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THE ROUGHYEDS

V BARROW RAIDERS



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ROGER AND (OUT) STANDING

See pages 7-9

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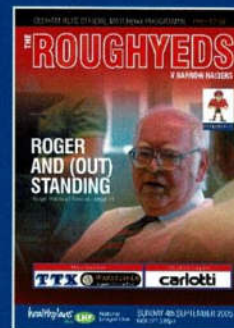
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We would like to express our thanks to the Oldham
Evening Chronicle, League Publications Ltd,
Phil Burdge and all concerned for the use of
photographs.

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Club Records - 1998-2004

Trans-Penine Cup
Finalists - 1998

Northern Ford Premiership
Club of the Year - 2000
Grand Finalists - 2001

MOST APPEARANCES: John Hough, 189 - Jan 1998 - September 2004
CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES: Phil Farel, 67 - *April 2nd 2000 - March 15th 2002
*John Hough was on the team for every match February 1st 1999 - April 16th 2001 (82)

TRIES IN A SEASON: Nick Johnson, 25 - 2004
GOALS IN A SEASON: Pat Rich, 146 - 2000-2001
POINTS IN A SEASON: Pat Rich, 320 - 2000-2001
DROP GOALS IN A SEASON: Neil Roden, 7 - 2001-2002
TRIES IN A CAREER: Mark Sibson, 60 - 1999-2002
GOALS IN A CAREER: Pat Rich, 254 - 1999-2001
POINTS IN A CAREER: Pat Rich, 576 - 1999-2001
DROP GOALS IN A CAREER: Neil Roden, 18 - 2000-2003

TRIES IN MATCH: Mark Sibson v Wigan St. Judes, 4 - Feb 8th 2000 at Boundary Park
Mark Sibson v Queensbury, 4 - Jan 28th 2001 at Boundary Park
David Gibbons v Chorley Lynx, 4 - Jan 30th 2001 at Boundary Park
James Bunyan v Featherstone Rovers, 4 - Apr 12th 2004 at Boundary Park
GOALS IN A MATCH: Simon Syabic v Swinton Lions, 10 - Apr 6th 2003 at Boundary Park
POINTS IN A MATCH: Gareth Barber v Dewsbury Rams, 26 - Apr 2nd 2002 at Hurst Cross
(7 goals, 3 tries)

DROP GOALS IN A MATCH: Neil Roden v Workington Town, 2 - Dec 17th 2000 at Derwent Park
John Braddish v Hull KR, 2 - Dec 16th 2001 at New Craven Park

HIGHEST SCORE/WINNING MARGIN: v Yorks Wasps, 70-6 - Apr 1st 2001
at Huntington Stadium
v Queensbury (am), 64-0 - Jan 28th 2001
RLCC 3rd Rnd at Boundary Park

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The Chairman's Thoughts

with CHRIS HAMILTON

Welcome back to Boundary Park for what is hopefully our final home game.

As is usual for Oldham, the season has been a roller-coaster of a ride not helped by our off-the-field problems.

But, despite everything, I would be lying if I didn't say I was disappointed with the fact that we have not made the top six play-offs. This will be the first time that this has happened since season 2000 and we can only look on enviously as other teams do battle for Grand Final places. However, there is no one to blame but ourselves.

The upshot of this is that today we face a Barrow side who have no pressure on them with but we still need to win to keep ourselves out of the relegation dog-fight.

This game is also very significant for one other reason and that is it should be the Roughyeds' last home game on which Roger Halstead will report for the Oldham Evening Chronicle. Roger has been trying to find ways of making the good better and the bad not so bad for over forty years and that in itself is a major achievement!!

To have done it in the way that he has for so many years is in itself a tribute to the man and we are delighted to have his loyal wife Val and members of Roger's family here today as guests of the club. I just hope we can make the

performance a fitting one for somebody who thoroughly deserves it.

Roger has been a big help to me personally over the last eight years and it has been a real privilege to work with somebody who is Oldham RLFC through and through. Enjoy your day Roger, you deserve it.

Finally, thank you to all of you for your support this season and to everybody who helps us by working on match days or during the week - as ever, we can't do what we do without you.

After next week we start the preparations for next season which looks like it will be the hardest competition to date.

Enjoy the game.

Chris Hamilton

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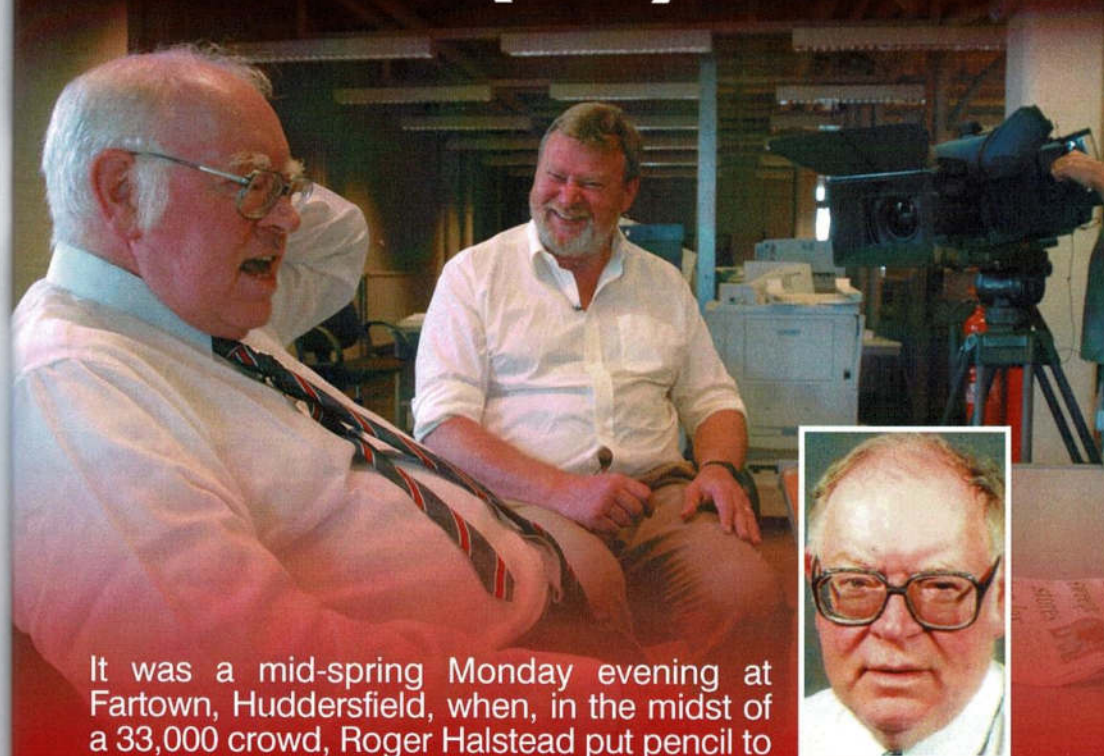
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ROGER AND (OUT) STANDING



It was a mid-spring Monday evening at Fartown, Huddersfield, when, in the midst of a 33,000 crowd, Roger Halstead put pencil to notepad to report on Oldham's performance in the second Challenge Cup semi-final replay against Hull KR. I don't think for one instant that it could have entered his mind that this, his opening Oldham first team match report for the Oldham Evening Chronicle, would be the beginning of a sequence that would continue for over 41 years.

'DYSON'S INJURY KEPT SECRET' was the Chronicle's headline next evening, referring to Oldham goal-kicking fullback Frank Dyson who had picked up a foot injury in the first semi-final replay and had hobbled his way through this match. There were no substitutes in those days, but as Roger went on to report, it wasn't Dyson playing with an injury that cost Oldham their first-ever Wembley visit but missed chances by the Oldham forwards, who had also failed to take advantage of hooker Len McIntyre out-heeling Rovers' international 'Flash' Flanagan thus

providing the Oldham side with that all important 'extra' share of the ball. Which side the ball came out of the scrum wasn't a forgone conclusion in those days either and a good hooker was worth his weight in gold.

Forty-one years on and approaching the business end of the 2005 season Oldham recently overran Hull KR, one of National League One's front-runners, but just seven days later were themselves blitzed by a big and mobile Whitehaven pack. Those two matches were almost unrecognisable compared to how the

OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE Tuesday, April 21, 1964

DYSON'S INJURY KEPT SECRET

OLDHAM 1-0-2, HULL KR 3-2-12



FRANK DYSON, the man whose ambition of steering Oldham to Wembley was shattered by pace and craft in front of thousands of his home town fans, hobbled painfully through three-quarters of this game with a suspected broken toe - and none of the Oldham lads knew until Dyson took off his boot at the end! It was the best kept secret of the whole fantastic tie. Only a handful of officials knew of the Oldham full back's injury and they decided to say nothing.

Club physiotherapist Dennis Wright told me afterwards: "Frank was obviously in pain. But we decided it would be better to keep the news from the other lads, and none of them knew about it until after the match."

The injury happened midway through the first half, when Dyson suddenly felt a searing pain in the big toe of his right foot. "I don't know how it happened but it was sore - very sore," said Frank afterwards.

Dyson is to have the toe X-rayed today he, more than anyone, knows that Oldham

have no excuse for a defeat, which can be summed up in one word - class.

For virtually the first time in the mammoth tie, Rovers turned on the football. Not the individual brilliance of out half Alan Burwell as in the Swinton game, but an all round team display of

by ROGER HALSTEAD

support work and strong running, which left Oldham groggy in the second half.

Many Rovers fans thought skipper Harry Poole had boomed when he won the toss and elected to play against the wind. Poole's gamble proved a master stroke, however, and in the second half, with the wind behind them, the Robins hurled back Oldham's attacks with a simplicity which had to be seen to be believed.

Poole, of course, had facts to support his theory that the wind would prove decisive in the second half. He knew Oldham were expected to get on top as the game wore on - as at Swinton - and he

support with an almost clear run to the line.

They were staggered too, when Charlie Bott held on only minutes before with Peter Smethurst and Trevor Simms flanking out on his left.

But the chances went begging - and against a team of terrier like tacklers like Rovers, chances like that have to be taken.

GONE was the backing up of the Oldham pack, which has swamped even the strongest of opposition in the cup run this term.

GONE were the lightning breaks of Stuart Whitehead and Geoff Robinson.

GONE too, was the immaculate cover, for which Oldham had become known throughout the league.

And Rovers, held all the trump cards in attack, with Burwell and Bunting turning in a tremendous display of fleet footed running. It was from one typical Burwell break that Mike Blackmore was sent racing down the wing within minutes of the restart.

Dyson pulled off a bone-shattering tackle five yards from the line - but the



Rogers SILVER ANNIVERSARY

25 years of Oldham match reports was celebrated during the first division match against Castleford at Watersheddings in 1989. Oldham won 34-18 with tries scored by John Cogger (2), Paul Lord (2), Gary Hyde and Doncan Platt who also kicked 5 goals

meander right or left when a more obvious choice would have been to go forward.

But it doesn't matter. It just gives us Oldham fans the right to claim we've supported the best club in the game that hasn't won a major trophy for four decades! We've had, some cracking players, played in some cracking matches and as far as Roughyeds' fans are concerned there can be no finer memory than a packed Watersheddings on a cold winter's night.

We're lucky to be one of the few towns that can still boast an independent evening newspaper for which Roger has done a magnificent job, not just reporting on this match or that, on this signing or the other, not just whipping up the enthusiasm of the Oldham fans when things haven't been going quite as well as they might but also having the bottle to grasp the nettle and air his views, when, in his opinion, things weren't quite right within the inner-sanctum.

Retirement may be fast approaching but I suspect that when the time comes there will be no cutback in Roger's support for the Oldham club and that he will remain a loyal supporter for years to come. I look forward to the autobiography "Roger and Out".

Roger, it's now your turn to take a bow!

Brian Walker

game was played back in 1964. Now competed in summer, generally on a Sunday afternoon as opposed to Saturday, by bigger, stronger and faster players in a sport which has itself been speeded-up by the introduction of the six tackle and ten metre rules. It's also played with four substitutes, the hooker is now an extra half-back as opposed to ball-winner, four points instead of three for a try, big score lines, and big screens. Ironically, the Challenge Cup, until recent years the Holy Grail of all rugby league clubs, has lost some of its glitter since the advent of Super League and with it the Grand Final.

But, for Oldham fans two things haven't changed. Roger Halstead is still reporting on the Roughyeds and according to his observations on the Whitehaven game the club is still taking a chance on the fullback carrying a foot injury (but, Gavin Dodd was still voted Oldham's best back on the day, scoring one of his trademark long distance tries!).

Today, though, that alters. Roger retires in December and all things being equal this will be his final report on an Oldham first team home match. Whilst I'm sure he will cover the Tri-Nations series in the autumn, the first half of the amateur's winter season plus Oldham's early preparations for the 2006 campaign, when later this afternoon, the referee blows his whistle for 'no side' it will also signal the closing of an important part of one of the most distinguished careers in rugby league journalism.

It's difficult to calculate the number of rugby league matches on which Roger has reported but a starting point is that since the 1964 Challenge Cup semi there have been over 1,600 Oldham first team fixtures. Add

to that second team, academy, amateur, international, representative and cup final games and it must be somewhere in the region of 5,000. Back in 1964 the RFL was made up of 29 clubs all of which fit snugly into a triangle drawn between Workington, Liverpool and Hull, so who could have predicted that included in that figure would be visits to report on Oldham playing in such places as Gateshead, Cardiff, London, Paris, Carcassonne, Adelaide and Townsville?

At the end of the 1963/64 season Roger wrote an article for the then Supporters' Year Book which began, **"Ever taken a stroll over the Saddleworth moors, been lost in a rapidly descending mist, and struggled to a crossroads not knowing which path to take? You have? Then its odds on you know exactly the position in which the Oldham club stands today"** Prophetic words indeed. Living slap-bang in the middle of Saddleworth as I do I can vouch it's not just a misty part of the world but often you can't even see your hand in front of your face and despite the passing of 40 years the signposting has got no better, either. If Duraglit's success in the polish market had been reliant on burnishing the silverware that had graced the Oldham cabinet trophy over those years it would have bankrupted. As if controlled by some centrifugal force the club seems to have been allowed to reach Lancashire Cup finals, Challenge Cup semis, Championship play-offs and so on, but lift a major trophy or even make that first Wembley appearance, no. Many times this old Lancashire side has been so, so close but it seems that when approaching the next set of crossroads that same force has caused us to



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Q&A

WITH GARY MERCER

Roughyeds 13 asked:

Why did we not take advantage of two very kickable penalties against Batley Bulldogs awarded before the first try was scored, especially as Marty Turner is one of the division's most reliable goal kickers?

Gary says:

I felt at the time that it would be better for us to go for the six points as we seemed to be throwing the ball about well and I believe that we are a team that can score points with the ball in our hands.

New Fan asked:

Would you advice Marty Turner to give it another go in England next season? Do you think he has the attributes to make an immediate impact in Super League?

Gary says:

Yes, I believe Marty would benefit by staying in England for another season. As for him making an impact in Super League I believe he could. He would benefit in the long run by having a year's full-time training so therefore his impact would be felt more in his second season at the top level.



From The Touchline

with Gary Mercer

Firstly, I wish to apologise to all the fans for the debacle against Batley, our worst performance of the year.

It was by far the most important game of the season and we let the fans, the club and ourselves down. In my five years of coaching this was by far my greatest personal disappointment. From being 28 - 0 up after just 20 minutes to then concede three soft tries in a quarter of an hour spell was really disheartening. What can I say?

Obviously, questions had to be asked. The video viewing was followed by a no-holds-barred get-together as we set about ironing out the negatives. But, one thing I made sure of was that following that Monday evening session everyone left in a positive frame of mind. Make no mistake, we are all finely tuned in to the fact that with just two more games to go we are still not sure of NL1 football next season.

Today we entertain Barrow, a team sadly sitting bottom of the league. One thing is for sure we will give them the utmost of respect. They have nothing to lose, and I'm certain they will be looking to get a win to at least finish their season on a high. Peter Roe will have them fired up so we must be focused, clinical and totally determined to take the points. The key words for the boys today are patience, composure and discipline. Providing these are taken on board by each and every player those two points will come our way.

Have a good day and enjoy the match

Gary.



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As Ian Sees It!

So we come to the final two games of what has certainly been a momentous season, at least off the field.



And we virtually know our fate - no play-offs, but almost certainly no relegation either. Should this be regarded as success or failure?

I cannot believe anyone connected with the club regards it as success. The success is the off-field situation, that we still exist - which is certainly not to deny that there are still huge hurdles remaining in this regard, and an awful lot of work still to be done. We have had lots of on-field issues which have militated against a better playing performance, too - injuries, of course; lack of decent training opportunities; lack of a genuine 'home'; and failure to establish a squad in time for quality pre-season preparation. In spite of all, though, my view is that we should have done better, and that a place around fifth would have been one which the players and coaching staff could have regarded as one which represented potential realised.

This view can, of course, easily be justified by reference to the performances when we did ourselves reasonable justice, or better. I would say there have been 7 of these so far - twice each against Cas, Featherstone and Rochdale in the league, plus Hull K.R. at home. That leaves rather too many others when we either failed to perform adequately at all, or did so only for a part of the game, for it to be possible to argue that the staff have got the most out of themselves.

There are still two games to go, of course, as well as an awful lot of mouth-watering RL left before the 2005 season is put to bed, even though sadly it will not

involve us. But the mind begins to turn to 2006, and what we might be able to look forward to then. As usual, there will no doubt be lots of changes before we play our first competitive game, both in the make-up of the Oldham staff and in the nature of the opposition we face. One thing is for sure, though: next season will be even more competitive than this. We already know that Widnes and Leigh will be in NL1, as well probably as two of Cas, Hull K.R. and Whitehaven, and that York are likely to be more attuned to the standards of the league than other recently-promoted sides. With us [hopefully!] and probably Halifax, Rochdale, Doncaster and Batley making up the division, it is going to be a real challenge to make the top six, and by no means an easy task to keep clear of the relegation threat. So whatever we do, it needs to be done in good time, and with very clear assessment made of the challenge ahead.

One final thought before I put the word-processor to bed for a few months. It will be very strange next season not to be sitting next to Roger Halstead in the press-box. He has been there since 1964, and has seen a remarkable range of ups and downs during his time covering the fortunes of the club. I have only had the pleasure of his company for a relatively few seasons, but it has been a privilege. I cannot think that any club has been better served by its local newspaper correspondent, and I am certain that I speak for very many in wishing him a long and happy retirement.

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In Yer Face!

with GEOFF COOKE

Before the season is over may I be so bold as to suggest what needs to be done to ensure a better season in 2006? I am assuming several things. Firstly, that the current Oldham club survives its financial difficulties. Secondly, that the club stays in LHF National League One. And thirdly, that Gary Mercer remains Head Coach.

Given these three conditions it strikes me that the biggest single thing Oldham could do to improve their on-field results would be to recruit a leader of authority. It can be taken as read that the club will be trying to improve the playing ability of the current squad and that new players of quality will be the target of transfer activity, though how far Oldham can go to recruit some of the best in the current financial climate is open to doubt. So, in those circumstances the biggest single factor worth committing to is a man of natural authority and leadership in the pack.

Given the heartbreak of the Batley defeat a fortnight ago can older supporters imagine that having happened under the captaincy of a Terry Flanagan, a Brian Hogan, a Frank Foster, a Derek Turner or a Bryn Goldswain? As Michael Turner points out in his excellent History of Oldham 1876-1997 the signing of one player of the right calibre can transform the fortunes of a whole team, Bryn Goldswain in the early '50's

and Frank Foster in the early '70's being classic examples. To me it is clear that Oldham have some talented players on the books but we have to get the best out of them and we have to stop them committing rugby suicide. I won't be so bold as to suggest who should be recruited - that is the job of management - but I will be forward enough to suggest that the priority is a controlling influence on the field of play who can reflect the coach's wishes and stamp some authority on a team which has improved considerably from the dark days of winter but needs to continue its progress if it is to challenge for honours next time around.

My wish that Shayne McMenemy should win a Challenge Cup winners medal came true and I am thrilled that a former Oldham player of quality has won one of the highest honours in the game. It serves as an example to current players that N.L.ONE is not necessarily the only level they can play at. The right attitude and dedication can take one to higher things. And what of master Coach John Kear who has now plotted two great Challenge Cup upsets for Sheffield and Hull F.C.? It's a big ask to get your players down to earth again after such a momentous achievement but if he can do it Hull are now genuine Super League Grand Final aspirants. The club has quality players in the shape of Shaun Briscoe, Ewan Doves, Paul King and Paul Cooke all of whom must be in the running for Great Britain selection. And for any N.L.ONE player of ambition just think on Richard Whiting, Jamie Thackray and Danny Brough because the chances are you played against them in the course of the last two seasons. Never say never.



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TODAY'S OPPONENTS

Barrow Raiders

Phil Atkinson. Signed for Barrow in June 1993. The Ulverstonian has been a fantastic servant to the club. Joined an elite band of players who have scored 100 tries for Barrow club last season.

Dave Clark. Vastly experienced hooker, very popular player. Was very influential in the championship winning season which culminated in gaining two Welsh international appearances.

Barry Pugh. Former U21 international who toured Australia and has also played for Wales after gaining 2 Caps. Showing his full potential and is now a regular for the first team at stand off or loose forward.

Paul Jones. Versatile back, very fast. Another product of local amateurs Askam. Scored an 80 yard try for Askam against Barrow in The Challenge Cup 2001. Equally at home in the stand-off/ scrum half position.

Paul Lupton. A strong tackling forward who is a former BARLA international. Hails from the once famous Millom club.

Adam Pate. A rugby union signing plays full back or stand-off. Hails from Carlisle and has represented Cumbria at union. A more than useful goal kicker.

Chris Archer. Pocket battleship half back signed from London Broncos, where he spent two seasons, a major signing for Barrow. Archer is Barrow born having played junior rugby for Hindpool.

Stuart Dancer. Former BARLA international signed from Walney Central with enormous reputation in the amateur game. Now fully established and became a firm fan's favourite.

Paul Wilcock. Signed from Barrow Island after impressing in trial matches during 2002.

Darren Holt. (Captain). One of a handful of Barrow players to top the 1000 points mark. Record breaking season last year with the boot and pound for pound one of the hardest scrum half's around.

Mike Whitehead. Signed for Barrow via the Wigan Academy side. Left last season to play for neighbours Whitehaven but now back to push for a regular spot.

Nick Beach. First season in the pro ranks after signing from Roose Pioneers. Speed to burn. Enormous future prospect.

Jonathan Williamson. Stand off/ scrum-half who has been snapped up from the amateur ranks. Great pair of hands and will make a big impact when settled. Enormous future prospect.

James Nixon. Local lad signed from the Dalton RL Club. With time on his hands, he is definitely one for the future.

Joel Osborn. Signed from London Skolars during the off season after impressing the coaching staff during both encounters last season. A natural full back who can also offer diversity elsewhere on the park.

Andy Fisher. Signed from Doncaster and plays 'full on' rugby that will complement our pack. Picked up five MoM awards last season.

Freddy Zitter. Signed from Featherstone Rovers and has just completed a very successful international stint for France scoring against both New Zealand and Australia. Blessed with blistering pace Freddy is at home in the centres or on the wing.

Richard Colley. Signed from Bradford after failing to gain a regular first team position. Natural ball-handler who can play stand off, scrum half or hooker.

Shane Irabor. Fast and powerful winger/centre.

Dave Critchley. Starred in amateur club Eccles promotion winning side last year, scoring 21 tries. Can play anywhere in the back line.

Dave Fallon. Another product of the Eccles conveyor belt. Compact winger with strength and pace.

James Finch. Signed pro from Walney Central this season after starring for Barrow last term. Strong centre who rarely misses a tackle.

Ryan Wood. Followed in his father's footsteps in signing for Barrow. Impressive forward who signed from Walney Central.

Jamie Marshall. Returned to the club after a season up with Whitehaven. Proven try scorer with pace.

Jamie Butler. Big powerful forward and a product of the Askam club. Gained County honours this season and will be an asset to the club given time.

Glenn Osborn. Powerful second row forward signed from London Skolars. Gained BARLA students GB international status.

Jason Roach. Winger who is built like a forward. Super League experienced player who is always capable of out-running a defence.

Ady Mulcahy. Signed from the Eastmoor amateur club as a classy stand off but can play anywhere.

Matt Jefferson. International full back signed from Barrow Island. Very dependable under a high ball. Signed after impressive performances last season whilst on loan.

Paul Raftery. Another star player from the Eccles club. Former BARLA GB second rower who is a big strong runner with bags of potential.

Player Profile by Roger Halstead

CARLOS MATAORA

CARLOS Mataora will never forget his baptism in English rugby league.

It was at Boundary Park against Blackpool Panthers in the first competitive match of this season on February 13. It was cold, freezing cold, and Carlos had been in this country only a matter of days after flying in straight from a southern hemisphere summer.

For the month before he left, Carlos, Dana Wilson and Tere Glassie had been preparing for their adventure to the North of England by training under the watchful eye of Kevin Iro in the South Pacific.

Temperatures nudged 30 degrees in Rarotonga on the Cook Islands -- in stark contrast to the ice, snow and hail that greeted the three New Zealanders when they flew into Manchester.

Tere and Dana had been here before. But for Carlos it was his first visit, and when he got here and first felt the full blast of a February easterly blowing off the Pennines he must have felt like hopping on the first plane back home.

"I wondered where I had come to," said 23-year-old Carlos when I spoke to him this week at the house in Shaw which he shares with Tere, Dana and the Roughyeds' overseas quota man Marty Turner, also a Kiwi.

He added: "I flew in with Tere (Dana came a few days later) on the Monday and our first game was against Blackpool on the following Sunday.

"I couldn't believe how cold it was. We had trained at Chapel Road during the week in wet, windy conditions, but it was even colder at Boundary Park.

"The match had not been going long when my hands started to freeze up. I thought I would warm up as the game went on, but I didn't. I just got colder . . . and colder. And then I struggled a bit with my breathing."

He wasn't the only Oldham player to struggle that day. The Roughyeds trailed 20-4 at half-time, but hit back in the second half to win 22-20.

Almost a full season later it is interesting to recall the team that turned out in Gary Mercer's first competitive game in charge.

Cont over...

Player Profile

CARLOS MATAORA

“His natural ability on his feet was polished and honed on the school and club playing fields of his native Auckland”



Cont...

It was: Goddard; Cowell, Munro, Wilkinson, Johnson; Svabic, Turner; Norman, Barber, Nanyin, Bibey, Glassie, Mataora. Subs: Dodd, Kirkland, Farrimond, Elswood.

Glassie scored on his debut, there were other tries for Damian Munro, Martin Elswood, Will Cowell and Gavin Dodd, but Marty Turner managed only one goal. How times have changed in that respect!

The match was to mark the beginning of Carlos's life with the Roughyeds – 22 appearances up to press out of a possible 24 games and starting roles along the way at loose-forward, stand-off, right-wing and scrum-half plus many games as a substitute and, among them, the odd feature at hooker.

We knew when he came that he was going to be a versatile, play-anywhere man.

Coach Gary Mercer told the Oldham Chronicle when his signing was announced in the paper on December 13 last year: "Carlos can slot into a few different positions. He isn't the biggest of blokes, but he is tough, durable, he can tackle and he is aggressive and determined."

He might also have added: "He can sidestep, too," for there is no doubt that one of his greatest attributes is his ability to step off either foot – a skill that earned him a spectacular try under the posts in the 38-20 defeat of Featherstone at Sedgley Park on July 3.

His natural ability on his feet was polished and honed on the school and club playing fields of his native Auckland, where in his youth he played both rugby league and rugby union or, as the Kiwis would say, league and rugby.

As he got older he played rugby league in the Bartercard Cup for North Harbour Tigers before, like so many of his fellow countrymen, he crossed the Tasman to try his luck in Australia.

He played in the Queensland Cup for the Valley Brothers, but also represented Cook Islands --

coached and managed by Iro -- in the Pacific Cup. He qualified through his father, a Cook Islander who had settled in Auckland many years earlier.

With Dana and Tere also in the side, the Cooks beat New Zealand Maoris in the final to lift the prestigious trophy, stewardship of which is guarded jealously by the rugby league people of the South Pacific island countries such as Fiji, the Cooks, Samoa and Tonga.

Said Carlos: "They call Kevin Iro 'The Beast' and it's easy to see why. He's a huge bloke. He worked really hard with us for about a month before we came over here.

"I think it was his relationship with Gary (Mercer), his former New Zealand Test team colleague, that led to us coming to Oldham.

"I've really enjoyed it here (especially now the sun is coming out) and I like the sort of rugby that is played by most of the teams in the National League first division.

"In Australia the game over there, at all levels, is more structured and faster.

"The type of rugby played here in England is very similar to the rugby league that is played back home in New Zealand. It is more open than the Aussie game and that suits me down to the ground. It's really good."

It is difficult to believe that today's clash with Barrow will be the last home game of the 2005 campaign.

Like Tere, Dana and Marty, who is more accustomed to the cold weather because he hails from New Zealand's South Island (Christchurch to be precise), Carlos will be a whole lot warmer when he bids farewell than he was when he arrived.

He will also have made a whole host of new friends -- maybe it was worth putting up with ice and snow after all.



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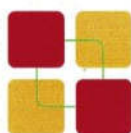
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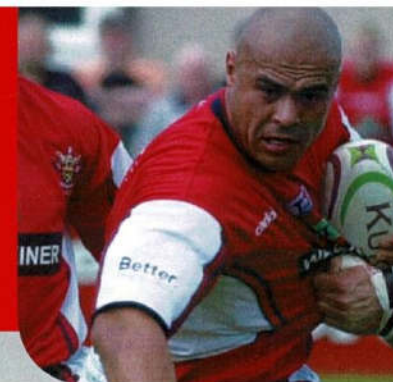
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On this day

Don Yates looks back to September 4th yesteryear



During autumn 1954 Barrow prevented Oldham from lifting their first major trophy in over twenty years when they beat the Roughyeds in the final of the Lancashire Cup.

It was a particularly disappointing defeat for Oldham who, less than two months previously, on Saturday 4th September, had won a league fixture up at Barrow by 17 points to twelve. Both clubs had powerful squads in those days and both had a reputation for playing attractive, open rugby. It was no surprise, therefore, when all the points in that match fifty-one years ago today, were scored by the backs. Winger Dick Cracknell and centres Roland Barrow and Alan Davies scored tries for Oldham with full-back Bernard Ganley adding four goals. The Barrow centres Ted Toohey and Denis Goodwin scored tries for the Shipbuilders with stand-off Willie Horne, arguably the greatest player ever to represent the club, landing three goals.

On Monday 4th September 1961 the touring New Zealanders were in Oldham. They played a combined Oldham-Rochdale Hornets XIII that evening in a match which attracted a crowd of 8,795 to Watersheddings. The match was a dour affair in which defences were well on top. Neither side was able to score a try so the match was decided on goal kicks with the combined side finishing on top 10-8. Centre Reg Cooke landed four goals for the Kiwis with his opposite number, Johnny Noon, winning the match for the home side with five successful shots.

Way back in 1897 Oldham began the campaign on Saturday 4th September with a visit to Morecambe. The Roughyeds made a winning start to the season, their 5-0 victory coming from a try by Joe Lawton and a goal from Fred Moran. Making their debut for the Roughyeds in that match were a couple of rugby union recruits who went on to enjoy long and successful careers with the club. On the wing was Dickie Thomas who eventually made his mark at full-back and appeared in 363 matches for Oldham during the following twelve years. He had been signed from Newport RUFC and, although a

Welshman, played five times for Lancashire. Jim Telfer, a powerful Scottish forward, had been signed the previous month from Melrose RUFC and made 117 appearances for the Roughyeds during the following five years. Both were members of the first Oldham team to lift the Challenge Cup in 1899.

It was on Saturday 4th September 1965 that one of the greatest characters ever to grace our game, Geoff Fletcher, made his debut for Oldham. He had been signed from Leigh the previous month for £1,500. Fletcher made his debut in the second-row of an Oldham team which disappointed in a 4-4 home draw against Blackpool Borough. He made 111 appearances for the Roughyeds and developed into a flamboyant ball-playing prop. When he moved on to Wigan in 1969 the transfer fee was £4,000. He returned to Leigh before joining Huyton, a club he kept in existence virtually single handed by acting as player, coach, groundsman, baggage-man, chairman and club steward. In 1981 he became the first holder of the Rugby League Writer's Association Special Award of Merit for the work he carried out on behalf of that beleaguered Merseyside club.

Barrow coach Peter Roe has enjoyed a nomadic career as both player and coach. As a player he served Keighley twice, Bradford Northern, York and Hunslet before taking up coaching appointments with Keighley, again twice, Halifax, Swinton, Featherstone Rovers and now Barrow where he is in his second spell. With such a lengthy record it would be a surprise if today he was not celebrating some anniversary or another. In fact it was on Wednesday 4th September 1985 that Roe started his second spell as a Keighley player. He was at stand-off in the Keighley team which drew a home Second Division match with Carlisle by 20 points apiece.

ROUGHYED KIDS + CO

Hi KIDS

Well, here we are our ready for our last home game for this season. We have had a bit of a roller-coaster ride this year. Lets hope for a better one next time.

Both Carole and myself would like to take this chance to apologise once more for the lack of events this season. However, we like everyone else, have only 24 hours in a day and have found that this year we have had to channel our time into helping keep the club afloat.

Halloween and the pantomime trip are still booked and we will contact kids members nearer the time.

Today's mascot is Owen Baldwin. Owen is 6 years old and plays rugby for St. Annes as well as being a keen Oldham supporter.

Once again, a big thank you to all our sponsors who now appear under our new heading.

See you soon

Carole and Janet

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As always good luck to Gary and the Lads.

OLDHAM RUGBY SUPPORT GROUP

Following a short summer break our monthly quiz evenings will recommence this month. In view of the desperate need for funding without any match day income, we really need to see a good turnout for this and any forthcoming Club events.

QUIZ NIGHT - 10 SEPTEMBER
8.30pm in the Social Club Lounge

The recent Car Rally was really good fun and enjoyed by all who participated. Despite some rather obtuse clues there were no lost souls left wandering around Saddleworth after dark! Many thanks to Dave Lord and his team of helpers for the hard work put into this event and once again to Doreen, for a good supper.

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Rugby Talk

Danny Lockwood
Publisher, League Weekly

Hull's tense win in last weekend's Powergen Challenge Cup final was a real pat on the back for the 'Best of British'. It was a triumph for homespun talent like Paul Cooke and Danny Brough, and indeed the valiant Kevin Sinfield whose bulldog spirit in defeat earned him the Lance Todd Trophy.

We saw two powerful packs butt heads in the battle for midfield supremacy, and it was young British talents Paul King, Ewan Dowes, Garreth Carvell and Jamie Thackray that led the Black and Whites' charge to glory.

But off the field it was also a victory for proud Yorkshireman John Kear.

Since starting out on the coaching staff at Castleford back in 1986, Kear has certainly been around. On his travels, he has caused one of the biggest upsets in cup history with Sheffield in 1998, seen hard times with the controversial Huddersfield-Sheffield merged club and led England in the 2000 World Cup.

He has held posts with England A, France and Paris St Germain too and in recent years he has occupied assistant roles at both Wigan and Hull before taking over as the Airlie Birds' main man at the start of 2005.

Now, Kear's reprisal of his role as 'Master of Cup Shocks', seven years after starring in the original blockbuster with his supporting cast of underdog Eagles, is proof positive that you don't have to be an Aussie or in the first flush of youth to enjoy success as a coach in the modern game.

Kear has also promoted up-and-coming British talent with the appointment of former York coach Richard Agar as his assistant down at the KC Stadium and, with him, Agar brought half back Danny Brough.

Brough could possibly have been swamped in midfield by the likes of Swain, Horne and Cooke but he has punched well above his weight in defence and shown a priceless steely nerve with the ball. Now if only we could get him a decent haircut!

So last Saturday at the Millennium Stadium was a great day for the British game then, if not for Leeds coach Tony Smith who has gone from riding a 12-month magic carpet to trying to kick-start the Super League moped again. Leeds looked invincible two weeks ago – favourites for a spectacular league and cup double – but they have been handed a sharp reality check with back-to-back defeats to Bradford and Hull. Suddenly, the Rhinos have their doubters and this will surely be the biggest test of Smith's management capabilities in a fledgling career.

But this punter's money is firmly on the unflappable Aussie to turn it all round. I'm sure it won't be long before we see the Rhinos back at their impressive best.

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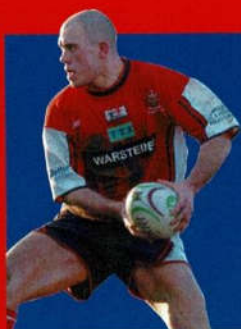
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For this season the format for this page will be to take a look at players who have represented both Oldham and the opposition of the day.

from the pen of MICHAEL TURNER

Today we offer a warm welcome to the players, officials and supporters of the Barrow club.

Threequarter Tom Fletcher, the first Cumbrian back to play for England at Union, signed for Oldham from Seaton during the 1900-01 season but after scoring thirty one tries from just one hundred outings he left Watersheddings to join the Barrow club. During that era winger Ben Wilson left the Furnessman to join Oldham.

In 1923 Oldham acquired the multi-talented Albert Brough. A second row, winger or centre, Brough was a tremendous all round skilful player and useful goal kicker. This versatility was recognised by his selection for the 1924 tour.

During the second world-war Oldham benefited from having a number of guest

players from other clubs including none other than the Barrow legend Willie Horne. The master half back played two matches for the Roughyeds during the 1942-43 season.

After the war there was much more traffic between the two clubs. Tommy Ayres, George Gummer, Pat Hewson and Norman Thomson all represented Oldham and Barrow in the late 1940s.

In more recent times, Ged Smith, Ray Hopwood, Tony Wainwright, international Bob Irving, and the great Frank Foster all wore both the red and the blue. Bringing the list right up to date, Martin McLoughlin and Iain Marsh also played for both clubs.



Tommy Ayres



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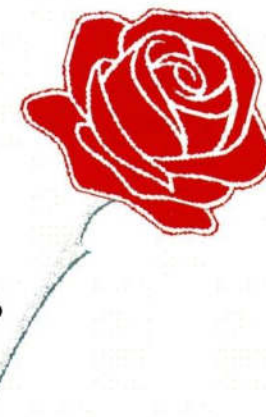
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OLDHAM RLFC PLAYER STATS 2005

Oldham match stats up to and including August 21st

NAME	APPEARANCES	TRIES	GOALS	POINTS
J.Goddard	19	7	0	28
W.Cowell	10	4	0	16
D.Munro	15	8	0	32
A.Wilkinson	21	5	0	20
N.Johnson	23	12	0	48
S.Svabic	21	7	6[+2 d-g]	42
M.Turner	23	8	84[+ 1 d-g]	201
P.Norman	12	1	0	4
G.Barber	20	6	1	26
D.Nanyn	8	0	0	0
R.Bibey	20	0	0	0
T.Glassie	21	4	0	16
C.Mataora	22	3	0	12
C.Farrimond	4	0	0	0
G.Dodd	24	15	0	60
M.Elswood	11	2	0	8
J.Kirkland	13	0	0	0
J.Hough	19	1	0	4
D.Wilson	22	3	0	12
S.Haughton	12	7	0	28
M.Roberts	13	2	0	8
A.Gorey	6	3	0	12
K.Brennan	2	0	0	0
I.Hodson	13	0	0	0
D.Tootill	2	0	0	0
R.Mills	6	1	0	4
C.Hough	11	3	0[+ 1 d-g]	13
A.Sharpley	9	0	0	0
A.Sands	2	0	0	0

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NATIONAL LEAGUE TALK

with GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS



ALL TO PLAY FOR!

THE LHF Healthplan National League seasons arrive at their penultimate weekend – and every single game sees something crucial at stake.

Starting in National League One, the main issue concerns the Minor Premiership.

Whitehaven will all but guarantee top spot if they can beat Batley Bulldogs at the Recreation Ground this afternoon.

But they will encounter a Bulldogs side still desperate for points, as they are caught up in the relegation battle.

And they proved by recovering from 28-0 down to win at Oldham that they don't lack steel away from Mount Pleasant.

The other challengers for first place, Castleford Tigers, take on big local rivals Featherstone Rovers at the Jungle.

Again, Rovers need the points in an attempt to climb out of the bottom two – their inferior points difference compared with Batley's means that they will probably have to win their remaining two games to survive.

Oldham are still not clear of relegation, but a home win over bottom club Barrow – who only have pride to play for – would end those fears.

Elsewhere, the crucial fourth spot – which brings a home game in the play-offs – will take a step closer to being decided, when Halifax, the current occupants, take on sixth-placed Doncaster.

Rochdale, who can also still finish fourth, need a win at home to Hull Kingston Rovers, one of the few clubs whose league position now looks certain.

In NL2, Blackpool – who now look set to fold, as was revealed in Monday's Rugby Leaguer & League Express – entertain Dewsbury Rams, who are looking to ling onto second place ahead of the play-offs.

Workington can still overtake them, so a victory away at champions York City Knights is crucial to them.

And at Cougar Park, Hunslet will be hoping to hit some form going into the play-offs against a Keighley side that has underachieved this year.

Two matches that will probably have taken place by the time you read this are Sheffield Eagles versus Swinton Lions – a huge one for both clubs – and London Skolars against Gateshead Thunder, who are still pushing for their first top six finish.

It could hardly be more delicately poised.

Read the best match reports from all today's matches in Monday's Rugby Leaguer & League Express

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Oldham RLFC fully support the Let's tackle Racism in Rugby League campaign and welcomes all players and spectators irrespective of their ethnic or racial origins. Racism has no place in our game and racist chants are totally unacceptable.

Allow everyone to enjoy the game.

Fixtures 2005

DATE	OPPONENTS	CUP	VENUE	K. O.	RESULT	W/L	ATT
09/01/05	Rochdale Hornets	Law Cup	Away	15.00	24-8	L	1,404
21/01/05	Leeds Rhinos	Testimonial	Away	20.00	22-10	L	5,196
30/01/05	Halifax	Friendly	Away	15.00	34-12	L	1,443
13/02/05	Blackpool Panthers	NT Cup	Home	15.00	22-20	W	1,446
27/02/05	Swinton Lions	NT Cup	Away	15.00	46-14	L	1,101
06/03/05	Swinton Lions	NT Cup	Home	15.00	30-37	L	1,116
13/03/05	Sharlston Rovers	Powergen CC 3rd Rd	Away	19.30	14-46	W	852
16/03/05	Rochdale Hornets	NT Cup	Away	19.30	68-26	L	1,161
20/03/05	Blackpool Panthers	NT Cup	Away	15.00	16-35	W	250
25/03/05	Rochdale Hornets	NT Cup	Home	15.30	10-54	L	1,544
28/03/05	Featherstone Rovers	NL1	Away	19.30	20-20	D	1,463
03/04/05	York City Knights	Powergen CC 4th Rd	Home	15.00	28-32	L	1,282
10/04/05	Doncaster Dragons	NL1	Home	15.00	22-44	L	1,266
17/04/05	Castleford Tigers	NL1	Home	15.00	20-32	L	2,054
24/04/05	Hull K R	NL1	Away	15.00	32-19	L	2,474
15/05/05	Whitehaven Warriors	NL1	Home	15.00	6-60	L	1,284
22/05/05	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	Away	15.00	25-18	L	792
05/06/05	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	Home	15.00	25-24	W	827
12/06/05	Barrow Raiders	NL1	Away	15.00	22-40	W	1,073
24/06/05	Halifax	NL1	Home	19.45	14-28	L	1,221
03/07/05	Featherstone Rovers	NL1	Home	15.00	38-20	W	928
10/07/05	Doncaster Dragons	NL1	Away	15.00	34-26	L	896
24/07/05	Castleford Tigers	NL1	Away	15.30	32-20	L	4,600
31/07/05	Hull K R	NL1	Home	15.00	40-20	W	1,448
07/08/05	Whitehaven Warriors	NL1	Away	15.00	36-16	L	1,663
14/08/05	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	Away	15.00	24-27	W	1,426
21/08/05	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	Home	15.00	32-34	L	1,187
04/09/05	Barrow Raiders	NL1	Home	15.00			
11/09/05	Halifax	NL1	Away	15.00			
18/09/05	Play Offs	NL1	TBA	TBA			
25/09/05	Play Offs	NL1	TBA	TBA			
02/10/05	Play Offs	NL1	TBA	TBA			
08/10/05	Grand Final	NL1	TBA	TBA			

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