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The Roughyeds



CHORLEY LYNX

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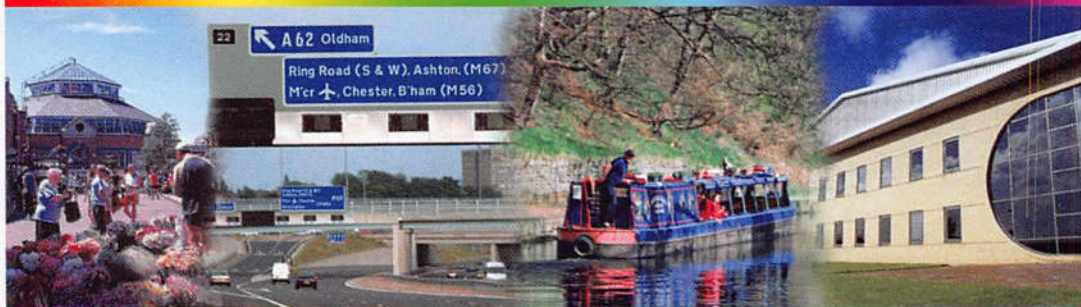
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IN THE HOT SEAT

with
Christopher Hamilton



LAST Sunday's performance at Dewsbury was a massive disappointment to say the least.,

The players let themselves, Mark Knight and you the supporters down against a Dewsbury side who have lost most of their big name players since last season. Having said that, knowing the character of the players, they will be determined to make sure that today sees the start of a revival. They have shown their resolve over the last two seasons and we haven't suddenly become a bad side.

With all the upheaval at the club over the last few weeks it is the easiest thing in the world to feel sorry for yourself and offer excuses for things gone wrong - I know because I've felt sorry for myself on plenty of occasions and wondered why I am doing this - but we are all involved at Oldham Rugby League Club because we want to achieve success and the one thing you can guarantee about that is that you don't achieve it lightly.

Everybody is looking at us and thinking the wheels have come off - I prefer to think we have suffered a couple of flat tyres - and now is the time for all at the club to start fighting back and moving forward - it doesn't matter what is thrown at us **we will keep going.**

I would personally like to thank all of you for your loyal support and hope that we can give you the performances and results that you deserve. Finally, please get behind the lads today as our opponents Chorley Lynx have improved dramatically which is a great credit to everybody connected with the club and they will no doubt feel they can beat us - let's all make sure we disappoint them.

Enjoy the game.

Chris



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*Front Cover: Oldham's first League
match v York at their 'new home'*

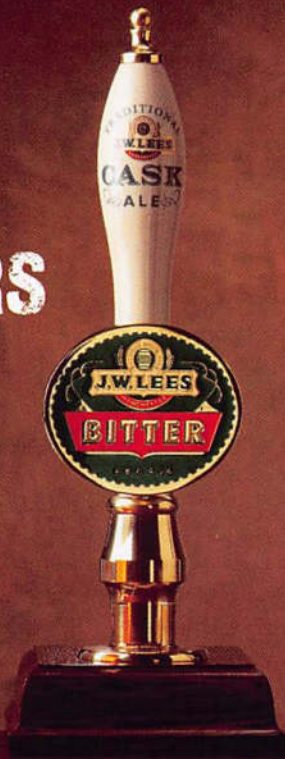
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COACH'S COMMENTS... with Mark Knight



TO THOSE of you who made the journey to Dewsbury last week I wish to apologise for what I know was a poor performance, and you can be sure that we will be attempting to put right what went wrong for today's match.

There was a team meeting at training on Monday where the players expressed their own disappointment and it was clear there was a feeling that the side had let the fans down. That said the mood that emerged was very positive. Clearly, we can't do anything to alter what has gone, we can only influence what is to come. So the outcome was that that's now behind us, let's look to the future, take each game as it comes and see what happens. We get the praise when things go right, so must take the flak when things go wrong.

I have been looking at Chorley this week and studying their play. It is now clear that all the sides which struggled last season, like York, Gateshead,

Hunslet and, yes, Chorley, have strengthened considerably for this season. The competition this year will be much more even and every game a test. Our intention is to surmount every hurdle as it comes and we hope you will stick with us. We know our fan base is one of the best around but we take nothing for granted.

On the injury front Tommy Hodgkinson will be out for a week or two and Kevin Mannion is still a fair way off a full recovery. Simon Knox saw a specialist on Monday night and these notes were written before his report had come back, so here's hoping for the best.

The players most likely to be back soon, possibly by next week, are Anthony Gibbons and Paul Norton both of whom are making good progress. In the meantime it was good to have Keith Brennan available again last week as his versatility is so valuable.

Today's game promises to be a good contest, so get behind us and enjoy your rugby.

Mark



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In Yer Face



I HOPE you will forgive me because I don't like writing about other sports in a Rugby League programme. In fact it was a rule when we produced the Roughyed Fanzine that another code was **NEVER** mentioned. So I'll break the rule just this once, only in order to say that I'm sick and tired of buying Rugby League papers and magazines which give a ridiculous amount of space to the other code. It's a completely different game; it's no threat to our game; and it's as boring as hell. There, I've said it and I've still managed not to use its proper title. And I promise not to mention it again!



I see London Broncos are on the move again, this time to Brentford's Griffin Park Ground. Still nomadic after over twenty years. At least the club is doing its best to recruit British players at the moment, but you really wonder if all the money spent on Australians had been spent to secure a permanent home and to develop the junior and amateur game in the capital whether the club would be any the worse off. Mind you, there are some clubs in the North of England who could think along those lines as well given the parlous state of the game over the last decade.



All that said, however, we need to bear in mind the quality of the product on the field. Already the NFP is showing every sign of being an exciting and competitive League. With only a handful of games played it would be a brave man who could predict the standings in the final League table. And, by and large, the players continue to provide outstanding entertainment without the horrors inflicted on us by prima-donna soccer players. And next week sees the start of the Kelloggs Nutri-Grain Challenge Cup (try saying that after eight pints!) which is sure to bring its usual crop of surprises and heartache. March then sees the commencement of a new Super League season and it may not be as clear cut as some seem to think (keep an eye on Hull

F.C.) Meanwhile Bradford Bulls - love them or hate them - will have put one over on Newcastle Knights to boost our morale. So, you see, it's not all doom and gloom after all. And then there's the National Cup.....



On the news front Featherstone got all hot and bothered over Huddersfield Coach Tony Smith's complaints regarding their hastily rearranged holiday fixture. In true Fev fashion Terry Mullaney laid it on with a trowel, quote:- "The Huddersfield Giants have, in the last five years, received more assistance from the powers that be than Featherstone have received in almost 100 years existence. A sham of a merger with Sheffield, similar to the Hull/Gateshead fiasco, not to mention the £3 million Paris farce, have cost the game dearly, and more importantly caused many 'dyed in the wool' Rugby league fans to turn their backs on the game forever. The first thing any Strategic Planning Committees and Implementation panels need to look at is restoring the game's credibility in the eyes of Joe Public, if it's not too late. Everything else will then fall into place

"Tony Smith needs to quickly realise that he, as a coach at Huddersfield, is in a privileged position with parachute payments and the ability to assemble his players for daily training. His moaning over his players having to endure unfamiliar weather conditions and having to play games when it doesn't suit him are becoming a standing joke amongst the other far less fortunate NFP clubs, who don't receive a brass farthing from anywhere".

There was a lot more to the diatribe as well! Don't you just love them down Post Office Road way?



A creature with ROGER THE RAM on its back wandered round the pitch at Dewsbury. I didn't know whether it was a name or an invitation!



'THE DON'

ON THIS DAY . . .

Don Yates looks back to January 20th yesteryear

Exactly ninety years ago today, Saturday 20th January 1912, the famous old Watersheddings stadium staged its first international match when a crowd of 8,000 saw England thrash Wales 31-5. The English led 22-0 at half time and would have won by a wider margin had their goal kicking been a little steadier. They scored nine tries but could convert only two. Only one Oldham player was involved in the fixture, Welsh centre Evan Davies who created the opening for the late consolation try scored by the visitors. The referee was Bill McCutcheon, an appropriate appointment for he was a Welshman who joined Oldham from Swansea RUFC in 1888. He kicked off the first ever match at Watersheddings and when his playing and refereeing careers were over he served on the Oldham committee and was president when the Roughyeds won the Challenge Cup in 1925.



Evan Davies

The tiny Parc des Sports ground in Roanne, France, capacity 7,000, has staged only one international. It was the third test between France and Australia which should have been played in Lyons but was postponed because of heavy snow. It was quickly put back four days and staged on the afternoon of Wednesday 20th January 1960. Despite persistent rain and an afternoon kick-off, a crowd of 3,437 attended the match which the Kangaroos won 16-8. The Australian try scorers that day were magnificent players from that era. Johnny Raper, a loose-forward who played stand-off in that test, touched down twice whilst second-row forward Brian Hambly and centre Reg Gasnier scored the other two. A couple of goals from skipper and fullback Keith Barnes completed the scoring.

Wednesday 20th January 1999 was a sad day, not only for local rugby, but also for rugby league in general. Because it was on that day that the death occurred of 62 years old Brian Gartland. Brian was an outstanding coach, especially at youth level, who was on the Oldham coaching staff for 25 years. Literally hundreds of youngsters were able to achieve their full potential because of the coaching skills of Brian. In the spring of 1984 Gartland reluctantly took over as coach of the Oldham first team squad following the resignation of Peter Smethurst and then Frank Barrow. The Roughyeds were struggling at the time and staring relegation in the face but, under the guidance of Brian, relegation was avoided against all odds. Such was the knowledge and talent of Brian Gartland, a man who knew everything there was to know about the game of rugby league.

Twelve months ago, on Saturday 20th January 2001, the freezing weather caused all but one Premier Division match in the National Conference League to be postponed. The match which did avoid the bad weather involved top-of-the-table West Hull who entertained second placed Woolston Rovers. The Humberiders won 19-8 with tries from winger Glyn Jones, substitute Lee Roberts and centres Albert Rounding and Carl Moore. Loose-forward Wayne Harris added a conversion and dropped goal. That victory enabled Wests to retain the Conference League Championship and they are favourites to lift the title for a fourth consecutive season later this year. They will also provide stiff opposition to the Roughyeds when they visit Hurst Cross next Sunday for a Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Challenge Cup-tie which must not be missed. It was on this day in 1962, Saturday 20th January, that Featherstone Rovers entertained Wakefield Trinity. Trinity won 18-4 but Featherstone's bitter disappointment at losing this derby encounter against their arch rivals was eased somewhat by the receipts which they received from a crowd of 14,990, the largest crowd to watch a league match at Post Office Road. Who says the public do not want winter rugby?

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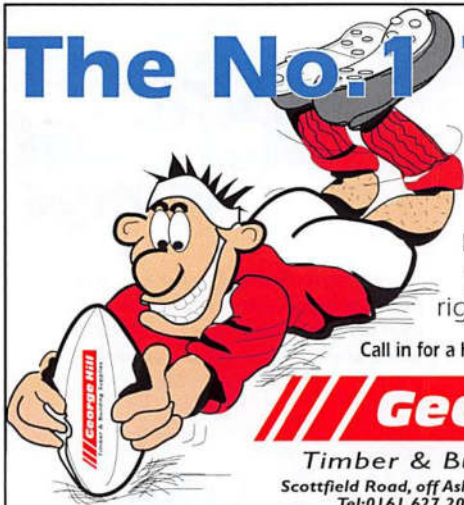
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Saturday 2nd February

Workington Town (H) at Manor Park 2.30 ko

Thursday 14th February

Dewsbury Rams (A) At Ram Stadium 7.30 ko

Saturday 2nd March

Rochdale Hornets (H) at Manor Park 2.30 ko

Saturday 9th March

Gateshead Thunder (A) at Bullocksteads Sports Ground 1.30 ko

Saturday 16th March

Batley Bulldogs (H) at Manor Park 2.30 ko

Week ending 6th April Play-off 1 v 4 and 2 v 3

NORTHERN FORD PREMIERSHIP TABLE 2001-2002

	P	W	D	L	For	Agst	Diff	PTS
Huddersfield Giants	6	5	1	0	185	58	127	11
Workington Town	7	5	0	2	155	123	32	10
Leigh Centurions	5	4	1	0	180	61	119	9
Whitehaven	6	4	1	1	145	70	75	9
Rochdale Hornets	5	4	1	0	114	78	36	9
Hull Kingston Rovers	5	4	0	1	146	54	92	8
Barrow Raiders	7	4	0	3	181	126	55	8
Batley Bulldogs	6	4	0	2	107	96	11	8
Sheffield Eagles	6	3	0	3	168	86	82	6
Featherstone Rovers	5	2	1	2	105	85	20	5
Dewsbury Rams	4	2	0	2	78	86	-8	4
Chorley Lynx	6	2	0	4	96	130	-34	4
Doncaster Dragons	4	1	0	3	62	94	-32	2
Oldham	4	1	0	3	60	118	-58	2
Keighley Cougars	5	1	0	4	62	225	-163	2
Gateshead Thunder	5	0	1	4	52	108	-56	1
Swinton Lions	3	0	0	3	30	74	-44	0
Hunslet Hawks	4	0	0	4	54	170	-116	0
York Wasps	5	0	0	5	46	184	-138	0

NFP Round Up

THE WEATHER again interrupted my match forecasting for January 6th. I was wrong in expecting Sheffield to beat Featherstone where second-row Neil Lowe inspired the Rovers to a 28-18 win. And I had Huddersfield to win - just - at Whitehaven, a game which finished 12-12 and, as we all know, draws in Rugby League are notoriously difficult to predict. Battling 'Haven came back from 12-0 down at half time with prop Phil Sherwen and centre David Seeds to the fore. Otherwise I had my forecasts right, being particularly pleased to have Batley defeating Workington at the Mount.

Last week Leigh and Rochdale fought out a stirring draw at Hilton Park. The Centurions had to cope without David Bradbury, dismissed after 14 minutes, and benefited from a penalty award in the 78th minute to level. On debut both Vila Matautia (Leigh) and Paul Davidson (Rochdale) had uneventful matches. Unfortunately the fixture list does not provide for a re-match. So the draw and lack of repeat delighted Huddersfield. The Giants disposed of Barrow 36-12 to head the League table. Two tries and five goals here for Giants' live-wire halfback Chris Thorman.



Chris Thorman

Workington stole into second place with two home wins in a week. On Wednesday they accounted for Barrow 19-16 and followed up on Sunday with a 24-16 defeat of Hunslet. Seven games played by Workington against three by Swinton: no wonder Tony Barrow is tearing his hair out!

Whitehaven look handier by the week, a fine away win at Doncaster (20-18) placing them fourth. Veteran centre David Seeds notched another try to give him seven for the season.

An Alistair McLarron hat-trick helped Hull K.R. to a win at York by 22-8, a result which left the Robins in sixth place.

Meanwhile Batley secured a fourth successive victory at Gateshead (14-6) with Roger Simpson at fullback outstanding. The win gave the Bulldogs seventh place one ahead of another surprise packet, Sheffield Eagles, who hammered Keighley by 60-0. Wayne Freeman grabbed a hat-trick for Sheffield with Gavin Brown landing eight goals. For newly appointed Cougar Coach Gary Moorby it was a pointer to the size of the task confronting him.

Finally, today's opponents at Hurst Cross had mixed fortunes. While lacklustre Oldham were succumbing to a Dewsbury onslaught to lose 30-6, Chorley Lynx were powering to a 24-14 win against Swinton. What price a win for the visitors today?

On the transfer front Chorley gave a debut to Australian forward Bryce Killock who is looking to break into Super League with Warrington. Dewsbury signed Hull K.R. stand-off Chris Kitching and he made an impressive debut last week against Oldham. Doncaster moved quickly to secure the services of, arguably, Hunslet's best player and points machine Chris Ross. Meanwhile prop Steve Hill has left Sheffield and - like Jamie Benn - has signed once again for York Wasps. And to finish on the news front Keighley have moved in for Danny Ekin from Halifax and Richard Moore on loan from Bradford. And don't they just need them!

Today's programme has some intriguing fixtures so here goes with my predictions: Barrow to exploit home advantage over Doncaster; Batley to push Huddersfield all the way but fall in the last quarter; Hull K.R. to beat Dewsbury, again because of home advantage; Hunslet to sneak home against Gateshead (though I am very doubtful about this one); a so far disappointing Featherstone to win at Keighley; Rochdale to win comfortably against York; Workington to pinch a late win at Swinton; and Whitehaven to account for Sheffield. And I'll leave you to decide about Oldham v Chorley.



CHORLEY LYNX

WE WELCOME Chorley Lynx to Hurst Cross today for a fixture which should prove competitive as our visitors have strengthened considerably of late. Their outstanding victories over Whitehaven (20-16) and Swinton (24-14) are testament to the progress being made and the Lynx cannot be taken lightly.

Founded in 1989-90 as Chorley the club became Chorley Borough in 1991-2, Chorley Chieftains in 1995-96, just Chorley in 1996, Lancashire Lynx in 1997 and then Chorley Lynx for season 2000-2001. Coached by Graeme West, an outstanding player with Wigan and later Coach at Wigan and Widnes, Chorley have lately been establishing links with Super League clubs - most notably Warrington - several of whose players will be on view today.

Chorley's complete League record obtained from their excellent website Chorley lynx.com reads: Played 316 won 100 Drawn 7 Lost 209 Points For 5488 Points Against 9230 (Av. 17-29) which is up to the end of season 2000-2001 [Further information is available on the website].



Leroy Rivett

Chorley's team today will be chosen from:- LEROY RIVETT Newly acquired on loan from Warrington, Rivett is the four try hero of Leeds' Challenge Cup winning side and also featured controversially for Bramley. A real handful and a quality finisher.

ALAN REDICLIFFE is Chorley's leading try scorer and is also on loan from Warrington. With these two the Lynx will have no shortage of fire-power if they can establish superiority up front.

EDDIE KILGANNON is a tough, ex-Widnes centre who reads the game well on both attack and defence. He may be joined by another ex-Widnes Viking in ANDREW FRIAR to form a potent threequarter line.

Behind these four is likely to be LEE BAMBER now in his second term at Victory Park and a more than useful last line.

Utility back LIAM JONES will probably wear number 6 and is the side's goalkicker. He has had experience at both Wigan and Widnes.

Jones's partner maintains the Widnes connection as LEE BIRDSEYE is a bright scrum half possessed of good hands and an excellent kicking game.

Up front the Lynx have two experienced and redoubtable props in hard hitting ex-Widnes man STEVE ARGENT and - just when you thought you'd seen the last of him - evergreen TIM STREET. 'Streety' needs no introduction in these parts as his no-nonsense style once graced Watersheddings. Ever popular where-ever he has played Street is the man the opposition fans love to hate!

Hooker IAN TALBOT was Chorley's Player of the Season and Supporters Player of the Season in 2001 and is an outstanding leader and workhorse. Played in Dewsbury's Grand Final side before crossing the Pennines.

Other candidates for places in the starting line-up or off the bench include former Wigan prop LEE PREST, another tough customer, and IAN PARRY a prop signed from Warrington. If he is still available on loan ex-Salford, Leigh and now Warrington utility man JOHN DUFFY has been in outstanding early season form as both creator and finisher. Meanwhile young CHRIS RAMSDALE, a fine ball handler at hooker, halfback or loose-forward, is also available having been a stalwart of the side for three seasons since his debut as a 16 year old.

In the back row Chorley will choose from the hard working DAVE SMITH familiar to N.F.P. supporters as a former Widnes second-row; WAYNE BLOOR a second season, one time Haydock ARLFC wide runner; LUKE VINCENT the versatile former Salford man; WARREN HINDLE a graduate from the Lynx Academy side; and PHIL HARRISON an attacking second-row signed last season from Rochdale Hornets.

Walkerbouts

... with Brian Walker

"During 2001 three prominent local rugby leaguers, ORLFC stars Peter Goddard and Dennis Ayres along with international referee Dickie Thomas passed away. Both Dennis and Dickie died after the club had completed its home fixtures so it was not in a position to mark the occasion in the traditional way.

Dennis, who played his senior rugby in those halcyon days of the 50's when Oldham were arguably the best rugby league club team in the world and whose career highlights include appearing in the 1956/7 Championship and Lancashire Cup finals wrote the following article back in 1996 marking the closure Watersheddings. In the memory of both Dennis and Dickie I make no apology for repeating it here".

MORE THAN AMBITION I WAS GOING HOME

OLDHAM'S Ground at Watersheddings has always played a part in my life. I was born in to the top house on Longfield Street. Bernard Ganley could have kicked a ball from our front step over the Herbert Street stand and landed it on the centre spot.

From a tender age I used to rush into the ground with our gang when the gates were opened at three quarter time. Early memories of steamy forward battles with Norman Pugh, in his scrum cap and Alan Laird still running forward even on his knees.

Later it was playing rugby at school Saturday mornings, and watching Oldham from the penny rush in the afternoon. Formative years, instructive years, watching the brilliance of Norman Harris



Dennis Ayres hits the line in front of 62,000 at Odsal Stadium. Championship Final victory v Hull 1957.

the courage and strength of Billy Mitchell and Billy Batten and the do or die spirit of Billy Griffiths and Bert Ambler.

When I finished school I had three happy seasons at Oldham R.U. but when the chance came to turn pro I seized it, with almost indecent haste. It was more than just ambition I felt that I was going home.

A season in the 'A' team under the wise and kind Alec Givvons with a couple of first team games took me up to National Service. When I finished that in March 1956 I hoped to do better but Oldham were a very good side on the fringe of honours and it took an injury to Johnny Noon to open the door for me. Bad luck for John but good luck for me. How much good luck I couldn't possibly have realised. It turned out to be a season when Oldham did better than they had for thirty years and the achievements haven't been matched since.

It was the season and particularly the matches at Watersheddings which will stay forever in my memory.

The details are well recorded of course, but bear with me while I list a few of them here. Three out of a possible four trophies were won including the League Championship and the Lancashire Cup. We beat St. Helens three times in the season and Wigan three times too. All our matches at Watersheddings were won including a 21-2 victory over the visiting Australians. We lost away to Workington, Barrow, Warrington, York and of all teams, Liverpool, where there didn't seem to be any spectators so we paid to go into the ground. Liverpool repaid our generosity (and condescension) by beating us 16-8. We also lost unforgettably at Leigh in the Challenge Cup second round. By a score of one try and a conversion to nil we left the cup that should have been ours buried in a sea of mud and icy water.

In spite of those odd lapses we were playing fast and exciting football inspired by the greatness of Alan Davies, Frank Pitchford and Rocky Turner. We had a head start every game from the clinical accuracy of Bernard Ganley's extraordinary goalkicking. That season we scored 214 tries. John Etty had 43 of them.

Watersheddings was alive with anticipation and happy supporters on match days. They loved it and showed it. For the big matches they turned up in droves. Even with the Herbert Street stand in use, it's hard to believe the attendance figures. When Barrow came there were 18,748 on the ground, for Halifax 21,449, St. Helens 16,781, Wigan 19,676 and Leeds 19,100.

All in all that season was a magical experience. It probably doesn't come much better. It was a privilege to be there, to play a part and to have known Watersheddings at its best.

Dennis Ayres.

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Michael's Match

... from the pen of Michael Turner



ALTHOUGH the name of Chorley still seems somewhat "new", in Rugby League terms, it is now over ten years since the Roughyeds played their inaugural match against the first team to bear the Chorley name. In fact tomorrow it will be eleven years to the day since the Oldham side of 1989-90 went to Victory Park and recorded a victory by forty four point to six. The match was the fifth in a run of sixteen consecutive victories for Oldham which began after a Boxing Day defeat at Rochdale and ended in that heart

breaking loss to Warrington in the Challenge Cup semi final, a full three months later. Nearly three thousand people attended the game which featured a somewhat younger looking Leo Casey in the Oldham front row.

The match remained scoreless for the first fifteen minutes before Des Foy broke the deadlock with the opening try. Another score from the international centre, along with a further try by Richard Irving and three Duncan Platt goals gave Oldham an eighteen point cushion at the interval.

After the break it was initially one way traffic. John Cogger scored after twelve minutes before two tries in two minutes gave Irving his hat-trick. Keith Newton added a further try, before there was some relief for the home side when Torpy went over for a try converted by Wood. However, it was the Roughyeds who had the final say when Australian loose forward Cogger registered his second try in the last minute of the game. Platt added three more goals to leave Oldham convincing winners.



Oldham full back Duncan Platt who contributed six goals in the first Oldham v Chorley encounter.

Oldham team v Chorley

January 21 st 1990.

D Platt,

R Irving, D Foy, G Hyde, J Henderson,

B Clark, M Ford,

L Casey, R Russell, J Fieldhouse,

K Newton, S Allen,

J Cogger

Subs: K Atkinson, J Fairbank.

Attendance: 2,851

Referee: Mr C Steele - Barrow



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A Chance to Meet JOHN BRADDISH

with David McGealy, Radio Cavell 1350AM



Where were you born and when?

I was born in Warrington on 25th January 1981.

What about your family, are they all from Warrington?

Yes, they all live in Warrington. I live with my mum, dad and three younger brothers.

Where did your first taste of Rugby League come from?

It started off as a kid, eight years old, when a friend of mine took me down to Woolston Rovers. It started from there, then I went on to play for Warrington schools and then I got signed up by St Helens from Crossfields.

Just going back to where you started, did your primary school play Rugby League?

No, it wasn't my school because at primary school it was all football. It was just my friend that took me down and I just got hooked on the game and it went from there really.

So it was the amateur game that got you hooked. So where and with who did you first play Rugby League?

It was for Woolston Rovers against Royton Tigers at home and I scored a try on my debut playing Second row. Royton Tigers - the Oldham connection, this fate has a thing for us.

Who was the first professional team that you signed for?

St Helens. I was spotted while playing for Crossfields. What happened was a scout had gone down to watch a stand-off and I was playing against him and he signed me instead of him. Burnt him off? Burnt him off. Yep. How old were you then and how big a 'Cor' was it to you? At the time I was sixteen and I signed on my sixteenth birthday. I was attracting the attention of both Warrington and Salford but neither of them followed their interest up. So when Harry Wellens, the Chief Scout at Saints at the time, came up to me and offered me a contract I had no hesitation in signing for such a big club.

Why did you come to Oldham?

Because they've got a high potential at the club and can achieve much. But the big factor was Mike Ford. It wasn't a playing issue as I could have signed for Leigh, but I just wanted to improve as a player and I knew I had to take one step back from Super League because my chances at Saints were limited. So to do that under Fordy's guidance I thought I would go back into Super League straight away. Of course now he's gone! That fate comes back again.

Just going back, You signed for Saints what's happened in your career since then?

I was playing in the Saints' Alliance

side and at the end of the season before last Ian Millward said I'd figure in his plans. But then he said a lot of other things to me, so I played in the Alliance and again for the second year running I finished top try scorer, top points scorer and goal scorer. Eventually he gave me my Super League debut against Warrington, my home town club. Which I thought went really well. But since then he never spoke to me. So I spoke to Fordy and it all happened from there really.

I suppose you must have been a bit disappointed?

Yes, I was disappointed as I'd played Super League and I thought it would carry on from there. But Ian has his own plan and I didn't figure in that. Obviously I'm on loan because he said he could call me back at any time, but I can't see him calling me back. I think it's just a gimmick.

You went from the Alliance side into Super League. Is it a bigger step than going up from Northern Ford?

Yes it was a big step, but when you've got players like Sean Long, Paul Sculthorpe and Keiron Cunningham around it makes life a lot easier for you. But yes it was a big step. I must say that the NFP is a lot more physical than the Alliance so I suppose it's in between Super League and the Alliance.

Who's been the greatest influence on you as a player?

I'd say it's been my mum and dad through the amateur game. As I went to Saints John Myler was the biggest I've had playing-wise and he turned my career right round and also I've had a lot of influence off John Jackson the Oldham scout. But perhaps Mike Ford because he persuaded me this was the place to be, but I also knew he'd make me a better player. Obviously he's not here now, but these things happen don't they. **Do you keep in touch?** Yes, I still keep in touch. He's told me not to lose contact and if I need any help he's always there for me. So I'll just keep in contact with him. **What are you like at Rugby Union?** Never

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played it. **Not Irish?** No. Wait. Yes, I have Irish grandparents. Oh don't start smiling now!

What was your most memorable moment in rugby league?

That'd be when I made my Super League debut. Although I had played a friendly before that against Wigan Warriors on Boxing Day. I came on as a sub scored a try kicked two goals, set up a few more tries and took the Wish FM's 'Man of the Match'. But I still think my Super League debut was the most memorable.

Well with the good comes the bad, so what are your worst memories, or moment in Rugby League?

The worst moment was not being told the truth by Ian Millward. Being promised things that you live up to and then it just gets shot down.

I won't dwell on that so, who's the biggest character you've come across in the game?

Being at Saints I'd probably say Sean Long. Because he's always got a lot of jokes and always giving it to people and having a laugh around the club. But at Oldham I'd say Jason Clegg. He comes out with some good stuff, an excellent lad. All the lads are excellent round here but Cleggy's a character. He stands out.

What's your ambition in Rugby League?

To be successful and perform well for Oldham. But my main ambition is to play Super League either with Oldham or if not with Oldham then to see where my future lies. But I like it here and hopefully if things can turn around, then with Oldham. But Super League ambition definitely.

Tell us a secret about one of your team mates at Oldham or any other club?

Oh I can't tell you them. I know nothing!

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A VIEW FROM THE TOUCHLINE

MY spirits lifted as Oldham's finest trotted out onto the pitch at Hurst Cross.

Familiar faces, new faces, a couple of pounds heavier here and there. Immaculate in their new outfits, they looked really pleased to be performing in front of a 'home' crowd once again.

Conditions underfoot were not ideal though, nor was the tannoy - 'tinnier' than a Model T Ford.

I look forward to sunnier weather when they can dance to 'Kung Fu Fighting' in their short skirts!

C'MON THE ROUGHYETTES

THE ANSWERS TO OUR CHRISTMAS QUIZ

- Q6 (i) MOTHER TERESA
(ii) FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE
(iii) KATH HETHERINGTON

- Q1 (i) OSAMA BIN LADEN
(ii) SADDAM HUSSEIN
(iii) CHRIS HAMILTON

The winner of the "Guess the Amount in Alex Murphy's Swear Box" competition was **Mrs Peach Road of Waterhead**, the amount was, **£35,000**.

- Q2 (i) JULIAN CLARY
(ii) QUENTIN CRISP
(iii) MAURICE LINDSAY

- Q11 (a) **Answer - No** (Johnny Vegas did not win the Lance Todd Trophy last year)

- Q3 (i) JEFFERY ARCHER
(ii) NEIL HAMILTON
(iii) CHRIS CAISLEY

- Q11 (b) **True** - The Salary Cap is an optical illusion
(Information supplied by Mr M. Lindsay of Wigan)

- Q4 (i) TAJ MAHAL
(ii) PYRAMIDS
(iii) HURST CROSS

- Q12 (a) **Yes** - Cardboard cut-out touch judges will be used this season, after research shows that they are just effective as flesh and blood ones.

- Q5 (i) MIKE TYSON
(ii) DAVID BECKHAM
(iii) JASON CLEGG

Wilson's Wisdom

... with Ian Wilson

MY MATCH report in League Express has to be completed relatively soon after the end of a Sunday game, to meet the paper's printing deadlines, so that inevitably there is not much time for general reflection. After the York match, though, I pondered on the experience, the first both at Hurst Cross and post-Ford. I would be interested to know to what extent programme readers share my thoughts.

First I was pleausurably surprised by the ground. Ok, it's not the JJB - but then we are not Wigan. And the playing area is on the small side, and a bit heavy - but I have certainly seen worse. Most importantly, it has the feel of a small town RL ground, with some covered seating, some covered standing and open terraces. Supporters have the choice of watching seated or standing side-on, or standing behind the posts, with the option to change ends at half time. (Given this, why not do as they did at Leigh, and toss up for choice of ends 10 minutes before kick off? Spectators would then be able to choose their end before the game began - that is, if they could understand the relevant tannoy announcement!) I definitely had the feeling that, if we could attract up to and then above 2,000, there is the potential there for a Watersheddings-type atmosphere in a way there never really was at Boundary Park.

Obviously, it is very much a second-best, shortish-term solution.

But I know that I was not the only person there to feel much more comfortable with the thought that some of my money was going to Ashton United, especially if, as seemed to be the case on the day, there is developing a decent relationship between officials of our club and thiers, then I ever was with Oldham Athletic regimes. Early days of course - but so far, so good.

What about the match itself, and the coaching position? Obviously, we are still making too many errors and we will play a lot better teams than York as the season progresses - probably including Chorley today. In particular, after what I thought was a really good - varied and accurate - kicking game at Craven Park, this one was pretty awful. But, on the plus side, the discipline of the side was back to last season's standard, after it had been very disappointing, as well as costly, in the first two games. Clearly, a lot of further improvement to come, but as least a step or two in the right direction, after that useful second half at Hilton Park.

With regard to the coach, my only contribution would be that I would much prefer to see a keen, young coach, on the same wavelength as the players (provided he also has their respect), with both ambition and modern ideas, than one of the old names recycled. I can't believe that Chris Hamilton would have any interest in the Kevin Ashcroft/Alex Murphy type!

Junior Roughyeds



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WELCOME to all the Junior Roughyeds and also to the players, officials and especially the Junior supporters of Chorley Lynx.

The mascot for today is 10 year old **Jonathan Fullalove**. Jonathan plays rugby for Royton Tigers and his favourite player is our flying winger Joey Hayes. Have a good day Jonathan!

Many of the Junior Roughyeds have said that their favourite players are the Gibbons Twins and many wanted to know who is the eldest. I asked Anthony this and he said that Anthony is the oldest by 6 minutes. I also asked him if they ever

swapped identities when they got into trouble, especially at school. Anthony said that him and David never got into trouble at school and that they were the perfect twin brothers - we believe you Anthony!

The Juniors would also like to wish our caretaker Coach Mark Knight good luck with his forthcoming matches.

If anyone would like to become a Junior Roughyed there is still time to join please contact the club office on 0161 628 3677 for further details.

Enjoy the match.

Adele Knowles

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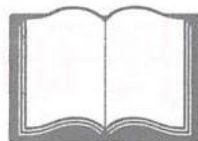
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Club Call cotinued on page 25

Amateur Album

.....WITH DON YATES



BE A referee and see the World!! That could be the advice of local whistler Ian Smith who has visited three continents during a meteoric rise up the refereeing ladder since hanging up his playing boots less than six years ago.

Ian enjoyed a moderate playing career as goal kicking centre with Salem Hornets between 1982 and 1996. Although he thoroughly enjoyed his playing career at Hornets where the team spirit was superb, Smith always intended taking up refereeing eventually. However a troublesome rib injury brought forward his refereeing ambitions



Ian Smith "Salem Hornets centre"

and now, despite being only a youngster in refereeing terms, he is amongst the top half dozen referees in the British game.

Ian derives a great deal of satisfaction from his involvement with the sport at the level he has already achieved, treading the same turf as the game's super stars. 'I never thought I would achieve this level when I first started reffing. The past six years have been a b s o l u t e l y unbelievable,, he said.

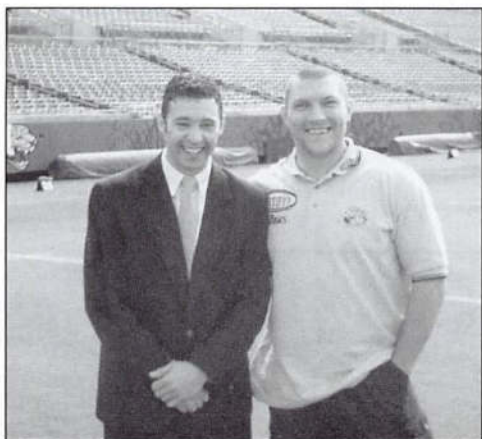


Ian Smith "Referee"

Honours have come thick and fast for Ian. North West Counties open age referee of the year in season 1996-97, National Conference League referee of the year the following season which ended with his refereeing the BARLA National Cup Final. He was Northern Ford Premiership referee of the year in both 1999 and 2000 but late in 1999 he received his first Super League

appointment when he took charge of the London Broncos v. Salford encounter at the Stoop Memorial Ground. Ian refereed the Trans Pennine Cup Final between Dewsbury and Leigh in 2000 and last October was reserve referee at Old Trafford for the Super League Grand Final between Bradford and Wigan. 'That Grand Final has to be the highlight of my refereeing career so far. To be involved in such a great occasion, in any capacity, was awesome.'

Earlier in the year Smith refereed the France-Scotland international at Albi in the south of France and he has also made a couple of trips to South Africa not to mention the trip to Florida twelve months ago.



Ian Smith with Barrie McDermott in Florida last year

The future certainly looks bright for the talented Smith who hopes to be able to maintain his form thereby enabling him to eventually take charge of a Challenge Cup or Super League Grand Final. The first final back at Wembley seems an attainable target. 'The ultimate appointment', says Ian, 'would be to referee an Anglo-Australian test match. Being on the same pitch as the great players, especially the Oldham lads like Barrie McDermott, Kevin Sinfield and Paul Sculthorpe, would be a terrific thrill.'

Next Tuesday, 22nd January, the Oldham Referees Society hold their annual quiz night at the Weavers Arms, Huddersfield Road. So anyone wishing to take up the whistle and follow in Ian's footsteps, meet him for some advice or talk generally about rugby league is invited to attend and, who knows? maybe someone will relieve Fred Royales of his long held title as Quiz King of the Oldham Society.

CLUB CALL

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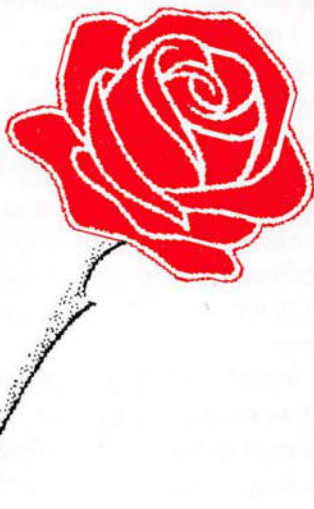
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The Whistle Blower

..... With Sam Shepherd

Sam Shepherd, perhaps Oldham's most famous International Rugby League referee and assessor, is a new columnist for the matchday magazine.

'WHO would want to be a referee?'

I am often asked how I got into refereeing. The answer is my arm was twisted firmly up my back. After completing my three year training as a teacher of Physical Education, my first job was West Oldham High School (formerly known in pre war years as Ward Street Central).

On my first day, I was introduced to the Senior Master, Mr John Farrar, and told that the school had four Rugby League teams, and I would be in charge of the senior team, with a match next Saturday. When I protested that, although I knew the shape of the ball, just, my knowledge of the rules was very basic, I was told 'learn them by next Friday'.

I had, of course, watched Oldham for many years, but that was little help; however, the school had a very good team. And the stand off and captain was Peter Marner. Peter was already a brilliant player, a future Lancashire cricketer, and former landlord of the Old Original, Scouthead. I was able to run along side him during the game, and learn as I went along!

In addition to West Oldham, St. Mary's had an equally strong team, and I found it strange that the teachers tossed a coin at the beginning of the match, with the winner always choosing to referee the second half. I soon learned why.

For very important games, however, this biased refereeing was not allowed, and we had to call on another neutral

teacher, the venerable and very strict local Head Teacher Mr Fred Howarth.

These games were played at the Ferranti Ground on Hollinwood Avenue.

At the end of that first season, which was also the end of my one year contract, I then moved to a school in York with excellent facilities for field sports. I carried on with refereeing schoolboy rugby games.

After four years in York I moved back to Counthill Grammar School, and it was there that I met Richard L. Thomas ('Dickie' as he was generally known), who from time to time was the groundsman at Watersheddings and already a senior Rugby League Referee. In 1957 I was persuaded to join the Oldham Rugby League Referees Society, and to go with R.L.T. to Wembley to soak up the atmosphere.

Dickie's appearances at Wembley are well chronicled: before he became a Senior Referee, he was a touch judge at Wembley, and then a few years later appointed reserve referee. Finally the top job of referee at the Challenge Cup Final came his way. Although he did not take charge of any more Cup Finals at Wembley, he did have an illustrious career.

So, that's how I started refereeing, and more stories surrounding the Oldham Referees Society will appear in later editions of this column.

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TOPIC OF THE DAY

...THE 100 GREATEST RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYERS - EVER!

(Well, 1951 to 2001) [What do you mean you don't watch Channel 4?]

A NEW series to get you talking and, since it will take ten programmes to complete, to keep you buying the best programme in the NFP.

To qualify an overseas player must have played all or most of his career in England. And current players must be well established internationals - hence no Paul Sculthorpe.

100 MICK ADAMS The Widnes and Great Britain loose forward was an integral part of the Chemics (as they then were) late 70's/early 80's trophy winning side. A classic, ball handling number 13 Adams was an inspirational captain who constantly fed his runners into gaps and possessed the skills to open up the tightest of defences.

99. GRAEME WEST Coach of today's visitors Chorley Lynx Graeme West was one of the outstanding second-rowers of the '80s. A New Zealand international and tourist, he captained Wigan to several trophy wins and was Wigan Coach when they won the World Cup championship against the Broncos in Brisbane. His ability to free the ball in the tackle and offload was phenomenal and his 6'5" frame was an enormous asset to his clever handling.



98 TERRY FOGERTY A star of the 1960's and '70s with Halifax, Rochdale, Wigan and Great Britain, Fogerty was an Oldham lad who started with Saddleworth Rangers and signed at 16 for Halifax, stolen from under the noses of the Roughyeds despite scoring two tries in a Watersheddings trial match. When he became the inaugural winner of the Harry Sunderland Trophy as Man of the Match for Halifax in their Championship Final victory against St. Helens (15-7) he was still only 21. If ever a player could 'make a ball talk' that man was Fogerty. his ability to turn a game on its head was legendary and he remains one of the finest ball handlers ever to grace the game.

97 BOB IRVING Pound for pound Oldham, Wigan, Salford, Barrow and Great Britain second-row Irving was one of the most destructive running forwards of the '60s and '70s. For once Oldham saw the best of a great player, albeit in a not very good era for the club. An international at 19 and a tourist in 1970 when Britain last won the Ashes are testament to his ability. One of the great sights of the game when in full flow.

96 MICK STEPHENSON Sky T.V. commentator Mick Stephenson was the outstanding hooker of his day. Signed by Dewsbury from Shaw Cross in 1965 he captained his unfashionable home town side in their finest hour when they overcame mighty Leeds in the 1973 Championship Final (22-13), Stephenson winning the Harry Sunderland Trophy as Man of the Match scoring twice. He had also scored a try for Britain in their 1972 World Cup Final win over Australia and went on to star for Penrith.

95 JOHN JOYNER Centre, stand off, loose-forward, Joyner was nothing if not versatile. A Castleford and Great Britain star of the '70's and '80s he was a 1979 tourist. Joyner was a player who pushed his side around the park, but was as adept as a finisher as he was as a play-maker.

94 PAUL NEWLOVE Current St. Helens star Newlove is the former Featherstone, Bradford and Great Britain centre who has faced and matched some of the best Australians around. A player with a phenomenal try-scoring record, Newlove's left foot step has been one of the most productive moves of the modern era. A teenage starlet, Newlove is incredibly strong and almost impossible to stop close to the line.

93 ERIC HUGHES Fast, elusive and versatile, stand-off Hughes was one of the leading lights in the all-conquering Widnes side of the 1970s. His first cap came in 1978 and he was a G.B. Tourist in 1979. A controversial coach and football manager with Wigan and St. Helens subsequent to retiring.

92 DARRYL POWELL Current Leeds Coach Powell was Sheffield Eagles first international. It is easy to forget that Powell has 9 Ashes appearances and was a regular for Britain at centre, stand-off or loose-forward. An unsung hero, Powell could read a game superbly, was defensively strong and had a great pair of hands.

91 CHRIS JOYNT St. Helens captain Joynt is one of the outstanding players of the modern game. Great defender, outstanding leader and a try scorer as well. Always seems able to come up with the big performance when the chips are down. Virtually given away by Oldham, much to the delight of his home town fans.



Stat Attack

2001/2002 Match Results

AWAY	Barrow	Batley	Chorley	Dewsbury	Doncaster	Featherstone	Gateshead	Huddersfield	Hull KR	Hunslet	Keighley	Leigh	OLDHAM	Rochdale	Sheffield	Swinton	Whitehaven	Workington	York
Barrow		14-28	22-6																66-0
Batley												11-22						18-10	
Chorley		14-28				16-28										24-14	20-16		
Dewsbury	21-31									25-22			30-6						
Doncaster							4-20												
FEATHERSTONE								20-21							28-18			17-18	
Gateshead		6-14			18-26	12-12													
Huddersfield	36-12										66-0				30-10				
Hull KR										50-6			26-10						
Hunslet											68-12			20-28					
Keighley			22-16																
Leigh	30-12									68-12			46-12	14-14					
OLDHAM																			32-16
Rochdale		26-14						24-20								22-10			
Sheffield					36-14	34-2				60-0									
Swinton										6-28									
Whitehaven					27-2			12-12										28-14	
Workington	9-16									24-16	58-18				12-10				
York		18-22															4-42		

NORTHERN FORD PREMIERSHIP – LEADING SCORERS AT 14.1.02

TRIES

SEEDS	Whitehaven	7
TURLEY	Leigh	7
THORMAN	Huddersfield	6
GLEADHILL	Batley	5
LEWTHWAITE	Workington	5
LOWE	Featherstone	5
ROPER	Leigh	5
POWELL	Hunslet	5
IRABOR	Barrow	4
SALMON	Barrow	4
TOMLINSON	Batley	4
COOPER	Huddersfield	4
O'HARE	Huddersfield	4
BALDWIN	Leigh	4
COOPER	Rochdale	4
MAYBERRY	Rochdale	4
LESTER	Whitehaven	4
R. PURDHAM	Whitehaven	4
BEAUMONT	Workington	4
TOMLINSON	Batley	4
McLARRON	Hull KR	4

GOALS

ATKINSON	Barrow	26
TURLEY	Leigh	26
O'NEILL	Whitehaven	22
ROONEY	Featherstone	17+1
CHARLES	Hull KR	17
G. BROWN	Sheffield	17
MANIHERA	Workington	16+1
MCNAMARA	Huddersfield	16
JONES	Chorley	14
THORMAN	Huddersfield	11+1
WOOD	Rochdale	11

POINTS

TURLEY	Leigh	80
ATKINSON	Barrow	52
O'NEILL	Whitehaven	48
THORMAN	Huddersfield	47
CHARLES	Hull KR	42
ROONEY	Featherstone	41
MANIHERA	Workington	41
G. BROWN	Sheffield	38

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ASHTON UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

I hope that supporters will find this brief background to our hosts of interest.

MOST OF the better known Tameside soccer clubs started life around the 1880's but were originally formed as RUGBY clubs, Mossley, Stockport, Hyde, Dukinfield and Stalybridge were all weaned on the oval ball before turning to 'association' and all would have had fixtures at one level or another with Oldham.

Ashton United is an exception. Formed in 1878 (more than 20 years before Oldham Athletic) as Hurst FC they are one of the oldest soccer clubs in the country and in 1885 beat Newton Heath (embryo to Manchester United) in the final of the Manchester Senior Cup.

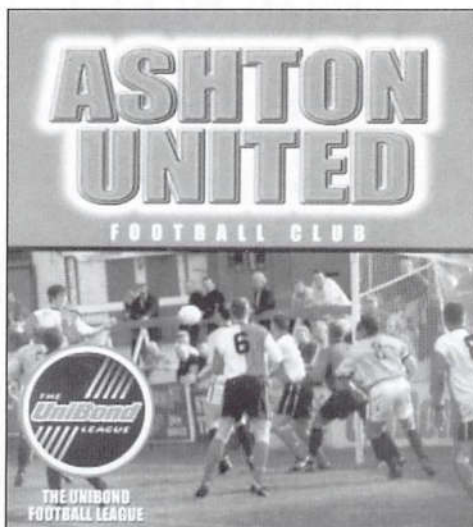
The club's formative years were spent at a ground at Rose Hill (Hurst), moving to Hurst Cross in the early 1900's. In 1947 the club's name was changed from Hurst FC to Ashton United and it's colours from black and white to red and white.

Since the war the club has played in the Lancashire Combination, the Midland League, the Cheshire County League (where it had regular fixtures with Latics reserves), the North West Counties and, since season 1992/3, Division One of the Unibond Northern Premier.

Of the eight seasons played since the formation of the Unibond, Ashton has finished third on five occasions failing by the narrowest of margins to gain promotion from Division One to Premier (pathway to the Nationwide Conference). Last season the club ended the campaign 14th.

Famous players include a 15 year old Alan Ball (his father was club coach), John Mahoney (Wales) and Eric Gemmell (who, until his record was

broken by Roger Palmer, was the Latics highest aggregate goalscorer). Well known coaches are Sammy McIlroy (1994 from Northwich Victoria) and Eddie Hopkinson (early 1980's). Other players who have served both Ashton and Latics include Ronnie Fawley (early 50's), Alan Lawson and Johnny Colquhoun (early 70's) and Darren Royle (son of Joe) one of United's current stars.



Ashton United have reached the FA Cup first round proper on just two occasions, in 1957 losing a replay at Hurst Cross to Halifax (this was the club's record attendance and, depending on who you believe, was somewhere between 7,000 and 11,000!) and again two years later losing 8-0 to Southport. In this season's campaign the club, via Midfielder Gareth Morris, scored the fastest ever goal in the history of the FA Cup (after just 4 seconds) v Skelmersdale at Hurst Cross.

Current Chairman Terry Styring supported by eight fellow Directors joined the club in 1995 and has held the position since. Club coach is Gerry Quinn who arrived from Ossett Albion at the end of 1999.

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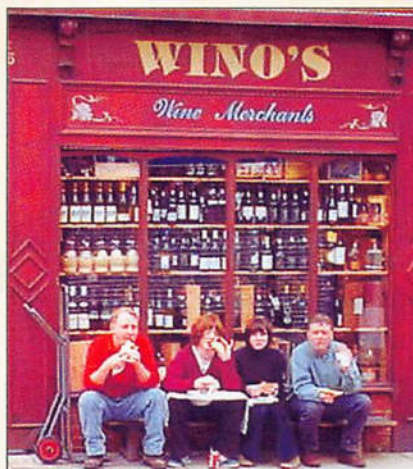
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Fixtures

Date Opponent Result Att

DECEMBER		F - A	
2	SWINTON LIONS	P	
16	Hull K.R.	10-26	2032
23	ROCHDALE HORNETS	P	
30	Leigh	12-46	3388

JANUARY			
6	YORK	32-16	1130
13	Dewsbury Rams	6-30	1410
20	CHORLEY LYNX	H	
27	Kellogg's Challenge Cup (3rd Round)		

FEBRUARY			
3	Workington	A	
10	Kellogg's Challenge Cup (4th Round)		
17	GATESHEAD	H	
24	Kellogg's Challenge Cup (5th Round)		

MARCH			
3	Huddersfield	A	
10	DONCASTER DRAGONS	H	
15	Sheffield Eagles	A	
24	FEATHERSTONE	H	
29	Rochdale Hornets	A (Nat Cup)	

APRIL			
1	DEWSBURY RAMS	H (Nat Cup)	
7	Huddersfield	A (Nat Cup)	
14	KEIGHLEY	H (Nat Cup)	
21	Hunslet Hawks	A (Nat Cup)	

MAY			
5	BATLEY BULLDOGS	H (Nat Cup)	
12	National Cup Quarter Finals		
19	National Cup Semi Finals		
26	National Cup Final		

JUNE			
2	Keighley Cougars	A	
9	WHITEHAVEN	H	
16	Barrow	A	
23	BATLEY BULLDOGS	H	
30	Hunslet Hawks	A	

JULY			
7	LEIGH	H	
14	Chorley Lynx	A	
21	Whitehaven	A	
28	HUDDERSFIELD	H	

AUGUST			
4	HUNSLET HAWKS	H	
11	Batley Bulldogs	A	
18	Rochdale Hornets	A	
25	WORKINGTON	H	

SEPTEMBER			
1	York	A	
8	KEIGHLEY COUGARS	H	

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CHORLEY LYNX

Coach: Graeme WEST

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Gavin DODD	2	Ian HAYES
Dave GIBBONS	3	Liam JONES
Jon GODDARD	4	Simon SMITH
Joe McNICHOLAS	5	Alan REDDICLIFFE
John BRADDISH	6	Chris RAMSDALE
Neil RODEN	7	John DUFFY
Leo CASEY	8	Tim STREET
John HOUGH	9	Martin RODEN
Jason CLEGG	10	Ian PARRY
Lee DORAN	11	Phil HARRISON
Bryan HENARE	12	Bryce KILLOCK
Phil FARRELL	13	Wayne BLOOR
Gareth BARBER	14	Safraz PATEL
Will COWELL	15	Tom KILGANNON
Keith BRENNAN	16	Leroy RIVETT
Danny GUEST	17	Andy GRUNDY

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