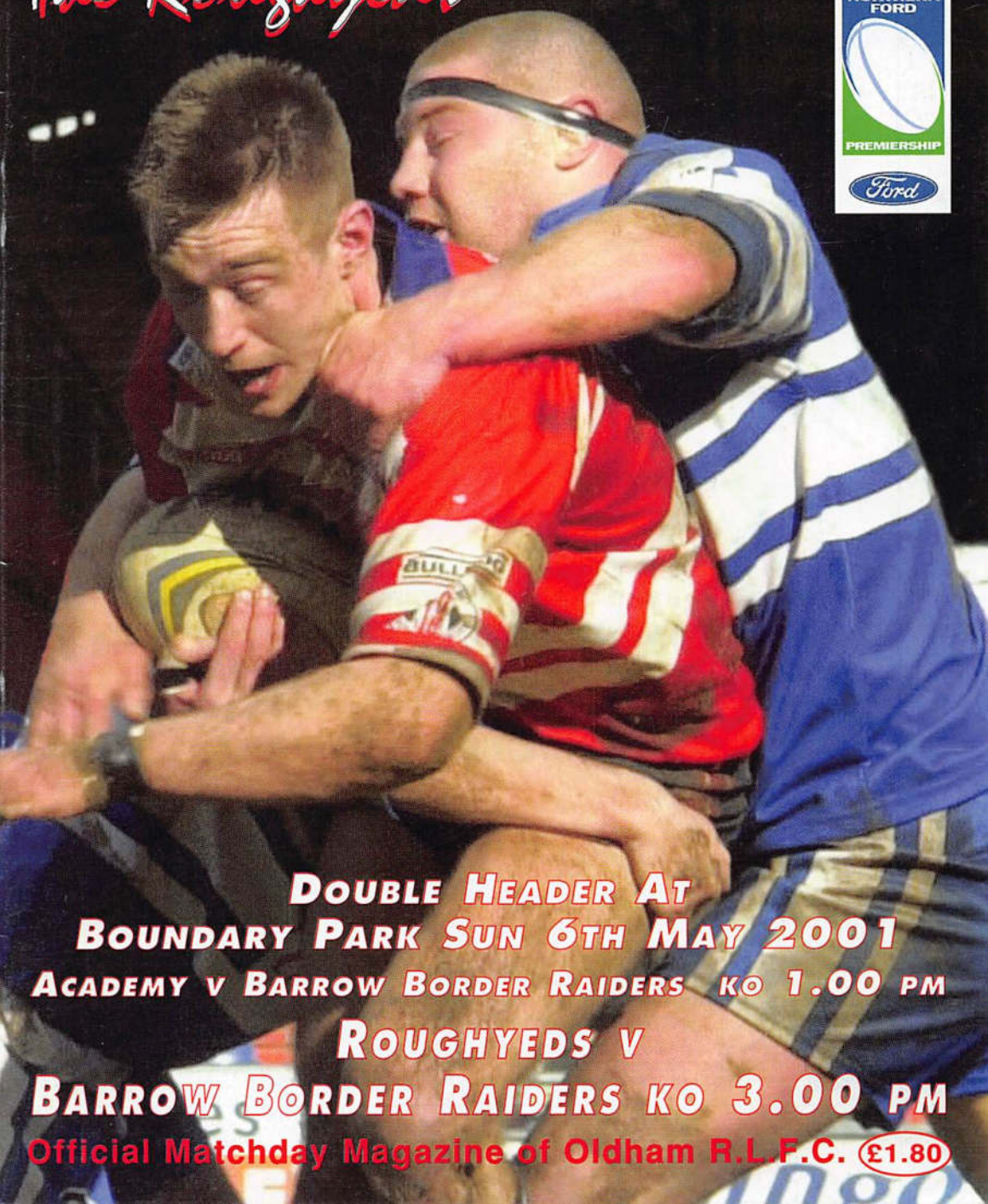


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The Roughyeds



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Up Front

... with Christopher Hamilton



ANOTHER development takes place today for the Club when our Academy team plays for the first time ever on Boundary Park. This will be a great opportunity for both players and fans alike particularly as lots of people will not have seen the Academy team play before.

Players who are contracted to the Club and making their first appearance in an Oldham shirt will be Paul Bennett, James Kirkland and Adam Clayton, all of whom potentially, have big futures ahead of them. So

good luck to all the players today and hopefully plenty of fans will be there to watch them.

Everybody at the Club also wishes Shaun Gartland good luck as the new Academy Coach and today will be Shaun's first match in charge of the side.

On the first team front up to and including last Wednesday's game at Swinton, the team had played four games in 17 days and as we all know had won them all. What has been particularly pleasing has been the level of performance the lads have achieved in those games. Throughout the last two seasons there have been a number of occasions where, through matters beyond the Club's control, the players have had to face up to major physical and mental challenges, and without fail each time they have responded magnificently and I take my hat off to them for that.

The current re-shaping of fixtures has also placed a burden, financial and otherwise, on you the spectators but the support the team has received in the last four games has been magnificent and everybody at the Club, especially myself, thank you for that.

Today we entertain Barrow, and we offer a warm welcome to Alan Stoker and everyone from the Club. Barrow have been having a difficult season on the playing front but today will still be a tough fixture. I do know that in Alan the Barrow club have a Chairman who I respect highly and who will ensure, in a proper manner, that the Club will continue to make steady progress both on and off the field.

Enjoy the game.

Chris



The Roughyeds

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1964-74, Martin Murphy 1966-82,

Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94.

FRONT COVER

Action from the recent home
victory over Keighley Cougars.

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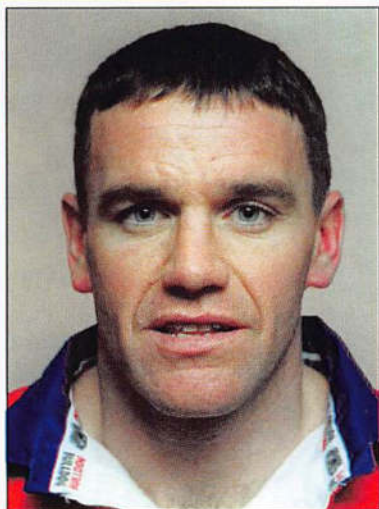
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FORD FOCUS . . . with Mike Ford



WE are obviously extremely pleased with our last few results, even if Doncaster and Keighley were not as strong as they were at the start of the season. Our defence has returned to its best and both those sides could only score against us via kicks (which can be very unpredictable) rather than through handling movements.

However, in these two games we also saw some much improved attacking play. Our left side attack against Keighley was the best it's been all season and we produced some exciting plays. Gavin Dodd in particular always threatened something special.

With Neil Roden and David Gibbons providing us with an improving kicking game our kick and chase has been brilliant and we have really pressured our opponents.

I am especially pleased with Joe McNicholas and Keith Brennan who have come back into the side and done exceptionally well. With both players their attitude and commitment has never wavered, even though they've had to wait patiently for their chance.

I hope you will understand that with our busy programme we will be operating a squad rotation system to give all our squad players a chance and to save wear and tear. Both Boundary Park and Gigg Lane are heavily sanded and heavy pitches take their toll on the players. I have confidence in all my players and with John Hough and Leo Casey likely to be available again after injury we have a lot of strength in depth.

These notes are written before we know the result of the Swinton game so I hope we took the points. Barrow will be no easy beats today and they have an outstanding scrum half in Darren Holt and a tough as teak pack. We will not make the mistake of underestimating them.

Enjoy your rugby,

Mike



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Michael's Match

... from the pen of Michael Turner



TODAY we welcome to Boundary Park the players, officials and supporters of the Barrow club. Since the reformation of the "Roughyeds" in 1997 we have had some ding-dong battles with the "Furnessmen" with home advantage usually being the decisive factor. Indeed up until our win at Craven Park in December, victory in every match had gone to the home team.

The most famous match between the two clubs was the 1954 Lancashire Cup Final when Barrow belied their outsiders tag to win the trophy by twelve points to two at Swinton. As if to show it was no flash in the pan they followed up this success later in the season by carrying off the Challenge Cup at Wembley against Workington Town.

The featured match today goes back to January 22nd 1949 when an inexperienced and somewhat experimental Oldham side took on a Barrow team well established in the top four of the championship under the general-ship of half back genius Willie Horne.

As one could imagine for a damp January encounter at Watersheddings the conditions were not ideal for open rugby. However, both teams were giving the ball "plenty of air" and on seven minutes Oldham took the lead from a penalty goal from full back Irving Barraclough after Toohey the Barrow scrum half was caught off side. The lead was to be short lived and soon after the restart Oldham lost possession and quick hands by the visiting threequarters allowed Lewthwaite to score an

unconverted try at the corner. Oldham hit back with Platt and Mitchell combining well to put Spencer on a run to the line but the Barrow cover got across just in time to force the Oldham winger into touch at the corner flag.

Barrow gradually began to take control of the game and increased their lead after 33 minutes when, after a scrum in the Oldham quarter, Horne sent out a peach of a pass to Lewthwaite who cut inside for a clear run to the posts to register his second try. Jones converted to give Barrow a half time lead of eight points to two.

In the second period Oldham tackled well to keep the visitors out and the frustration left Barrow resorting to some heavy handed tactics which eventually resulted in Ayres being sent off. Now with an extra man advantage Oldham came more into the match and enjoyed a spell of pressure in their opponents half which culminated in Sugden leaping high to take a kick and score. The conversion was missed and Barrow kept the "Roughyeds" out for the remainder of the match to record a victory by eight points to five.

OLDHAM: I Barraclough, W Spencer, L Platt, W Mitchell, L Tate, R Batten, J Silva; H Ogden, W Frost, H Tomlinson, A Tomlinson, J Sugden, T Leyland.

BARROW: Jones, Lewthwaite, Parker, Longley, Trelore, Horne, Toohey; Longman, Woods, Grainger, Ayres, Scott, Atkinson.

Attendance: 11,000



Tough Barrow tackling puts an end to Oldham's attack while Harold Tomlinson and Harry Ogden wait for the 'play the ball'. Oldham v Barrow January 22nd 1949.

Photo Courtesy of David Whitehead.

ROGER

ROGER



THE appointment by Oldham of Shaun Gartland as Academy coach, on a one year contract, will inevitably stir memories of the sterling work done by late father, Brian, in a similar capacity for the old Oldham Bears Club.

Indeed, Shaun knows better than anyone that he will have a lot to live up to in order to retain the Gartland family tradition at Oldham Rugby.

Brian was all things to all men at Watersheddings, a scout, colts coach, 'A' team coach, trainer and he even had a spell in charge of the first team when, in the absence of Frank Myler on Great Britain duty, the late Peter Smethurst resigned, to be followed one match later by Frankie Barrow's resignation.

Into the breach stepped Brian and a good job he made of it, too.

His forte, however, was his ability to develop and groom youth and he was doing that on Oldham's behalf for years: from his early days when he was appointed to run a Colts team that was one of the most talented in the game to the final season before the club's liquidation when he spotted and then signed a fresh-faced lad who wouldn't have looked out of place with a chorister's ruff round his neck.

I will never forget coming across the boy and his father as they waited in the Watersheddings pavilion to meet Brian so they could complete the signing formalities.

Brian had spotted the kid playing somewhere in the Ashton-in-Makerfield area. He was immediately impressed with the boy's handling and kicking ability, but he wondered why he hadn't been snapped up by one of the big West Lancashire clubs like Wigan, Saints or Warrington which were virtually on his doorstep.

He figured the lad's slender physique and baby-faced appearance - he was only just 16, mark you - might have had something to do with that, but Brian was so sure about the lad's natural ability that he couldn't sign him quickly enough for Oldham.

'The problem I have in signing kids for Oldham,' he often remarked, 'is that the place is falling down. The Watersheddings facilities are

dilapidated. They don't impress the lads and dads: just the opposite, in fact.'

What did impress this lad and this dad was Brian's ability to 'sell' the club: not its fading fabric, but its reputation for signing and developing youngsters in an environment in which they didn't get swallowed up as tiny fish in a big pond, but were always regarded with the greatest of respect and were allowed the space and freedom to enable their talents to develop.

In short, they were able to put their trust in Brian Gartland.

As a result of that trust, the dad urged his son to sign for Oldham and that's how one Simon Svabic, now of Leigh and one of the most talented players in the NFP, came to join Oldham.

Over the years scores of boys came to Oldham thanks to Brian. Many, like Terry Flanagan, Ray Ashton, Mick Worrall and Paddy Kirwan had won all the amateur youth honours available to them and didn't need much 'spotting'.

A certain Andy Goodway didn't fall in that category. Brought up in Castleford, he somehow got 'lost' in the wealth of young talent in that hot-bed of the game at that time, but Brian watched him play in one game against Saddleworth for Redhill and knew immediately he had unearthed a gem.

In later years, as Goodway went on to big things with first Oldham, then Wigan and Great Britain, Brian became known as 'the man that signed Goodway' - a fitting tribute to a man who devoted so much of his life to rugby league in Oldham.

He would, indeed, be a proud man today to know that Shaun, his elder son, was about to embark on a similar job for the Roughyeds.

Shaun cut his coaching teeth at Saddleworth Rangers, where he had charge of virtually every age group from under-9s to under-16s as well as a spell as coach of the Lancashire under-16s which at that time included Phil and Chris Farrell.

A year at Spotland Rangers was followed by half a season in charge of Oldham St. Anne's. He never really settled with the Saints, but within three weeks of finishing at Higginshaw Road the Roughyeds vacancy cropped up and this time he succeeded where he failed the year before when he applied for a job which went to Mark Knight.

This time he got it and there will be no happier man than Shaun at the prospect of following in his father's footsteps.

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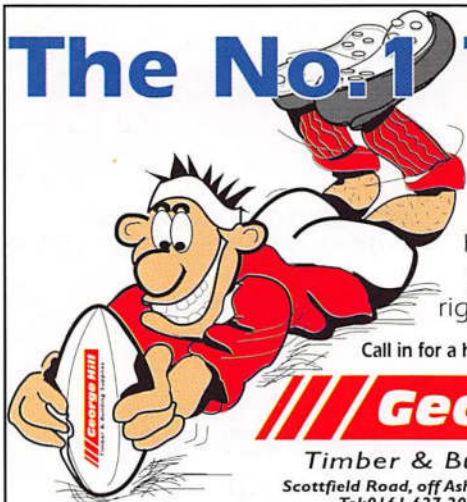
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Alliance Action

.. with Mark Knight - Oldhams New Alliance Coach

THE Alliance home fixture against Widnes Vikings postponed for the second time has now provisionally been rearranged for Thursday 14th of June and obviously this date will be confirmed in the local press.

The lads had a difficult fixture at Featherstone programmed for Thursday evening the only side to inflict a home defeat on the Roughyeds so far this season but at the time this programme went to press the result was not known.

Congratulations go out to Keith Brennan third so far in this season's Alliance One top try scoring list, second in the goalscoring charts, and holding the same spot as overall points scorer. Ironical that Keith will be thinking that it would suit not to score another Alliance point this season as this will mean he is holding down that first team spot. Again congratulations are in order to Keith who won the 1st team man of the match award against Cougars last Sunday.



Keith Brennan

The next Alliance match is at Castleton against the Cougars this coming Thursday 10th May K.o. 7.30pm.

TOP TRIES - 12 Wayne Green (Doncaster); 11 Paul George (Widnes); 9 Keith Brennan (Oldham), Mark Flanagan (Widnes) & Will Jordan (Featherstone); 8 Chris Foran (Widnes), David Foster (Leeds) & Matt Foster (Keighley); 7 Paul Ashton (Rochdale), Wes Davies (Wigan), Chris Halliwell (Leigh), Liam Jones (Widnes) & Jon Woodcock (Doncaster)

TOP GOALS - 41 Green; 38 Brennan; 33 Lee Sanderson (Leigh); 31 Richard Fletcher (Hull FC)

TOP POINTS - 126 Green; 112 Brennan; 81 Fletcher; 78 Sanderson; 74 John Braddish (St Helens) & Jones; 62 Paul Sykes (Bradford); 56 Ashton; 54 James Walker (Keighley); 48 Iain Marsh (Salford); 46 George Mack (Batley); 44 George; 42 Davies

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	L24-30
29	Doncaster	A	7.30	W56-16
April				
4	Batley	A	7.30	W21-0
19	Doncaster	H	7.30	W54-28
26	Widnes Viking	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			

Championship

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	PTS
Hull FC	7	5	1	1	257	101	156	11
Wigan Warriors	5	5	0	0	192	54	138	10
Bradford Bulls	5	5	0	0	209	100	109	10
Wakefield T W cats	6	4	0	2	129	164	-35	8
Leeds Rhinos	6	3	0	3	149	155	-6	6

Halifax Blue Sox	3	2	0	1	96	62	34	4
St Helens	7	2	0	5	198	200	-2	4
Huddersfield Gts	5	2	0	3	112	126	-14	4
Warrington W	6	2	0	4	114	216	-102	4
Salford Reds	7	2	0	5	128	239	-111	4
Castleford Tigers	6	1	1	4	136	189	-53	3
London Broncos	5	0	0	5	82	196	-114	0

Division One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	PTS
Widnes Vikings	12	10	1	1	364	175	189	21
Keighley Cougars	11	9	1	1	317	116	201	19
Oldham	12	9	0	3	381	220	161	18
Leigh Centurions	11	8	1	2	326	147	179	17
Rochdale Hornets	13	7	0	6	261	257	4	14

Featherstone R	12	4	1	7	195	299	-104	9
Doncaster D	13	4	0	9	294	378	-84	8
Whitehaven	10	4	0	6	128	231	-103	8
Batley Bulldogs	11	3	0	8	114	302	-188	6
Workington Town	11	1	0	10	151	264	-113	2
Hunslet Hawks	8	1	0	7	82	224	-142	2

Probing The NFP

WITH N.F.P. clubs hitting the financial buffers by the week the league table is undergoing a sudden and rapid transformation. Out of the blue there is no longer a big three but only a big one, Leigh Centurions. Now any team with any financial stability, one with the ability to cling on by its fingertips or one prepared to take a gamble is in a position to benefit. Any who fulfils these criteria? Oldham, Featherstone and Rochdale respectively. Now to the end of the season promises to be a week by week thriller as up to 13 of the 19 clubs battle for the play-offs.

Biggest beneficiaries of the week were Oldham. A midweek win over Doncaster in a cracker of a game set the ball rolling. For the Roughyeds Joe McNicholas didn't put a foot wrong on his return to first team duty and he scored a magnificent first try. Neil Roden constantly conjured something out of nothing. Jason Clegg was in barnstorming form. Phil Farrell was a model of both defensive and attacking second-row play. And stand in hooker Keith Brennan was simply sensational. Meanwhile for the Dragons Paul Mansson was a majestic play-maker and Ian Ramskill a powerhouse prop.

And to follow this on Sunday the Roughyed overwhelmed troubled Keighley who gave debuts to nine of the 17 on duty. Despite this the understrength Cougars performed heroically, backed by a vociferous travelling support. It was a tribute to the coaching at Cougar Park that the Keighley side never looked disjointed nor disorganised, playing with enthusiasm and occasional panache. Nevertheless, frustrated by Oldham's rock solid defence, Keighley ended up unable to contain the rampant Roughyeds. Props Jason Clegg and Danny Guest were too hot to handle and Keith Brennan and David Gibbons took full advantage to dictate the play. With Kevin Mannion adding a telling presence and Gavin Dodd making forceful forays from fullback the Cougars wilted. And suddenly Oldham had hit second in the table.

That Oldham had now risen to their highest placing since re-formation was thanks to Workington Town winning at Ram Stadium. Tane Manihera and Hitro Okesene were the

inspirations behind a dramatic Town victory. With the Cumbrians on nine wins from their last 12 outings and Dewsbury having lost four from six it becomes obvious how the balance of power has changed. Even so, after trailing 22-4 never-say-die Dewsbury scorched back to 22-16 before time ran out on them.

The other games last weekend all went to form. Featherstone were too good for Gateshead, Jamie Rooney notching 18 of the 38 points with 5 goals and 2 tries. Hull K.R.

comfortably dealt with Chorley, 4 tries here for Alasdair McLarron the ex-Driffield R.U. winger (who said R.U. players were no longer turning to R.L.?) Whitehaven added to York Wasps misery with a 54-6 win at Jockey Lane. And, finally Leigh overcame Sheffield 34-28 after



Jamie Rooney

a titanic struggle at Don Valley where the Eagles had the Centurions hanging on desperately at the close after the visitors had led 30-10 at half time.

This weekend inevitably sees some crucial encounters. Leigh could be tested again by Hull K.R. but ground advantage should tell. Featherstone v Dewsbury will be a close call again with home advantage likely to decide it. Rochdale will be sorely tested by Workington, but I'll go with the Hornets to win. And it's anyone's guess whether Widnes are good enough to nail Whitehaven at the Recreation Ground.

Of the other fixtures Swinton should defeat Gateshead; Keighley ought to account for Hunslet (depending on who the Cougars have available to play of course); Doncaster will beat York; and Oldham ought to overcome Barrow. Which leaves another close call at Batley where the Bulldogs meet the Eagles. Not wanting to sit on the fence I'll take Sheffield to win and you can gloat if I'm wrong.



BARROW BORDER RAIDERS

AFTER just missing out on a top eight place last season Barrow were expected to mount a big challenge this time round. However, it has been an in and out season for the Border Raiders, especially after Oldham dented their fortress Craven Park image with a first day away win by 28-16. Nevertheless the Cumbrians are making steady progress under the tutelage of former Salford and Great Britain fullback Paul Charlton.

Among players likely to be on duty today Barrow will have outstanding scrum-half **DARREN HOLT** who has shone every time the Cumbrians have faced the Roughyeds. A superb playmaker, tactical kicker and goal kicker, Holt formerly played for Carlisle.



Darren Holt

Voted best scrum-half in the N.F.P. in 1999 and Best Emerging Talent outside Super League he was Barrow's top scorer in 2000 with 8 tries and 116 goals.

Big centre **PHIL ATKINSON** is another to have troubled Oldham in the past although he could be missing today with injury. Originally signed from Ulverston, Atkinson appeared in Widnes' Academy team before settling at Craven Park.

A powerful second-row has also proved a handful for the Roughyeds in the past. Here **GEOFF LUXON** displays an outstanding workrate. In his sixth season with Barrow, Luxon was once a London Bronco. Last season he was a winner of three separate club awards as player of the year. His partner **STUART RHODES** recently returned 'home' after signing for Widnes at the start of the season. A big, powerful runner Rhodes has also played for Carlisle.



Stuart Rhodes

Behind these two **GARY CHARLTON**, son

of the coach, is an abrasive loose-forward. Having played at Whitehaven and Carlisle, Charlton has now settled at Barrow where he is showing some of the best form of his career.

In the front row young prop **DAMIEN WHITTER** travels up from Warrington to train and play, a real mark of his enthusiasm and commitment. Fellow prop **IAN RAWLINSON** is a local lad signed from Barrow Island now recovered from close season surgery on a troublesome groin injury.

At the start of the season the Border Raiders snapped up discontented Leigh hooker **ANTHONY MURRAY**, a lively director of play from acting halfback who is capable of cracking the tightest of defences.

In the backs **CHRIS MASSEY** will feature at stand-off. Another signing from Barrow Island the youngster has had to fill the gap left by Tane Manihere and has done so with aplomb.

Across the threequarters line we will see **ADE GARDNER** a young winger upgraded from last year's Alliance side; **MATT LEIGH** once with Wigan's all conquering Alliance side, then with Salford and a close season acquisition by Barrow; **BRETT McDERMOTT**, a player who has fought back from two seasons disrupted by shoulder and knee injuries; and **SHANE IRABOR** a Cumbria county Academy representative who formerly played for Walney Central.

Finally, full-back **DANNY LOCKHART** has broken through the ranks to take the no.1 shirt.

Substitutes will come from: **MIKE KAVANAGH** an experienced utility player originally at Askam and brought to Barrow from Carlisle; **WILLIE BURNS** ex-Carlisle prop who chose to sign for Barrow in preference to Workington; **STEVE JACKSON**, a Penrith born prop who also came to Craven Park via Carlisle; **MIKE WHITEHEAD**, a second row out of Walney who had four years at Wigan before heading back to Barrow; **PAUL GARDNER**, brother of Ade and once a schoolboy signing by Warrington; **GLEN HUTTON**, a speedy winger from Walney coming back to Craven Park via Keighley, and last season's leading try-scorer with 17 in 27 outings; and **GARETH PRATT** an ex-Doncaster and Dewsbury second-row.

Walkerbouts

... with Brian Walker

WATERSHEDDINGS

The upgrading of the small park at the corner of Counthill Rd and Ripponden Rd has now been completed and becomes a welcome centrepiece to Watersheddings Village life.

The heritage blue plaque to mark the history behind the Watersheddings rugby ground will now be fixed to a centre stone in the small park with the unveiling scheduled for Friday 15th of June.

The blue plaque will be the 27th in the Oldham area all commemorating famous people, places or events such as Oldham MP Sir Winston Churchill, rugby league pioneer Joseph Platt, the first cotton mill and now the area in which stood one of the oldest and most famous rugby stadiums in the world.

Watersheddings Rugby Ground

On the site of the housing development to the east of this park was the famous Watersheddings rugby ground, which served the Oldham club from its opening on the 28th September 1889, until the last first team match on the 19th January 1997.



Painting of the first match at Watersheddings v Swinton 1889

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Ian Sinfield
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Jason Clegg
Junior Roughyeds



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Cook(e)ing up a storm



ON THE way to Batley recently we fell into conversation with a Huddersfield Giants season ticket holder (and there aren't many of them about!). He made the interesting point that it's about time promotion and relegation to and from Super League was guaranteed. He didn't see much prospect of the Giants finishing other than bottom again this season despite recruiting heavily and engaging a supposedly dynamic, young Australian Coach in Tony Smith. And, not surprisingly, he's fed-up of seeing his side lose as often as it does Far better, he thought, to drop down a division, re-group, win some games (which might encourage a few more supporters to the ground) and take it from there while at the same time giving another club a crack at the big time. Food for thought, don't you think?



ANOTHER recent lunchtime encounter was with the players and Coach of Hull F.C. who couldn't have been nicer. Shaun McRae happily engaged in conversation and took the time and trouble to wish Oldham all the best that afternoon (we were at Widnes) as he left. Unfortunately his side went down in a thriller at St. Helens by 38-34, but as an example of gentlemanly behaviour Shaun McRae and his players were a credit.

Incidentally, McRae admitted he knew little of the fortunes of clubs in the NFP and thought there weren't that many players at that level who could hack it in Super League. However, with the benefit of full time professionalism, it's my opinion that he's wrong and I'd love to see an NFP side given the chance to prove it, be it current runaway leaders Leigh Centurions or anyone else.



Continuing our review of N.F.P. club programmes:-

YORK WASPS

36 Pages Price: £1.50

Mainly standing colour.

Printed by P. Turpin Associates.

Content: Very limited. The usual Chairman's and Coach's pieces, plus Juniors, Supporters and Development News. Centre spread of match statistics and brief player profile at back. Black and white match action photography. Best reads are Martyn Sadler's syndicated League Express comment, together with columns by Dianne Hillaby (York Evening Press) and Jonathan Doidge (radio York).

Verdict: Better than expected. An attractive presentation.

Rating: 6/10

WIDNES VIKINGS

36 Pages Price: £1.50

Full colour

Printed by Tobin Design.

Edited by Steve Fox (who writes the best column in League Express every week)

Content: On the week Oldham were at the Autoquest Stadium much of the programme was given over to an interview with newly appointed Coach Neil Kelly, which probably means it was unrepresentative. Written material by Chris Westwood, Colin Pheysey and 'William Boot' is topical and entertaining. Plenty of stats, but no up to date photography and, most surprisingly for a club of Widnes' achievements, no historical pieces.

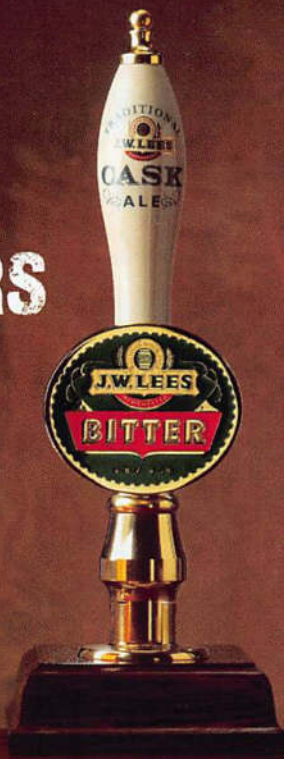
Verdict: A good read in a very eye-catching presentation. Dynamic front cover.

Rating: 8/10



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121



.... Joe McNicholas



Q. When did you first start playing rugby league?

I was thirteen when I started playing rugby league for Spotland Rangers and it was after a North West Counties game, Lancashire v Yorkshire, that I was approached by Brian Gartland to come to Oldham for a trial. After trials

elsewhere I decided Oldham was for me and Oldham (Bears) as it was then became my first professional club.

Q. Do any particular games or opponents stick in your mind?

Just one or two, I remember playing for the 'A' team against Wigan when Sean Long was scrum half and it was a ding-dong game. The score was 3-2 and it was regarded as being the lowest scoring 'A' team game ever. (We won by the way).

I admired Mike Kuiti as a player and a pro: his commitment was superb and he was a very genuine person. Also Jason Robinson was a player I thought was very good to watch, because he has excellent skills and fitness. It's a pity he plays union now.

Q. Have you any personal ambitions in your rugby career?

Oh yes, I want to keep improving my game, and feel with Mike Ford as coach at Oldham that I am learning a lot. My favourite position is full back, but I really do not mind playing on the wing. My injuries are all behind me, my strength and stamina is good and I feel with a bit of luck, Oldham can get to the play-offs. Obviously, Super League is my ultimate goal, so let's wait and see.

Q. Do you have any time to relax?

A bit. At the moment I am learning to play golf, and I enjoy occasional nights out with my girl friend, who by the way, comes to all the games I play in.

Q. Any other memories, Joe?

I remember being the last player to score a try on the old Watersheddings ground. It was an 'A' team game against Swinton and all the lads and supporters were a bit made up that day. I also remember being picked as 'A' team Player of the Year by the supporters. And last week was a good day for me when chosen as Man of the Match against Doncaster. I was reminded how much I owe as a player to my dad for ferrying me around all over the place, and the supporters at Oldham who are the best ever. So everything at the moment is going great.

FOOTNOTE

Joe McNicholas signed for Oldham Bears in 1995 in time for the Centenary Season. He played Academy and Alliance football for the Bears and made one substitute appearance in the first team against Leeds away in the end of season play-offs in 1997. He re-signed for Oldham Roughyeds and is now, at 22, the club's longest serving player!

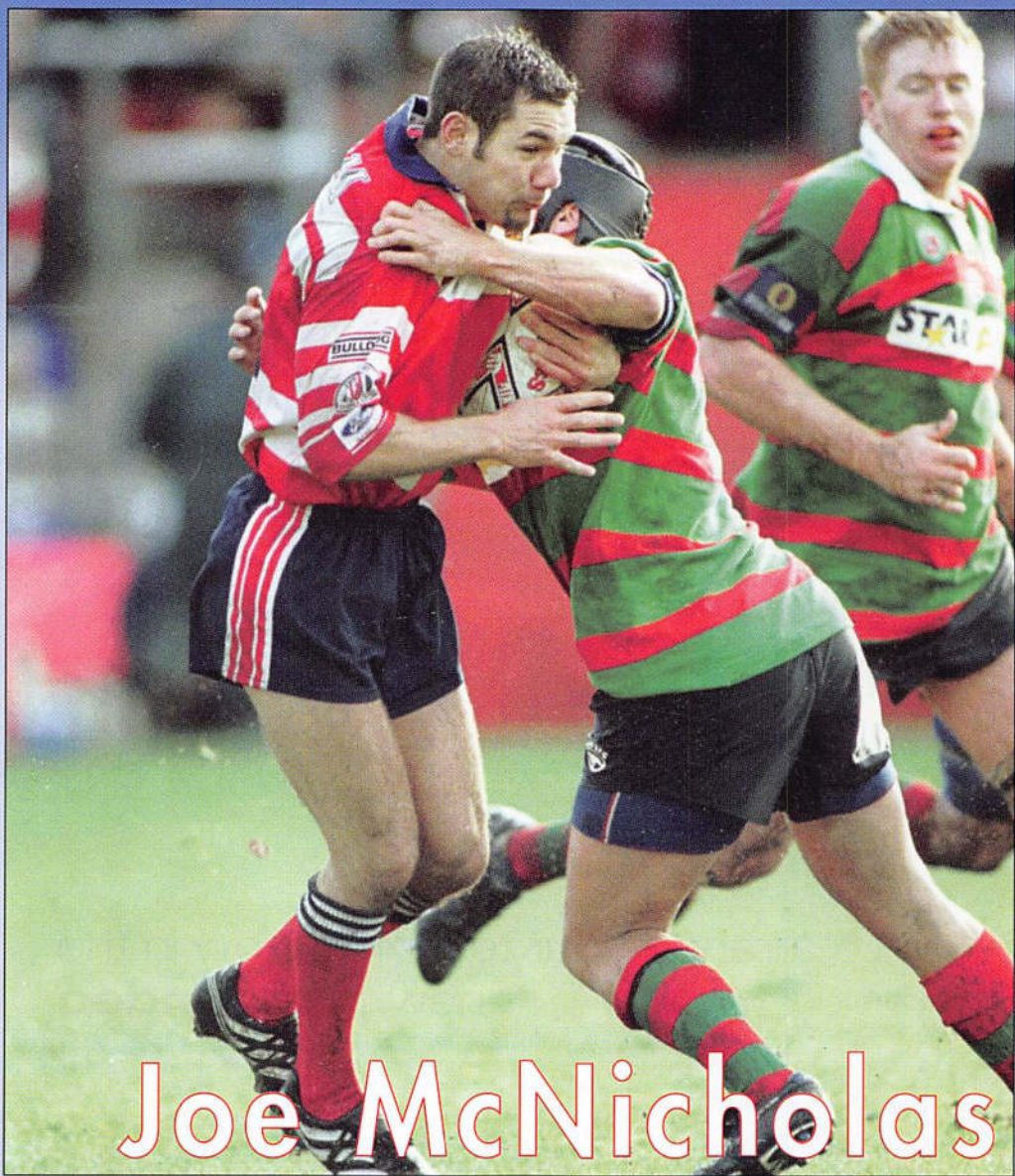
Answer to last week's teaser:

The player nicknamed bobby Bouchette is Phil Farrell.



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DEALERS

Iva Slateloose



Iva's Guide to the Grounds of the N.F.P.

BARROW

Getting to Barrow is always an adventure (so how they go on travelling away every other game must be more than man can bear). If you don't get stuck in Morecambe Bay, trapped by the tide at Grange over Sands, you can get distracted by a boat trip at the foot of Lake Windermere or wonder at a lighthouse in the middle of nowhere (does it guide the drunks home from the pub at throwing out time?). Then you can look in on the Stan Laurel museum at Ulverston - another fine mess you got me into! Before the dulllest link road you've ever travelled, it used to be better nipping down through Dalton, a sort of Furness version of Tombstone. And then you hit Barrow, like a lot of R.L. towns a bit of faded glory surrounded by the same everywhere you go i.e. B&Q, Tesco, Currys, Sainsbury, JJB. It could be Milton Keynes. As a tip, if you've time, go for lunch to the Old Bank, a spit and sawdust pub that'll do you a proper Sunday dinner (2 courses) for £3.95. And then you find the ground. And what do you know, it's terrific. Stands on all four sides, one of them named after local hero Willie Horne, and a smashing little shop. Do you know I drink out of a Barrow Braves (better name than Border Raiders) mug at work? Well you do now. Only two things wrong with Barrow, the wind off the sea and the bloody gulls!

BATLEY

A local industrialist in the 19th century had a weird sense of humour 'cos he called Batley's ground 'Mount Pleasant'. I don't know which day of the year he went but I've never been on the same day. Basic dress for Batley is outlined in Ranulph Fiennes' 'What you need for a trip to the Pole'. The cricket lads on the adjacent pitch have thermal jock straps.

If you stand at the top end of the ground you can just see the top of the posts at the bottom. The locals who congregate on the half way line all have one leg shorter than the other. And should you be unwise enough to sit in the stand the seats are so low they have a winch to get you up at the final whistle. And it's the only place I know where they give you your very own piece of carpet to sit on.

And, of course, these joys await you only if you've found your way via Cleckheckmondedge, Fox's biscuit works, various road humps and little Calcutta. Batley also completes my collection of R.L. drinking mugs (2 to be precise). Well for 50p you can't go wrong!

CHORLEY

Only someone experienced in Hampton Court maze can find Chorley's ground (which is why their crowds are so poor). It was built about 1815 to celebrate Waterloo, at least I think that's why they call it Victory Park: either that or somebody's got a REALLY cruel sense of humour.

The ground's the only one I know that slopes in EVERY direction, so you play uphill and downhill at the same time. Goalkickers have to dig a hole AND erect a mound of sand. The stand is concrete and railway sleepers: if you didn't have a bad back when you went, you will have when you leave. The local residents are all really cheerful: they greet you with colourful NO PARKING signs and spit at you when you leave.

DEWSBURY

They were so attached to the pitch at Crown Flatt that when they moved to a new stadium in Dewsbury they built another just like it, which takes some doing. Only this time to make it more friendly they didn't bother planting any grass. However, just to improve matters they decided to replace one uncomfortable stand for two. And the other thing about the new ground is that they built it nearer Hunslet than Dewsbury (I suppose that was in case either one got admitted to Super League)

The latest trick at Ram Stadium is to surround it with a lorry park, so you have to find it through Hans Maas, Norbert Dentresangle or various Turkish and Slovenian wagons. I do hope their latest money raising scheme has nothing to do with illegal immigrants.

Academy Action

Coach Shaun Gartland, Manager Pete Beswick

TODAY the Academy team will play its first ever curtain raiser at Boundary Park.

Formed only last season, the Academy still finished in 5th place, losing to Workington in the play offs. Although this in itself was disappointing, the players can be proud of their achievements, as the team was formed a month after the start of the season and inherited Hunslet's record of played two, lost two.

This season expectations are higher for the squad so far assembled and the club has also increased its work with the youth sector in the form of development squads for both 15 and 16 year olds and the recruitment of John Jackson, (Jacko), as head scout.

Both Jacko and myself have watched a good number of local youth games, which has resulted in the signing of promising youngsters Paul Bennett, Adam Clayton and James Kirkland, with hopefully more to follow.

The combination of these signings with experienced players, Matty Williams, James Wilkinson and Anthony Whitehead

who have been playing Alliance football all season, together with a crop of exciting youngsters that have come through the development squads, and the remainder of last season's players should provide new coach SHAUN GARTLAND with plenty of strength.

For the benefit of supporters at today's game I have included after this introduction a brief profile of each of the players already signed.

Let's hope the lads have a successful season and progress through the ranks of Alliance and First team football.

Mark Knight



Paul Bennett

PAUL BENNETT (16) a stand off. Signed by Oldham on a 3 year contract from Waterhead is highly rated and a key member of the Waterhead team that won the NW Counties under 16s premier division championship in the season just ended. Had been in

Wigan's development squad for about a year, but chose to join his hometown club when John 'Jacko' Jackson, the Roughyeds chief scout, persuaded him that Oldham were building for the future.

JAMES KIRKLAND

(16) a hooker. Also signed a three year deal and also a member of Waterhead's all-conquering under 16s, coached by Andy Yates. Like Bennett, he was also in Wigan's development squad and is held in high regard by many judges, including 'Jacko'



James Kirkland

ADAM CLAYTON (16)

a back row forward or centre. Yet another member of the Waterhead championship winning side, Adam played most of his early rugby at Saddleworth, like his elder brother Ryan who has been signed by Halifax Blue Sox.



Adam Clayton

Whilst at Rangers, he was coached by Shaun Gartland, the new Academy boss for the Roughyeds. Moved to Waterhead to benefit from a higher grade of youth rugby and has gone from strength to strength since. A member of the Clayton family, of Clayton Playing Fields fame.



Shaun Gartland

Academy Action

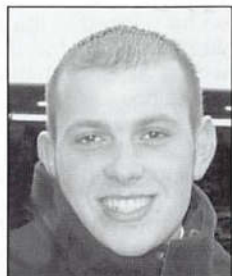


James Wilkinson

JAMES WILKINSON (16) a centre, already known to Oldham's fans thanks to his appearance for the Academy side last season and, more recently, regular appearances in the Alliance team. Originally from Royton Tigers, he is the younger brother of Alex Wilkinson, who is at Bradford Bulls. Won last season's Academy team's players' player of the year award.

ANTHONY WHITEHEAD

(17) a prop-forward. A cousin of Roughyeds director Sean Whitehead. Played at Saddleworth and joined Oldham's new Academy team last season for trials and made an immediate impact. Won the coach's player-of-the-year award and made several appearances in the Alliance side.



Anthony Whitehead



Matty Williams

MATTY WILLIAMS (17) a Rochdale boy, stands 6ft 4in. Like the other young signings, has put pen to paper on a three year deal. Joined Oldham's Academy set-up via Royton Tigers where Academy manager Peter Beswick quickly spotted his potential - potential that was confirmed in his early games with the under 18s.

Teams for Today

OLDHAM ACADEMY		BARROW B.R. ACADEMY	
Coach:		Coach:	
Shaun GARTLAND		Stuart WILKINSON	
Daniel ATKINSON	1	Lee WASHINGTON	
Mark MCDERMOTT	2	Chris OLDCORN	
Chris CARTER	3	Richard WILSON	
James WILKINSON	4	Chris PARK	
Warren BESWICK	5	Colin THOMPSON	
Paul BENNET	6	Neil SHAW	
Kiel LANCASHIRE	7	Anthony DIXON	
Anthony WHITEHEAD	8	Carl PARKER	
Michael FITZSIMONS	9	Martin CORNISH	
Ezra BAILEY	10	Ryan CORBETT	
Matty WILLIAMS	11	Darrell GROVES	
David NORCROSS	12	Ian ARMSTRONG	
Adam CLAYTON	13	Matthew PARKINSON	
Michael ROBERTS	14	Darren BALDWIN	
Adam SHARPLES	15	Simon LYON	
James KIRKLAND	16	Paul BELL	
John MITCHELL	17	Ian CAIRNS	
Kieran AITKEN	18		

Referee: Nick YOUNG
Touch Judges: Dave MILBURN
TBA

ACADEMY TEAM FIXTURES

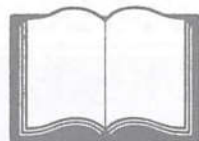
April	Featherstone	A	L44-14
23			
May	BARROW	H	
5	Chorley	A	
13	Dewsbury	A	
19	DONCASTER	H	
26			
June	Gateshead	A	
3	FEATHERSTONE	H	
9	LEIGH	H	
16	York	A	
24	Barrow	A	
30			
July	WORKINGTON	H	
7	Leigh	A	
14	DEWSBURY	H	
21	CHORLEY	H	
28			
August	GATESHEAD	H	
4	Doncaster	A	
11	YORK	H	
18	Workington	A	
25			
September	Play Offs - First Round		
8	Play Offs - Grand Final		
29			

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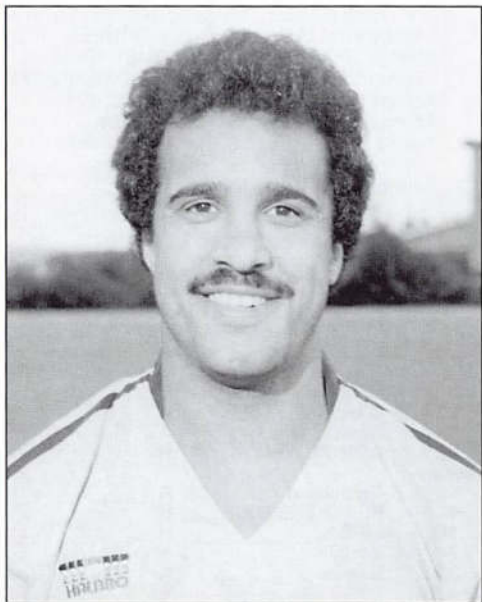
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Amateur Album



.....WITH DON YATES

THE CONVEYER belt of talent moving into professional rugby from local clubs is testament to the dedication and skills of a number of youth coaches in the Oldham area. One of these coaches is Joe Warburton who is currently coaching the Higginsshaw under-13s team.



Joe Warburton

Joe was himself an outstanding youth player with Saddleworth Rangers. He played up at Greenfield from under-13s to under-18s before joining the highly successful Oldham Colts team which contained several players who went on to gain full test honours. Mick Worrall, Terry Flanagan, Andy Goodway and Ray Ashton were just a few of the star names in that team which lifted the Colts Premiership by beating Leeds 21-13 at Swinton as a curtain raiser to the 1980 Premiership Final. Warburton was a hooker in that team but he failed to gain first team recognition at Watersheddings.

When Joe realised that he was never going to be given a first team opportunity at Oldham he moved on loan to Carlisle. He

played the final seven matches of the 1982-83 season in the old First Division, the equivalent of today's Super League. Warburton came up against all the top hookers of that era and satisfied himself that he was equal to most. 'I matched them all except Brian Noble of Bradford', he said. When his loan spell was over Warburton returned to Watersheddings where the Roughyeds slapped an exorbitant transfer fee on his head. Carlisle could not afford it, Warburton was still out of favour at Oldham so he packed in the professional game and went playing for Salem Hornets. It was whilst at Salem that Warburton took up coaching.

Four years later Joe was back playing professionally when, with a number of other local juniors he joined Mansfield Marksman. That 1987-88 season was a sensational one for Warburton. He played in 32 matches and topped the club try scoring charts with ten touchdowns. 'I really enjoyed my days at Carlisle and Mansfield', said Joe. 'At Carlisle I satisfied myself that I was good enough for first team rugby and underlined the fact with a brilliant spell at Mansfield.'

Joe's only regret about turning professional was that he missed out on an appearance in the Standard Cup Final by joining Oldham at 18. Now he has moved into coaching he hopes one day to coach a team in that final.

Joe would also love to coach professionally or to coach a BARLA international side at any level, be it youth, open age or maybe the British Students team. He certainly has the qualifications and also the respect of his fellow coaches. Warburton holds a senior grade coaching badge and is also a coach educator. That means he is qualified to coach coaches. You cannot get much higher than that.

One of the ambitions of the Roughyeds is to gain Super League status and attract all the top local juniors to the club. One way forward is to introduce a scholarship scheme and who better to overlook any youth policy than Joe Warburton whose dedication, enthusiasm and knowledge of local youth rugby is second to none.

CLUB CALL

Hope you all turned up for the Academy game today. It was the first time the youngsters have played a curtain raiser and hopefully it won't be the last.

Last Sunday we made it three wins in a row, and now at the business end of the season it couldn't be a better time to stock up on Roughyed merchandise. The Club Shop is open Monday-Friday 9.00-5.00 and on Saturday 9.00-1.00

Our Saturday Yankee stands at £5,000 but you have to be in it to win it. For more details call the club on 0161 628 3677

All that remains for me to say is get behind the lads and make some noise.



Our 'A' team are having a great season and are in a good play off position. Anyone who has not been down to Castleton will be amazed by the atmosphere and how close you are to the action. With your support we might just have a chance of a trophy come June.

The Roughyettes
would like to thank
everyone who gave
to their bucket
collection in the
Clayton Arms.
All donations have
gone to their funds.

We are running a weekend in
Newcastle/Gateshead on June
2nd/3rd to coincide with our
game against Gateshead
Thunder.
We will be leaving Saturday
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Centre, then having an evening
at leisure in Newcastle and
then on Sunday taking in the
game
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HI TO ALL THE JUNIOR ROUGHYEDS

A warm Oldham welcome to the Directors, supporters and Junior members of Barrow Border Raiders.

THE Oldham mascot for today is 8year old **AMY WHITEHEAD**. Amy attends SS Aidan and Oswald R.C. School and her favourite player is Leo Casey.

Have a great day Amy.



Amy Whitehead

The mascot against Swinton Lions on the 2nd May was **GEORGE YEWDALE**, George has had to wait a long time for this

re-arranged game and to be the mascot, but he had a great time when he ran out with the team and had his photo taken with his favourite player Jason Clegg.

The mascot for the Chorley Lynx game is 5 year old **BRADLEY KNOWLES**.

Happy Birthday wishes go out to Bradley from all the Junior Roughyeds. He will be 6 years old on the 19th May so have a great birthday.

Bradley's favourite player is Pat Rich.



George Yewdale



Bradley Knowles

Debbie Rafferty

2000/2001 Northern Ford Premiership

Pos	Team	Pld	Won	Drn	Lst	For	Agst	Diff	Pts
1	Leigh C.	19	18	0	1	747	202	545	36
2	Oldham	19	13	0	6	509	273	236	26
3	Keighley C.	19	12	1	6	603	305	298	25
4	Featherstone R.	19	11	2	6	519	253	266	24
5	Dewsbury R.	18	12	0	6	537	274	263	24
6	Workington T.	18	12	0	6	443	358	85	24
7	Widnes V.	18	11	1	6	501	265	236	23
8	Rochdale H.	17	11	0	6	475	264	211	22
9	Hull K.R.	19	10	2	7	349	286	63	22
10	Whitehaven W.	19	10	1	8	403	248	155	21
11	Sheffield E.	19	10	0	9	429	350	79	20
12	Doncaster D.	17	9	0	8	306	279	27	18
13	Batley B.	18	9	0	9	273	343	-70	18
14	Barrow B.R.	17	7	1	9	335	431	-96	15
15	Swinton L.	17	7	0	10	321	379	-58	14
16	Hunslet H.	18	4	1	13	226	623	-397	9
17	Chorley L.	19	2	0	17	267	851	-584	4
18	York W.	19	1	1	17	149	905	-756	3
19	Gateshead T.	19	0	0	19	166	669	-503	0



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'THE DON'



ON THIS DAY . . .

Don Yates looks back to May 6th yesteryear

ON SATURDAY 6th May 1911 Oldham met Wigan in the League Championship Final at Wheater's Field, Broughton. It was the fifth consecutive Championship Final involving Oldham who, after losing the first three, had lifted the trophy twelve months previously by beating Wigan. The pie-eaters, therefore, were seeking revenge and, having defeated the Roughyeds in a play-off to decide which club took top spot, they were confident of victory. Despite their earlier success, Wigan were decidedly second best when it mattered most and the Roughyeds retained the title by winning 20-7. Centre Jimmy 'Jumbo' Lomas was the star of the match, scoring two tries and three goals. Stand-off Tom White also scored two tries whilst a goal from hooker Joe Ferguson completed the scoring.

Eleven years later Wigan did gain revenge when, at the same Wheater's Field in Lower Broughton, on Saturday 6th May, Wigan defeated Oldham 13-2 in the 1922 Championship Final. It was a disappointing final, not only for Oldham followers, but for the vast majority of the 26,000 crowd who were treated to just one try. Oldham's points came from a second-half penalty landed by winger Reg Farrar.

It was on this day in 1935, Monday 6th May, that a Rugby League XIII defeated France 25-18 at Headingley, Leeds. There were no Oldham players involved in that match but included in the League pack was Barrow second-row forward Alec Troup. An outstanding forward, Troup was a native of Maryport who also played for Cumberland, England and toured Australasia with the 1936 Lions when he appeared in two test matches. A feature of the match against France was the use of a substitute by the visitors some thirty years before substitutes became common practice in the game. French scrum-half Joseph Carrere was replaced by Pierre Germineau on this historic occasion.

Seventeen years later, on Tuesday 6th May 1952, a Rugby League XIII were in action again. That evening they met Oldham at Watersheddings and were beaten 18-8 by the Roughyeds in a match staged for the benefit of James Chalmers, the former Oldham stand-off. The Roughyeds scored six tries that evening, the scorers being outstanding members of the great Oldham team of the mid-fifties, Terry O'Grady, Billy Mitchell, Alan Davies, Jack Keith, Sid Little and Dick Cracknell.

Four years ago, on Tuesday 6th May 1997, the Paris St.Germain Super League club sacked their Australian coach Peter Mulholland after the team had suffered a run of eight consecutive defeats. Mulholland was eventually replaced by the former Oldham forward and coach Andy Goodway although their results



Andy Goodway

and, probably more significantly, their attendances did not improve sufficiently so they were withdrawn from the competition by Super League Europe.

Exactly ten years ago, on Monday 6th May 1991, the Barrow Island junior club visited Redhill for a Conference League fixture. Barrow Island won 30-16 with seven of their players appearing on the scoresheet. Five of those scorers have since turned professional and have turned out for the senior Barrow club. These are Guy Spenceley who scored a try, Mike Charles try, Darren Carter three goals, Colin Wassell try and Gary Westwood try. The other two Barrow Island try scorers were Nicky Rushton and Rowan Nicholson.

Fixtures

Date Opponent Result Att

DECEMBER

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

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	70 - 6	514
8	BATLEY	26 - 8	1,598
13	ROCHDALE	10 - 38	2,398
16	Widnes	16 - 34	4,072
22	Batley	9 - 8	962
29	DONCASTER	23 - 4	1,171
29	KEIGHLEY	38 - 4	1,815

MAY

2	Swinton	A	
6	BARROW	H	
9	SWINTON	H	
13	Chorley	A	
20	WORKINGTON	H	

JUNE

3	Gateshead	A	
17	Whitehaven	A	
24	Keighley	A	

JULY

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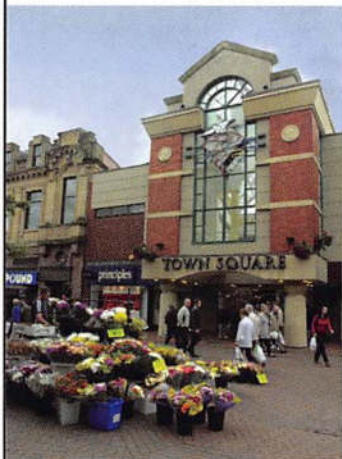
Take a look around the Oldham of the 21st century and you won't fail to be impressed with what's been achieved. There are now huge efforts taking place to ensure that the Borough remains in its rightful place at the hub of the North West region.

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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BARROW BORDER R.

Coach: Paul CHARLTON

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Pat RICH	4	Brett McDERMOTT
Daryl LACEY	5	Shane IRABOR
David GIBBONS	6	Darren HOLT
Neil RODEN	7	Anthony MURRAY
Andy PROCTOR	8	Damien WHITTER
Keith BRENNAN	9	Mike KAVANAGH
Jason CLEGG	10	Ian RAWLINSON
Phil FARRELL	11	Matthew LEIGH
Ian SINFIELD	12	Stuart RHODES
Kevin MANNION	13	Gary CHARLTON
Gareth BARBER	14	Jamie MARSHALL
Paul NORTON	15	Geoff LUXON
Danny GUEST	16	Tau LIKU
Chris FARRELL	17	Michael WHITEHEAD

TODAY'S

PETER MEADOWS

MARTIN ASHCROFT

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