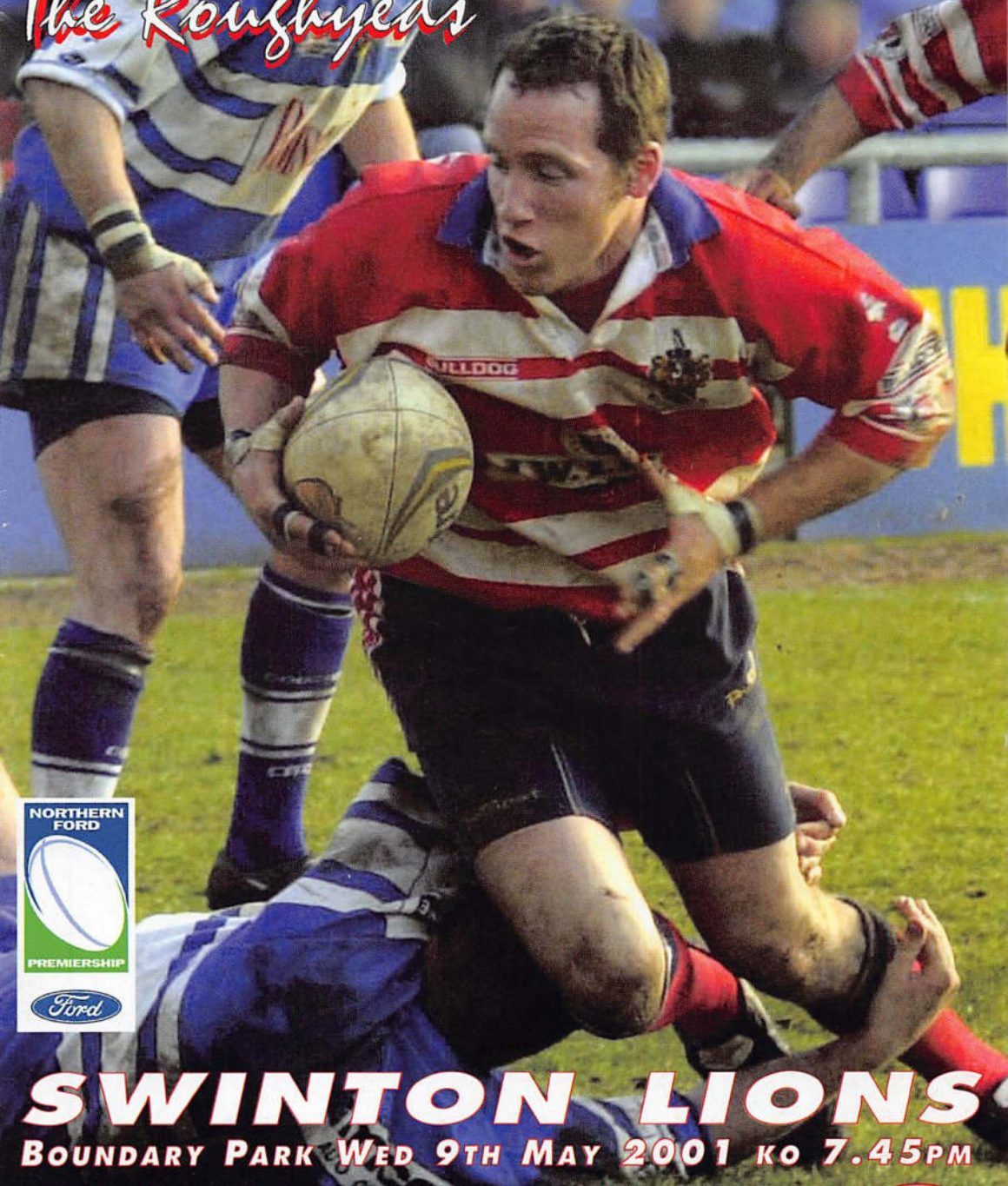


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The Roughyeds



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Up Front

... with Christopher Hamilton



TONIGHT we entertain Swinton Lions in what will be our last league fixture of the season at Boundary Park. The new pitch costing the best part of £600,000 will then be put in and hopefully, the pitch problems we have had since we re-formed will be behind us forever. Each season has seen us having to move games which has put a strain on the players, the coaches and the

finances. We must thank Swinton for agreeing to switch this fixture tonight at short notice to enable the game to be played at Boundary Park and although we beat them only 7 days ago at Gigg Lane I am sure they will be out for revenge tonight.

Most of you will have read that the Association of Premiership clubs will be meeting on 18th May to discuss a number of vitally important topics not least of which will be how many clubs are here next season. I have circulated a paper to clubs which, I think, should be the starting point of any future strategy, ie the financial status of each club, but I have to say that there are already a number of Chairmen who feel that this is too onerous a task. What chance have we got of safeguarding clubs' futures when people won't take the blinkers off? Not very much I would suggest but only time will tell.

Bryan Henare will be making his second appearance for us tonight after signing last Friday and anyone who saw his performance against Barrow will have seen exactly why we signed him and hopefully he will continue to have a big influence as we get towards the end of the season. Everybody at the club wishes him well and I won't bother to say I hope he soon settles in - we gave him about 30 minutes on Friday for that!

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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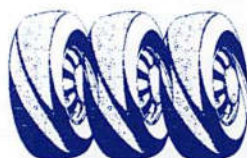
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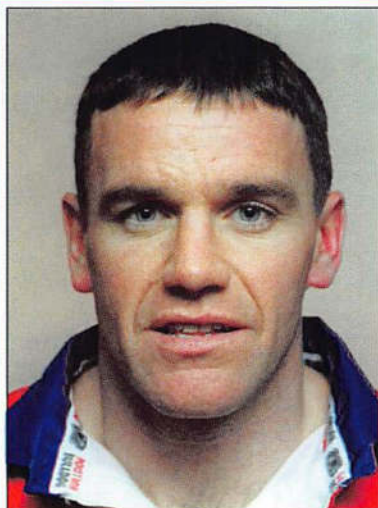
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FORD FOCUS ... with Mike Ford



WE have had another two good wins this week against tough opposition, fortunately without sustaining any further injuries. I know Mike Gregory was not pleased with Swinton's performance last Wednesday, so I have no doubt he will have his team fired up for tonight's game and they will be keen to turn us over. In Lee Hansen they have one of the outstanding forwards in the division and hooker Rob Barraclough never stops working, so we know we can't afford to relax.

Barrow last Sunday gave us a real workout, adopting spoiling tactics that made it difficult for us to play as fluently as we would like. Although we could have played better, we did enough in tough circumstances and we came through without any injuries. With Leo Casey and Joey Hayes almost ready to resume after injury I have a good squad of players and I think we are back on track after earlier

disappointments. We always intended to strengthen our side about now and the capture of Bryan Henare emphasises our intentions and our ambition. We are second in the League and intend to stay there. If anyone wants to shift us they are going to have to really work for it and put results together. I think you saw on Sunday what a good player Bryan is and he is just the boost we need at this stage.

In the meantime I have to say that in Leo Casey's absence Jason Clegg has been outstanding and behind a go forward pack Neil Roden has really started to dictate the play. Which is the reason why I can't get a game myself!

Earlier in the season I kept asking myself if I was doing the right thing when things were not going as we would all have liked. I hope now that we are back on track and that tonight against Swinton and on Sunday against Chorley we will be professional in our outlook and consolidate our position. We never take anything for granted but with your backing hope to win.

Enjoy your rugby,

Mike



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Michael's Match

... from the pen of Michael Turner



TODAY we extend a warm welcome to all the supporters, players and officials of the Swinton club and look back to a match played at Station Road in the 1981-82 season. This was a successful time for the "Roughyeds" in so much as the second division championship was won with only two defeats in the thirty two league matches. Also the club enjoyed an extended run in the John Player trophy before going down to the all conquering Hull F.C outfit in the semi-final. By coincidence the other semi saw Swinton defeated by Hull K.R.

The away match against the Lions was played on April 4th 1982. The "Roughyeds" started the game very much the favourites but it was Swinton who scored first in the ninth minute when some sloppy marking at the play the ball allowed Clough to go over for an unconverted try. Oldham hit back within ten minutes with Ray Ashton scoring a try converted by Mick Parrish. This was followed by a further try from Ashley McEwan again improved by Parrish. That concluded the scoring until the last minute of the half when Fairhurst kicked a penalty for Swinton following a high tackle by Alexander. the teams turned round with Oldham 10 - 5 to the good.

The match was decided in a twelve minute spell just after the break when Oldham scored three further tries. The first two went to Parrish, the second of which he converted and the third and best score of the match went to Brian Caffery after some snappy handling by the "Roughyeds" concluding with a slick reverse pass from Brian Hogan. Swinton rallied briefly when more slack defending at the play the ball allowed Ratcliffe to score. The try was converted by Mellor. However, Oldham had the last say and two further tries from Clive Hunter and Ashton gave a final score of Swinton 10 - Oldham 29.

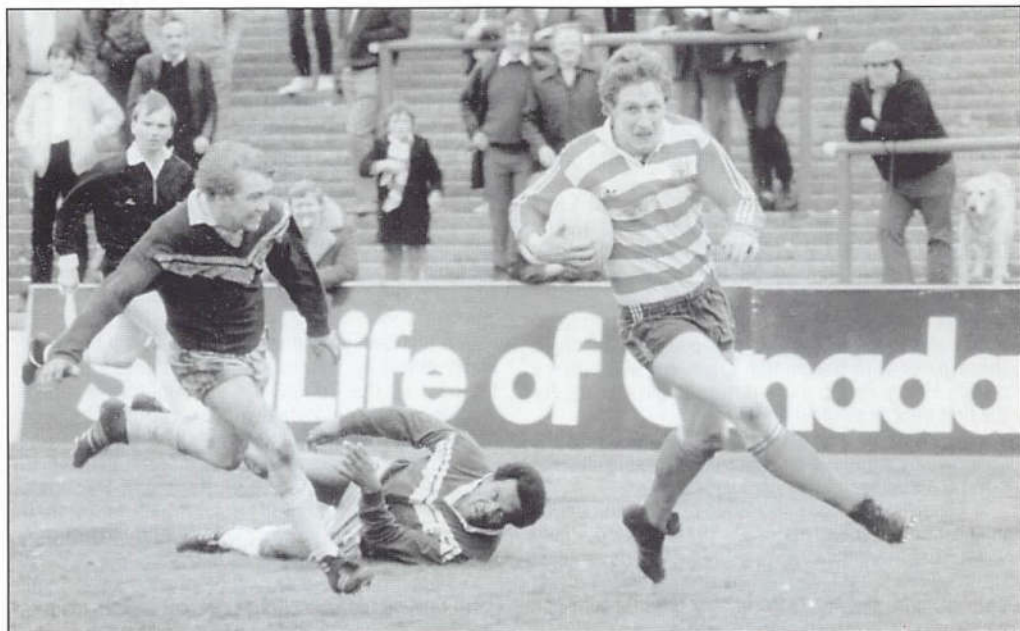
The match was a personal triumph for Adrian Alexander who had a hand in four of his side's seven tries.

OLDHAM: A Taylor, G Munro, B Caffery, M Parrish, C Hunter, A McEwen, R Ashton, B Hogan, A McCurrie, A Alexander, M Worrall, A Goodway, T Flanagan.

Subs: P Kirwan, L Cook.

SWINTON: P Mellor, Vigo, Carsley, Ratcliffe, Clough, Fairhurst, J Mellor, Clarke, Derbyshire, Ashcroft, Irving, Grice, Bolton. Subs: Lee, Rowley.

Attendance: 2,956



Mick Parrish goes in for one of his two tries against the Lions. Swinton v Oldham April 4th 1982

ROGER

ROGER



CAN Brian Henare do a Steve Molloy? That will be the question on the lips of Roughyeds' fans as the New Zealander settles in at Oldham following his out-of-the-blue loan signing from St. Helens last weekend.

Most fans were taken by surprise at the speed at which the Roughyeds moved when they heard that the Saints' forward was available on loan, and by the fact that it all happened at weekend when media coverage of the Northern Ford Premiership clubs – outside of the local press, that is – is extremely limited, to say the least.

The sport at NFP level deserves and is worthy of a higher press profile, notwithstanding disappointing attendances at many clubs, but that's another story worthy of greater examination at another time.

More to the point, what of Henare? Well, contrary to what many may think, he is not related to winger Richard Henare, the former Warrington and Workington player, who comes from the same part of the world and carries the same surname.

Brian, a 6ft 2in, 15½ stone forward, was brought up in Auckland where he played for the Otahuhu club before working his way through the Auckland Warriors' development and youth set-up, achieving his goal of representing the Warriors at first-grade level.

He did enough to attract the attention of Ellery Hanley, then head coach at Saints, and in the December of 1999 he left his native New Zealand to seek a new life in England and to start a new chapter in his rugby league career.

He had a fair idea of what he was coming to, in terms of settling in the UK, because he had toured these parts with the Junior Kiwis in 1993 when a certain Henry Paul burst onto the English scene for the first time as a fellow tourist.

He was, however, taking a giant leap into the unknown by signing a two-year contract for Saints to cover the 2000 and 2001 campaigns.

He arrived at Knowsley Road at a difficult period in the club's recent history – pre-Millward – and within three months of taking his first glimpse of St Helens, with his wife Odette, he was to discover that the man who had signed him and brought him half way round the world, Ellery Hanley, was to part

company with the club.

Under Millward, the 26-year-old Henare has found it almost impossible to command a regular first-team spot in a star-spangled Saints side, but the Aussie coach is full of admiration for the Kiwi's attitude and commitment and the way in which he has battled on despite obvious disappointments.

So, to get back to the 64,000 dollar question: can Henare do for Oldham in 2001 what big prop Molloy did for the club in 2000?

There are many similarities, not least in the timing of the deals.

Molloy arrived on loan from Huddersfield with only three regular league fixtures left, but he helped the Roughyeds to win two of them and finish in sixth place, from where they went on to reach the play-off semi-finals with success against Hull KR and Doncaster in that memorable extra-time thriller at Belle Vue.

Henare arrived with eight league games remaining so, in that respect, he has more scope than Molloy had. The Kiwi also comes with the Roughyeds placed second in the NFP. It is expecting too much of them, or any other club for that matter, to catch runaway leaders Leigh, but one can view the Henare signing as a positive sign that the Roughyeds' management and coach Mike Ford intend to build up, within their financial structure, for a late-season flourish similar to last year's.

Time alone will tell what sort of an impact the New Zealander will make. Unlike Molloy, he won't have a Shayne McMenemy alongside him in the Oldham pack yet, despite a season that has had its ups and downs, Henare made his debut with the Roughyeds occupying their highest league position since the new club was formed three and a half years ago.

A mid-season blip which culminated in the Good Friday defeat by Rochdale rapidly became a thing of the past as the Roughyeds put together a run of victories which coincided with the fall of clubs such as Doncaster, Keighley and Dewsbury.

The scene is set for a fascinating run-in in which clubs such as Widnes, definitely, and Rochdale Hornets and Workington, maybe, will fancy their chances of competing with Leigh, Oldham, Featherstone etc. for positions in the top four.

Oldham, meanwhile, will be moving heaven and earth to cling onto second place, hence the signing of Henare in a bid to give the squad a timely tonic.

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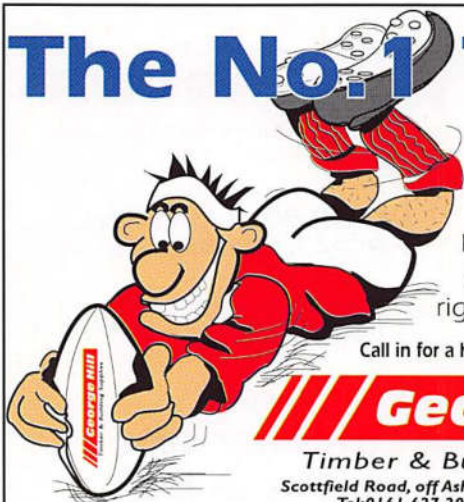
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Alliance Action

.. with Mark Knight - Oldham's New Alliance Coach

FEATHERSTONE 18 OLDHAM 22

FOUR DROP goals by Gareth Barber proved to be vital in the impressive Alliance victory away to Featherstone.

Oldham led 20-4 at half time, thanks to their most impressive half of football all season. In virtually an error free half, tries by the stand out trio of Doran, Johnson and Barber together with three Danny Naylor goals and two of Barber's drop goals left the home side wondering what had hit them.



Gareth Barber who scored a try and 4 drop goals.



Lee Doran - try scorer

The second half proved to be a different story, the combination of Oldham's performance dropping and Featherstone's improvement, provided a tight finish. Oldham holding on through two further Barber drop goals and a timely return to form by Mark Sibson.

Although the second half was disappointing the young and in-experienced side must be congratulated on a fine victory.

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	P
May				
3	Featherstone	A	7.30	W22-18
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			

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	PTS
Bradford Bulls	6	6	0	0	265	104	161	12
Hull FC	8	5	2	1	287	131	156	12
Wigan Warriors	6	6	0	0	232	76	156	12
Wakefield T W'cats	7	4	0	3	151	204	-53	8
Halifax Blue Sox	4	3	0	1	130	78	52	6

St Helens	8	3	0	5	240	222	18	6
Leeds Rhinos	7	3	0	4	171	197	-26	6
Warrington Wolves	7	3	0	4	134	232	-98	6
Huddersfield Giants	6	2	0	4	128	146	-18	4
Salford City Reds	8	2	0	6	144	273	-129	4
Castleford Tigers	7	1	1	5	140	245	-105	3
London Broncos	6	0	1	5	112	226	-114	1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	PTS
Widnes Vikings	12	10	1	1	364	175	189	21
Keighley Cougars	10	8	1	1	277	116	161	17
Oldham	11	8	0	3	333	222	111	16
Leigh Centurions	11	7	1	3	294	139	155	15
Rochdale Hornets	11	5	0	6	220	247	-27	10

Doncaster Dragons	13	5	0	8	300	364	-64	10
Featherstone Rovers	13	4	1	8	213	321	-108	9
Whitehaven	11	4	0	7	140	261	-121	8
Batley Bulldogs	11	3	0	8	114	302	-188	6
Workington Town	11	1	0	10	162	270	-108	2

Hunslet, having dropped out of the competition have had their results expunged resulting in Oldham having beaten Hunslet twice having 4 points deducted.

Probing The NFP

PRIDE of place this week goes to Leigh fullback Neil Turley who broke the record for tries in a season by a fullback, in the Centurions' win over Hull KR. His hatrick took him to 36 tries in 22 games and counting. It's a remarkable achievement for the young player signed from Wigan at the start of the season to replace Stuart Donlan.



Neil Turley

Meanwhile as we get to the business end of the season in the NFP, clubs are scrambling to strengthen their squads. A task made easier by the financial collapse of some teams and the sudden availability of quality players. Moneybags Widnes snapped up Doncaster's Aussie star Craig Weston to add to their strength, but you really do wonder where all the cash is coming from. Then, with Keighley teetering on the brink of disaster Dewsbury stepped in to take forwards Ian Hughes and Jim Leatham, releasing Alex Godfrey and Nathan Graham at the same time, thereby saving a couple of wages. Featherstone nipped in for fullback James Rushforth and utility man Danny Seal, while Hull KR signed up halfback Craig Murdock. Forwards Paul Harrison and Alan Boothroyd departed Cougar Park for Batley. And two other Keighley men went to Super League clubs when wingman Jason Lee signed for Halifax and prop Mick Slicker for Huddersfield.

Despite these comings and goings prudent Oldham may just have pulled off the best deal. Releasing disappointing wingman Danny Arnold to Salford, the Roughyeds brought in St. Helens' out-of-favour forward Brian Henare on loan. The newcomer made an immediate impression, winning the sponsor's man-of-the-match award as Oldham defeated Barrow. Despite a taxing programme of matches the Roughyeds have taken full advantage of other clubs' problems and three wins in eight days against Keighley, Swinton and Barrow has put them in the box seat for second place in the table.

Despite their woes Keighley held on to third with a 26-24 victory over Hunslet. Featherstone are fourth with a significant win against Dewsbury who dropped to sixth. Danny Seal made a dream debut with two tries and a man-of-the-match performance.

In a thriller at the Recreation Ground Widnes nosed ahead of Whitehaven 16-14 after trailing at half-time. A 75th minute Damian Munro try did the trick for the Vikings who moved up to fifth and look ominously strong.

Rochdale's run continued with a good home win against Workington, the two seventh and eighth in the table respectively. Hovering just below the play-off places come Hull KR, defeated 10-58 at Leigh, where wingman Dave Ingram's four tries for the Centurions were rather overshadowed by Turley's record-breaking performance. Then come Doncaster, 82-4 winners against York, with Simon Irving's 13 goals establishing a new club record. And next are Sheffield and Batley on 20 points like Doncaster, the Bulldogs fine 23-2 win against the Eagles giving them a sniff of the play-offs if they can maintain form.

With most clubs due to play twice, this week is a big week for many of the hopefuls. In tonight's games Leigh will account for Hunslet and Widnes for Gateshead. Doncaster will dispose of Chorley and Rochdale should get past Hull KR. And if tiredness doesn't overcome them Oldham ought to beat Swinton. This leaves two tricky games, Featherstone at Barrow and Keighley at home to Whitehaven. I rather think both will produce away wins.

As for next Sunday, key games are Widnes v Rochdale, Dewsbury v Keighley and Sheffield v Featherstone. Hornets could well surprise the Vikings, but Dewsbury will win comfortably. And, having won already at the Lionheart, the Eagles will fancy their chances against Fev in what is certain to be a fiery encounter.

Elsewhere, Leigh should win at Barrow, Oldham will beat Chorley, Doncaster will overcome Swinton and Hull KR will turn over York at Jockey Lane. This leaves Workington at home to Batley, a surprisingly mouthwatering fixture which Town should win, and a clash of the basement teams Hunslet and Gateshead which will give the Thunder a whiff of victory which will then not materialise.

SWINTON LIONS



Mike Gregory

MIKE GREGORY brings his team of Swinton Lions to Boundary Park tonight with a record of seven wins in seventeen matches. To call Swinton inconsistent is by now something of a cliché and is a problem the club management find hard to overcome. On their day the Lions play fluent football and can match it with the best, but all too often the side flatters to deceive.

The key players for the Lions are Lee Hansen, Rob Barraclough, Phil Waring and Mick Nanyin, with no disrespect to anyone else.

LEE HANSEN, man of the match in last week's clash at Gigg Lane, is a Tongan international prop who runs powerfully and tackles remorselessly. He has seen service at Leigh, Widnes, Keighley and Wigan and is one of the most respected players in his position in the league.



Lee Hansen

Hooker ROB BARRACLOUGH never stops working and, like Hansen, tackles relentlessly. He is an ex-Warrington Wolf and is an ex-GB junior champion at both Judo and Wrestling. No wonder he knows how to bring them down!

Stand-off PHIL WARING joined the Lions from Salford this season and has previous experience with St. Helens and Widnes. His role will be as playmaker in chief.

Goalkicking centre MICK NANYIN is an Oldham lad and product of the Lions Academy. Still only 19 and already carving out a good reputation. Father, also Mick, played with Wigan and Blackpool.

Other players likely to appear tonight include, at fullback, WAYNE ENGLISH, a lively attacker out of the Academy side and, at 20, a player still improving.

Wingman MATT BATEMAN is a well built striker who came to Swinton from St. Helens two years ago.

A rival for his position is, of course, ex-Oldham stalwart AIDIE MEAD who turned to the Lions after slipping down the pecking order here at Boundary Park.

Also vying for wing spots are JIM EVANS and ANDY CHEETHAM. Evans is a strong runner signed from Folly Lane, while Cheetham signed this year from Widnes. He has had previous spells at Huddersfield and Leigh.

Centre or second-row ROBERT RUSSELL is 20 years old and joined the Lions recently from Salford City Reds.

And to complete the back division 19 year old SHAUN FUREY will play scrum-half. At hooker against Oldham last year, the youngster has already made a name for himself with some eye catching displays and his speed off the mark.

Up front JOHN PAUL DOHERTY will complete the front row. Another ex-Widnes man who has also appeared at Wigan.

PHIL CUSHION has moved from centre to second-row. Another Academy product and again a player gaining experience all the time at 21 years of age.

Partner in crime DALE HOLDSTOCK is another son of a famous father, this time ex-Hull KR and GB prop Roy. Dale came to Swinton from St. Helens.

To complete a youthful side is 22 year old loose forward PAUL SMITH, the Lions' Young Player of the Year in 2000.

Also on Lions books, to come off the bench or to replace any of the above, are the following: CARLO NAPOLITANO, a product of Eccles and formerly four years as a second-row at Salford; CHRIS NEWALL, ex-Rochdale back row runner; MIKE LOUGHLIN, a big prop from St. Helens and brother of recently retired Paul Loughlin; RYAN STAZICKER an Academy product and nephew of former Wigan and Salford prop Ged; DANNY BUTLER, ex-St. Helens 'A' team star and utility back; and NICK CAMMANN also ex-St. Helens and a utility back.

And just in case you were wondering about the preponderance of former St. Helens players, the explanation is that ex-Gt. Britain star Mike Gregory was once the St. Helens Alliance Coach.



Aidie Mead

Walkerbouts

... with Brian Walker

THE FIRST LIONS

On the same day that the rugby union announced the British Lions squad of professional players to tour Australia this summer, an Oldham supporter gave me a copy of this atmospheric illustration of the first ever tour of rugby footballers to Australia and New Zealand. The reason he passed it on was not because of the announcement of the British Lions squad, that was a coincidence, but because it included Oldham's former Lancashire star John Nolan. (And for the interest of today's visiting fans it also includes former Swinton backs Saul and Bumby).

I had seen the photograph before and recognised it as being from a book published in 1891, 'Football, the Rugby Union Game' edited by Yorkshireman and RFU official, the Reverend Frank Marshall, affectionately known in rugby circles as 'the apostle of muscular Christianity and the scourge of the veiled professional' (Oldham hater!) The same man who pressed the Lancashire union authorities into investigating and banning for life Werneth, Oldham, and England forward, Abe Ashworth (later retracted) and who from his rugby pulpit bellowed accusations of professionalism at the Oldham club demanding they too be fully investigated (later retracted). I digress.

Unbeknown to the Reverend, the spark that incentivised two professional cricketers Alf Shaw and Arthur Shrewsbury to organise this first ever rugby tour would turn out to be the same spark that would eventually ignite the blue touch paper that would blow asunder the relationship between the RFU and most of its premier northern clubs for the next hundred years.

Shaw and Shrewsbury had been in Australia in the winter of 1887 as both promoters and professional players with the English cricket tour party, a squad comprising of a mixture of both amateur and professional players. Some of the cricketers were also accomplished rugby players and it was whilst there that the pair came up with the idea of bringing over a rugby touring squad.

They approached the RFU basing their proposal on the tour being a commercial, profit making venture, but added that whilst the majority of matches would be subject to union rules some would be under the new and unapproved Victoria (Australian) rules. Whilst the RFU declined to award their patronage to the tour they made the decision not to interfere as long as the promoters and players did not infringe the principles of amateurism.

The tour would go ahead with Shaw and Shrewsbury securing the services of twenty working class players, all but one from northern clubs.

The tour left England in March 1888 and returned November. Of the 35 matches played under union rules 27 were won and 6 drawn.

What then were the problems? The first was that Halifax's Jack Clowes, a star player of the tour party that had already set sail for Australia, had been accused of professionalism, a charge upheld and the verdict announced whilst the party was still enroute. Shaw and Shrewsbury, both sharp entrepreneurs and astute to the requirements of the RFU, decided that they had no alternative but not to play Clowes whom they now considered a burden to the tour's



Back row: J Anderton, T Kent, W Bumby, A Shrewsbury, H Brooks, J Lawlor, T Banks, A Saul, A S Laing, J Smith, W H Thomas, C Mathers, A Pinketh, W Burnett, R L Seddon.

Front row: H C Speakman, S Williams, J Nolan, A E Stoddart, J T Haslam, R Burnett, H Eagles, A J Stewart, G J McShane.

overheads.

Whilst it was an open secret that Clowes was not the only player on the tour that had received money, the second problem was that his demise seemed to accentuate the rumours. Its most famous player, England rugby and cricket captain, Andrew Stoddart had been 'bound' to the tour with a down payment of £50 with more to follow and Welsh international and Cambridge Blue William Thomas was paid £90 for the thirty weeks duration of the tour and later tried to negotiate a further £3 per week. John Nolan, the tour's leading scorer, was 'threatened' that unless he behaved himself his 'wages' would not be sent home to his family.

The third and most far reaching problem surrounded the eighteen matches which were played under Victoria rules. These were arranged purely for fund raising. The stigma of these games stamped the tour as an 'exhibition' and not a measure of skill and strength tested against fellow Australian and New Zealand sportsmen.

A sad gloom was further cast on the tour when captain Robert Seddon was drowned in a sculling accident on the River Maitland in New South Wales.

This historic tour was the embryo to all the problems that would haunt the RFU over the next seven years. How could a ruling body of the then national winter sport possibly think that working class men could spend thirty weeks away from their jobs without income to support their families?

On their return confusion surrounded the tourists status. The Yorkshire RU expected the RFU to carry out a full investigation and advised their clubs not to play the tourists. To everyone's surprise the RFU merely required the tourists to sign a declaration to say they had not received any money other than expenses whilst on tour and the matter was forgotten. The ban on Clowes was lifted.

The chance to face up to the issue of payment to players in a sensible and pragmatic way had gone. The failure to act in the face of the overwhelming evidence of payment allowed the staunch amateurs, particularly within the Yorkshire RU, to demand a 'clean up' in the sport resulting eventually in the breakaway. It could all have so easily been avoided.

Alf Shaw and Arthur Shrewsbury would surely raise a glass to this summer's tour and would be looking how to make a bob or two out of it.

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Cook(e)ing up a storm



I'LL try anything once: and Twickenham once last Autumn for England v Australia in the World Cup was quite enough, thank you. On that occasion it rained, but thanks to the stadium being only half full it was possible to move seats to avoid the worst of the downpour - and this was in a part of the ground supposed to be adequately covered. So it is with some sorrow that I read letters in the R.L. press and listen to stories of Oldham fans making the trip for the Challenge Cup Final. Because with an almost full house there were many who, this time, could not escape the downpour. I used to think that Wembley was a dump (indeed it was) but, for the R.F.U.'s showpiece stadium, Twickenham is a shambles. So it is with some pleasure that I read that the venue for the 2002 Cup Final will be Murrayfield which those who attended the 2000 Final seemed to be happy with. Having also visited the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff I feel sure the Edinburgh option is the right one.

Except, of course, all this to-ing and fro-ing puts money into the coffers of a rival organisation. If any of you vowed never to watch R.L. in an R.U. stadium let me assure you I fully understand your point of view. Which raises the question as to why after 105 years of its existence Rugby League does not have a showpiece stadium of its own? In view of the way the News Corporation money has disappeared into a bottomless pit (or is that pocket?), it is arguable that the whole lot would have been better spent on a proper R.L. stadium, H.Q., and Museum. And, much as I dislike Bradford Bulls, the obvious location is, and always has been, Odsal. Unfortunately, the latest redevelopment of the world's best known Corporation rubbish dump will not come up to scratch either. Yet another missed opportunity. And if you think a weekend away in Bradford does not measure up to a weekend in London, just think how well you'd eat in the curry capital of England.



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

BATLEY BULLDOGS

24 Pages Price: £1.50

Black & White, coloured cover.

Printed by Reprovision Studios

Compiled by Laurence Grailey

Content: Club historian Laurence Grailey has some interesting material on the visitors, on former players and a feature on 'that was the year that was'. Plenty of stats plus comment from the Chairman and Coach. Also included is Martyn Sadler's syndicated column. No photography of note and, surprisingly, for a club with an Alliance side no reports on the 'A' team.

Verdict: A good effort for a one man band production, which is nicely presented.

Rating: 6/10

DEWSBURY RAMS

48 Pages Price: £2.00

Colour production

Compiled by: Tony Scargill

Printed by: this is not directly acknowledged, but by deduction is by Bubbleprint of Ossett.

Content: Interesting idea of using a previous cover (against Oldham it was from 1993) on the back. This puts the teams onto a double page centre spread.

Current comment from Tony Scargill, the Coach, Roger Ram, South Stander, skipper Damian Ball, club physio Lee Robinson, Simon Kerr & Martyn Sadler. Well presented stats and some decent photography. Excellent player profile plus great features on the day's visitors. Very similar to an Oldham programme for content except not as strong historically.

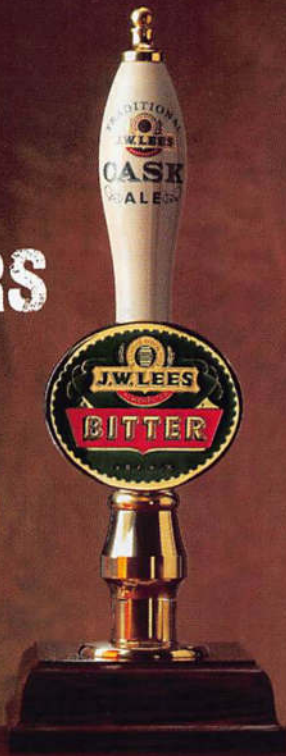
Verdict: The best programme I've seen so far

Rating: 9/10



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121



..... **Jason Clegg**



Q. When did you first start playing rugby league?

Actually I started playing rugby union when I was about 14 years old at Littleborough Rugby Union Club. I stayed and played with them till I

was about 19 years old when I felt a change was due so I went down to Littleborough Rugby League Club and played there for about 4 years. I think the scouts had been out and I was signed by Peter Fox for Bradford. Now he was a real character and well known throughout rugby league, and I really enjoyed my time at Bradford because after playing in the 'A' team for a while I got a crack at the 1st team and turned in about a dozen first team games against some tough opposition.

Q. Who is the toughest opponent you've ever played against?

The toughest opponent has to be Glen Lazarus who played for the Australian touring side in, I think 1996, I made my debut in that game and felt the first half was brilliant, but did not think I would be on the field for 80 mins, I was, and those last 10 mins were the longest 10 mins of eighty I have ever played. But it was a superb game.

Q. Where did your professional game go from there?

Well with the arrival of the Aussies at Bradford and Super League and full time contracts it was an unsettling time all round, so I thought the time seemed right for a change especially as I had not been offered a full time contract and Peter Fox would be gone soon, a man I had a great deal of respect for. Since coming to Oldham I feel I've made a thousand friends. We have a great squad with terrific team spirit, a first class coach and our season is going really well. The supporters are a fantastic lot and as long as I am enjoying my game and playing well I am happy and I hope everyone can see it.

Q. Do you have any time to relax?

A bit, I do enjoy a good night out with the lads. We all get on well both on the park and socially. I watch a bit of sport on the TV, but as you know training takes up many hours so some times have to wait.

AND TO FINISH HERE'S ANOTHER TEASER FOR YOU: What is Ian Sinfield's new nick name?

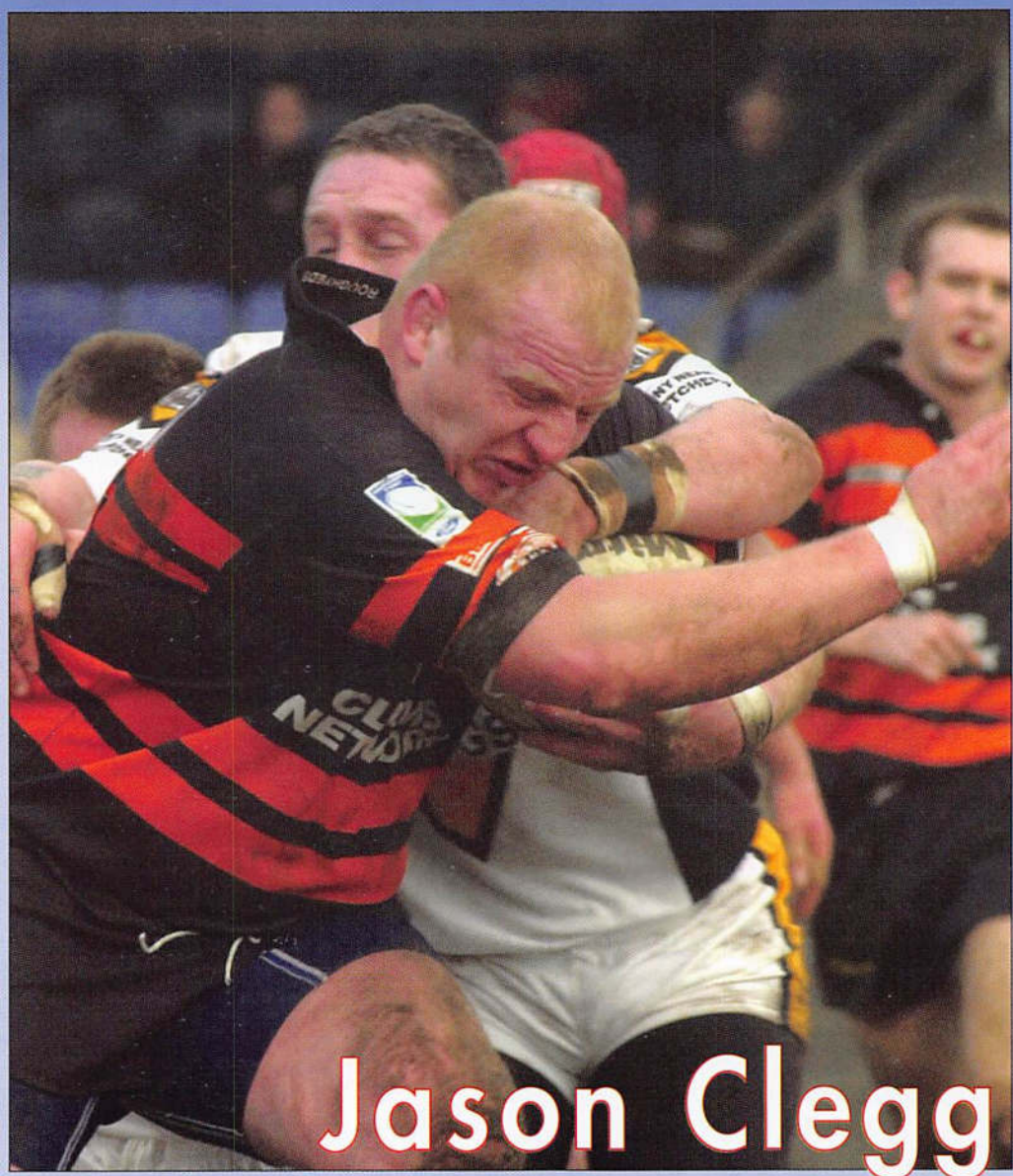
(Answer in next programme)

P.S. Did you know Kev Mannion has been christened Inspector Gadget by the fans!



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DEALERS

Iva Slateloose



Continuing Iva's Guide to Rugby League Grounds.

DONCASTER

You'd think finding Belle Vue was easy, after all it's right opposite Doncaster Racecourse. The trouble with that is it's on the south side of the city which gives you two problems. One is getting over the river and the other is negotiating a ring road that has so many places you could go wrong that, inevitably, you do. And then there's the Car Park. Yes, there's plenty of room but getting on or off across the Bawtry road is harder than crossing from South Korea to North. Next comes the turnstiles - there won't be any open until five minutes before kick off. From the outside the ground looks like it might be good: silly you! The toilets are porta-cabins (or should that be echo-chambers?). The main stand fell down in 1955 and was re-erected by someone from the High Chapperall. And a journey to the opposite stand is through a builder's yard, so you can't call it the 'popular' stand because you can't get there without a hard hat. And if you're tempted to a burger.....

FEATHERSTONE

The Lionheart Stadium (Post Office Road to you and me) is quite nice. It's a pity the people who go there aren't. And the mad drummer on the 'popular' side will drive you to distraction. The seats over there, however, are twice as good as in the main stand. (Actually, why are they called 'main' stand? They're always the worst stand on the ground and always cost more. If it's just for the pleasure of sitting near the Directors so you can barrack them it's not worth it). Fev's another ground with a slope (is it obligatory in the N.F.P.?) and usually plenty of mud. High light of a trip to Featherstone is the illuminations, red, red and amber, green.....

HULL K.R.

I don't know why it's called NEW Craven Park 'cos it's just the same as OLD Craven Park. They actually built it dilapidated. And what's worse it's even further away than the old ground and you end up going through housing estates that make the Gaza Strip look attractive to get there. And they built it the wrong way round because the wind whips off the sea straight up the ground. When the dogs are on they have to crawl down the home straight or they'd be blown off the track. Goalkickers often don't bother with conversions towards the Humber. And the home fans don't like visitors - I think it's something to do with memories of the Viking invasion (no NOT Widnes!). But it's a lovely drive back past the Marina and on the river front now the fish docks have gone.

HUNSLET

I don't know where the planners get their qualifications because this is another ground built the wrong way round. All the comments about wind at Craven Park apply equally well to the South Leeds Stadium. The novelty about Hunslet is that it's got its own shuttle bus back to the main road, which tells you how far it is from civilisation. The pitch changes size every time you go 'cos if they think the visitors have decent wingmen they bring the touchline in. If Hunslet ever draw St. Helens in the cup they plan to play on a pitch ten metres wide. And I've heard about it for donkey's years but I've NEVER YET heard anybody actually sing 'We've swept the seas before boys, and so we shall again'. However, to finish on a positive note, South Leeds Stadium has the nicest reception area in the league, if you like being received that is.



Academy Action

... with Shaun Gartland

IN WHAT was a terrific first half performance the pack laid the foundations and continuously punched holes in the Barrow defence. This gave the whole team confidence and the boys enjoyed the wide open spaces which were created.

There were 9 tries scored in total 7 in the first half as Oldham ran amok. Try scorers in that first period were Adam Clayton, Scott & Warren Beswick, Ezra Bailey, Anthony Whitehead, Paul Bennett and Michael Fitzsimons.



Adam Clayton

38-0 up at half time gave us a perfect opportunity to have a look at 3 more 16 year olds on the bench, James Kirkland, Kiel Lancashire and Adam Sharples all joining the fray.

Unfortunately half time disturbed our rhythm and allied with numerous mistakes through lack of match fitness we didn't manage to dominate the 2nd period, reflected by a score of 10 points to 8.

Paul Bennett scored his 2nd try with Danny Atkinson scoring the final try of the match. Chris Carter kicked 5 conversions plus a penalty. Matty Williams was outstanding in a superb pack performance and Martin McDermott and James Wilkinson had strong games in the backs.



Paul Bennett

ACADEMY TEAM FIXTURES

April			
23	Featherstone	A	L44-14
May			
5	BARROW	H	W48-8
13	Chorley	A	
19	Dewsbury	A	
26	DONCASTER	H	
June			
3	Gateshead	A	
9	FEATHERSTONE	H	
16	LEIGH	H	
24	York	A	
30	Barrow	A	
July			
7	WORKINGTON	H	
14	Leigh	A	
21	DEWSBURY	H	
28	CHORLEY	H	
August			
4	GATESHEAD	H	
11	Doncaster	A	
18	YORK	H	
25	Workington	A	
September			
8	Play Offs - First Round		
29	Play Offs - Grand Final		



Matty Williams

Oldham finished the game with seven 16 year olds on the park and with 2 years Academy football in front of them can look forward to some success if we can continue to improve and become consistent in our performances.

OLDHAM ACADEMY v CHORLEY LYNX

AT VICTORY PARK

SUNDAY 13TH MAY K.O. 1.00pm



CHORLEY LYNX v ROUGHYEDS

First Team

Following at 3.00pm

Behind the Scenes . . . with Dave Roberts

BACKROOM STAFF – STUART McDONOUGH

Age: 70

Duties:

Looking after Matchday Sponsors, making sure that they are comfortable and trying to make sure they want to come back for more.

I have been involved with the club since it re-formed in 1997, but I was a committee member of the old club during the 1960's for two years. I have also been involved with BARLA in the 1970's and with local club St. Anne's.

Who was the best Oldham player you have seen?

It has to be without a doubt Alan Davies. He was a great player in a great team.

In today's team would have to say John Hough who has stuck with us for the last 3½ years. Also the Gibbons twins and Keith Brennan are amongst other that deserve a mention.



What is the best Oldham team you have seen?

The Championship team of the 1950's - it was a great era when Rugby league grounds were full to capacity.

What are your other interests?

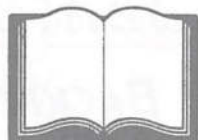
I don't have any, except sinking the odd pint of bitter.

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Amateur Album



.....WITH DON YATES

DURING the early and mid-1980s the Waterhead pack was as powerful as any in the county and the cornerstone of that set of forwards was prop Mick Hough who is still involved in the game albeit as Oldham based scout and youth coach for the Wigan club.



Mick Hough

But Hough will always be remembered in this town for his sterling and consistent performances for Waterhead. He has appeared in four Standard Cup finals which have resulted in three victories. In 1981 he was awarded the Ben Powell Trophy for his performance in Waterhead's 9-7 defeat of Saddleworth. St. Anne's were beaten 9-6 the following year and Hough completed a hatrick of Standard Cup successes in 1986 when Mayfield were beaten 13-8. Hough's fourth final came in 1992 although on that occasion Saddleworth Rangers lifted the trophy with a 22-8 victory. Waterhead also lifted the Lancashire Cup during the 1984-85 season and it was Hough who played a significant role in that success. He was named man-of-the-match in Waterhead's 18-0 victory over Blackbrook in the final.

Throughout those cup winning years for Waterhead, Hough was a regular member of both the Lancashire and BARLA open age squads. He was Lancashire skipper and he made 13 appearances for Great Britain, the

highlight being the 1986 tour of Australia when he was vice-captain of the squad which visited Perth, Alice Springs, Broken Hill, Adelaide, Melbourne, Tweed Heads and Darwin in a hectic but never-to-be-forgotten three weeks in June of that year.

Another proud moment in the career of Hough came in May 1983 when he was selected to play for Great Britain amateurs in a special match against an All Star XIII of professional players who were former BARLA representatives. That celebration match marked the 10th anniversary of the formation of BARLA and was won by the All Stars 22-20. Centre threequarter Ellery Hanley was outstanding for the professionals and scored a couple of tries but Hough and another Oldham lad, scrum-half Darren Bloor (St. Anne's), did the amateurs, and Oldham, proud.

Hough's consistency caught the eye of several professional clubs and in 1983 he had a short spell with Bramley although things did not work out at the McLaren Field. He had a much more successful spell across at Mansfield between 1986 and 1990 when, under coaches Jim Crellin and Ray Clark, the Marksmen enjoyed their best ever spell. Hough then had a short stint at Trafford Borough before finishing off his career back at Waterhead. Mick considers the highlight of his professional career being a second round Challenge Cup-tie in February 1987 when Mansfield were drawn against the mighty Hull side of that era. Hough was up against Lee Crooks that afternoon, an international prop at the peak of his career, and it was no surprise that Mansfield eventually lost 38-7. Nevertheless Hough was nominated man-of-the-match by the club sponsors for the way he took on the Hull pack. 'I was particularly pleased with the way I played that day especially considering the standard of opposition', he said.

Once his playing days were over, Mick moved into youth coaching and his vast experience has been seized upon by Wigan. He is the Oldham area scout for the pie-eaters and he also coaches the under-14s and under-16s in the Wigan scholarship scheme. Another example of a player putting something back into the game he served with such distinction during his playing days with Waterhead.

CLUB CALL

Our Saturday Yankee stands at £5,000 and is an important source of income for the club.

For just £1 a week you would be helping the club and hopefully helping yourself. You can pay by direct debit or have one of our collectors call round.

We are also looking for collectors for the Saturday Yankee and good commission is paid. For details call the shop on 0161 628 3677.



Things are looking pretty good on the field, we made it four wins in a row on Wednesday over at Gigg Lane and stand second in the table (going to press).

All these great games can be bought on video for just £9.99 and are available by contacting the Club Office.

We still have a few car flags on sale at £10.99, (ideal for driving into Rochdale on Grand Final Day).

Let's continue with the great support and really get behind the lads as they battle for a good play-off place.

GATESHEAD TRIP

2nd AND 3rd JUNE 2001

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HI TO ALL THE JUNIOR ROUGHYEDS

A warm Oldham welcome to the Directors, supporters and Junior members of Swinton Lions.

THE mascot for today's match is **Nicola Woodward**. Nicola is 12 years old and her favourite player is John Hough.

Enjoy the match Nicola.



Nicola Woodward

Debbie Rafferty

Here are some jokes for all the Juniors.

J: What do cows read?

A: *Moospapers.*

If dolphins are so intelligent, why do they live in schools.

J: What do you get if you cross Rudolph with a weatherman?

A: *Rain Dear*

J: What is a hen's favourite T.V. programme?

A: *The Eggs Files*

J: What's pink, curly and cuts the grass?

A: *A prawn mower.*

The World's Their Oyster

ON the occasion of this final Boundary Park game of the season the outstanding home game against Workington will have to be played elsewhere - it is perhaps appropriate to remind followers of the sport in the Oldham area that five local youngsters will be representing the town on the forthcoming NW Counties under 16s tour of Fiji, Auckland and Australia in July.

They are:

RYAN COLLINS, a scrum half from the Waterhead club, who played a key role in Waterhead's surge to the championship of the NW Counties under-16s premiership.

BRADLEY TINDALL, a utility forward from Royton Tigers, who has played consistently well for Tigers for the past two seasons.

MICHAEL ROWE, another Royton Tigers forward who has made a big impression.

WAYNE CORCORAN, a prop who lives in Rochdale, but also plays for Tigers and who scored a hat-trick of tries in a tour warm up match against Carcassonne.

ADAM SHARPLES, a Rochdale boy with significant Oldham connections in that he goes to Bluecoat School and joined the Tigers a year ago after originally playing for Milnrow Cobras.

The Roughyeds Club also has a direct association with Tigers in that Academy manager Peter Beswick is a coach there.

Fund raising for the tour, which will cost around £180,000, is still taking place and will continue to do so until shortly before the party leaves on July 4th.

The tour manager is **Steve Bithell** of 103 Denbydale Way, Royton, Oldham. OL2 5UH (678 6047) and the team manager for the tour is **Garry Highton** of 96, Denbydale Way, Royton, Oldham. OL2 5UH (620 7854).



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'THE DON'



ON THIS DAY . . .

Don Yates looks back to May 9th yesteryear

NINETY-three years ago, on Saturday 9th May 1908, the Roughyeds were involved in a Championship Final replay when they met Hunslet at Belle Vue, Wakefield. The teams had drawn 7-7 at Salford seven days previously but top-of-the-table Oldham were confident of winning and gaining revenge for the Challenge Cup defeat they had suffered at Hunslet the previous March. Unfortunately for the Roughyeds, it was not to be, Hunslet deservedly won 12-2 to complete a clean sweep of honours for the season, the first club so to do. A penalty from stand-off Tom White was the only score Oldham could muster.

Twenty-three years later, on Saturday 9th May 1931, Swinton contested a Championship Final although the outcome for the Lions was much more satisfying than it had been for Oldham. They met Leeds before a crowd of 31,000 at Central Park, Wigan. The Lions had defeated Oldham in the semi-finals and were firm favourites to lift the trophy for the third time in five seasons. This they did, winning more easily than the 14-7 score line suggests. They had two tries disallowed but loose-forward Fred Butters and centre George Whittaker scored tries which were allowed and second-row forward Martin Hodgson landed four goals.

It was on this day in 1990, Wednesday 9th May, that utility back Paul Topping was transferred from Swinton to Leigh. Topping had been with Swinton for five seasons, making 138 appearances and scoring over 600 points. He stayed at Leigh until September 1993 when he joined Oldham. Topping was with the Bears until their demise in 1997, making 115 appearances and



Paul Topping

scoring over 300 points. Throughout his career he was a committed and reliable professional, especially on defence, who was an excellent servant to both Swinton and Oldham.

On the evening that Topping moved to Leigh, Wednesday 9th May 1990, local juniors Saddleworth Rangers entertained Dewsbury Celtic in a Conference League fixture. Rangers won 22-8 with current Roughyeds' director Sean Whitehead landing five goals. The three Rangers' tries that evening were scored by Chris Gill, Paul Coates and Damien Chadwick.

On Saturday 9th May 1908, the day Oldham lost to Hunslet, an even more significant match was taking place down under in Sydney on the Royal Agricultural Ground. Rugby League had just been introduced to Australia and it was on that day that Australia played their first-ever test match. It was against New Zealand with the Kiwis winning 11-10. The visitors led 11-2 at half-time, centre Dally Messenger having scored the first Australian points with a penalty. After the break prop Tom McCabe scored the first ever Australian try. McCabe toured Britain with the 1908 Kangaroos and at the conclusion of that tour he signed for Oldham and remained at Watersheddings for four seasons.

As a curtain raiser to that first Australian test match, South Sydney defeated Cumberland 23-2 in a NSW Premiership match. It was Cumberland's first ever match. South Sydney went on to lift the title but Cumberland finished bottom of the table, resigned from the following year's competition and have not been heard of since.

Finally, as this is likely to be our final match of this season here at Boundary Park, it should be noted that exactly 52 years ago, on Monday 9th May 1949, Oldham Athletic made a rare appearance at Watersheddings. They actually played a charity rugby league match that night against the Roughyeds who, not surprisingly, ran in eight tries as the Latics were beaten 32-10.

Fixtures

Date	Opponent	Result	Att
DECEMBER			
3	Barrow	F - A	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
25	DONCASTER	23 - 4	1,171
29	KEIGHLEY	38 - 4	1,815
MAY			
2	Swinton	33 - 10	1,014
6	BARROW	36 - 10	1,554
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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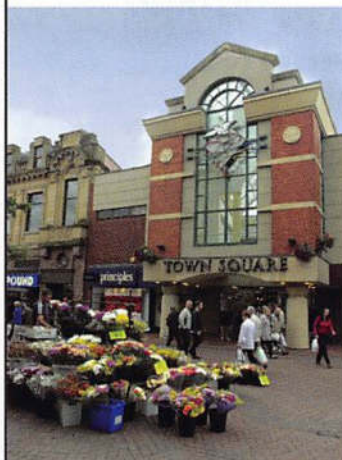
Take a look around the Oldham of the 21st century and you won't fail to be impressed with what's been achieved. There are now huge efforts taking place to ensure that the Borough remains in its rightful place at the hub of the North West region.

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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