

OLDHAM R.L.F.C

ROCHDALE HORNETS

DOUGHTY'S GYM (SHAW)

SUNDAY 2ND JULY 2006 • K.O. 3.00pm

p18

NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL A BEER BELLY.



JOHN WILLIE
TO HIS MATES

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Oldham RLFC v Rochdale Hornets

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Club Records - 1998-2005

Trans-Penine Cup
Finalists - 1998

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

MOST APPEARANCES: John Hough, 209 - Jan 1998 - September 2005

CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES: Phil Farrel, 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 Svabic 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 (amt), 64-0 - Jan 28th 2001 RLCC 3rd Rnd at Boundary Park

The views expressed in this matchday magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the management and staff of Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd.

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PROGRAMME EDITOR

Nigel Marland

HALL OF FAME MEMBERS

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Arthur Lees 1891-1907

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Fred Ashworth 1926-39

Alex Givvons 1933-42, 1949

Harry Ogden 1940-56

Alan Davies 1950-62

Frank Stirrup 1950-62

Bernard Ganley 1950-61

Sid Little OBE 1951-59

John Etty 1954-59

Derek Turner 1955-59

Kevin Taylor 1962-77

Mike Elliott 1962-79

Bob Irving 1964-74

Martin Murphy 1966-82

Terry Flanagan 1979-89

Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94

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. (www.digisport.co.uk)

www.roughyeds.co.uk



in the chair

with Chris Hamilton

Once again a Sunday arrives and once again we attempt to gain our first win of the season.

The two previous games against York have both been bitterly disappointing and nobody knows that more than the players.

I will not try to give reasons or excuses because by now myself and Sean both know that nobody is interested - all that needs to happen is getting a result on the pitch and only the players can deliver that.

What we will not allow to happen, under any circumstances, is for the season to become irrelevant with people not caring about their responsibilities.

The team knows it owes the die hards a good performance after the last two games and hopefully that will come today against a Rochdale side who themselves will be smarting after getting a good hiding last week at home to Hull KR.

It seems that there is no stopping them right now and they are certainly looking good bets for promotion to Super League.

Rochdale, however, are no mugs and we will have to raise the level of our performance to stand a chance of getting the two points but a lot of hard work has gone in this week on the training field which we hope will pay off today.

It is easy when in a situation like ours to feel sorry for yourself and blame everything on bad luck but EVERYBODY at the club has to pull together, stand up to be counted and show what Oldham RLFC means to them - in whatever capacity.

If Sean and I had thrown the towel in every time things hadn't gone our way we wouldn't even have got the club up and running and we have certainly shown our commitment to the cause every week.

Although it is hard we can only ask for your support - we know it is not easy when the team is not performing and despite that the vocal support - especially at away games - has been nothing short of fantastic.

We do appreciate it and hopefully you will have something to cheer today.

It was interesting to read during the week of the potential collapse of the Latics stadium plans whereby a lack of local support is threatening to scupper plans to redevelop Boundary Park.

Bearing in mind that the owners of Oldham Athletic have only been in place for less than three years and have on several occasions vented their frustration at the town and its leaders you can surely imagine how we feel.

The town is in need of a major lift and it has long been stated that sport is a proven way of doing this - let's hope that stories of the owners being ready to sell the club are wide of the mark as they have clearly put their money where their mouth is so far for little reward and any changes in ownership can have far reaching consequences for our club - remember Chris Moore - don't say I didn't tell you what would happen there and despite that I was vilified far and wide for daring to stand up to him in order to protect Oldham RLFC.

Thank you for your support and enjoy the game.

Chris



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direct from the dug out

with Steve Deakin



It would be great to be able to report on something positive result wise in the match day programme for you loyal fans but as we all know that isn't realistic.

I was very disappointed with our first game against York and was looking for a vast improvement in the following week's match.

Although the result again went against us and we conceded 11 tries I did think there was some improvement – we competed well in spells and there is no doubt the two sin binnings had a massive impact on our weary troops. In this respect we must look to our discipline. Although we were on the rough end of some decisions we have to be tough and put up with it. Even if it doesn't lead to a try a penalty means six more tackles to make and we have to be mentally tougher.

It must also be remembered that we got over their line on four other occasions than the three tries but couldn't convert. It is obvious we have great difficulty scoring tries and at the same time concede too many by missing too many tackles. Losing Ged and Barbs didn't help as

we were again left short on the bench

On the positive side I thought Adam Sharples did well after only a week with us and it was good to see Andy Bailey get through the game. Dean Gorton also impressed playing out of position at right centre.

So it's Rochdale again, we owe them one, and it will have been no different this week in our preparations – working hard on the training pitch and looking to eradicate the faults from the previous game. There will be no let up in effort and I keep my fingers crossed we can provide a result which will please our loyal supporters.

Get behind the lads and above all enjoy the game.

Deaks

club corner

ORLFC PREDICTION LEAGUE

		Week 9	Overall
1	Nigel Marland	14	118
2	Paul Hulbert	12	116
3	Colin & Dorothy Johnston	4	113
4	Peter Buckley	12	109
5=	Tim Boycott	6	107
5=	Ian Wilson	10	107
7	Four Red Lions	6	105
8=	Steve Baldwin	6	103
8=	Michael Ackroyd	8	103
8=	Ashley Baxter	14	103
11=	Harry Whitehouse	6	102
11=	Chris Hamilton	6	102
11=	Wayne Halstead	8	102
14	Sara Jackson	8	101
15	Roger Halstead	8	97
16	Geoff Cooke	6	96
17	Matthew Chambers	6	94
18=	Jeff Bates	4	93
18=	Frank Pullen	10	93
18=	David Lord	11	93
21=	Brian Walker	7	92
21=	Roger Ivens	10	92
23	Paul Gough	9	91
24	David Webster	10	89
25	Janet Yewdale	13	87
26	David Stephens	6	85
27=	Nick Henry	6	84
27=	J Hulmes	6	84
29	Terry Bailey	6	83
30=	John McAndrew	6	76
30=	Val Webster	6	76
32	Iain Ashworth	6	70
33	Peter Illing	6	48

Generally a low scoring week and a particularly poor one for the consistent Johnstons who have sunk to their lowest position so far, 3rd. Top scorers are Ashley who had a perfect 12 for the Doncaster game and yours sincerely who goes to the top for the first time, no doubt to be followed by abuse by a vocal minority (no names water man and ex office boy). This month's winner is down in the bottom half where a lot of the top scores for this month have come which shows there is still a chance for everybody. Frank Pullen scored 31 points, Janet Yewdale 35 but the winner for June and recipient of a signed ball is David Lord with 37 points.



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roger and out

by ROGER HALSTEAD

STICK around long enough, it seems, and nothing is new in rugby league.

While clearing out this week a mass of material and club records collected over my years at the Oldham Chronicle I came across two articles which may be of interest to today's readers.

Our club's ongoing financial difficulties have been well documented, particularly in the past 12 months, but a glance back in time clearly indicates that the previous club, which went bust in 1997, had been heading down the slippery slope for several decades.

I wrote this at the end of the 1993-94 season: "Apart from a six-year spell in the 1970s, Oldham have been losing money consistently for more than 30 years.

"The break-up of the 1950s championship-winning side caused a major slump in fortunes and, with two exceptions, the treasurer reported annual deficits throughout the 1960s.

"In the summer of 1970, after a season in which the committee was forced to sell Derek Whitehead to Warrington for financial reasons and the team won only six of 34 league matches, a new nine-man committee took over, led by Arthur Walker, the former Rochdale Hornets boss.

"Playing fortunes improved, but in the next five years there were five consecutive trading losses, amounting to a total deficit of £78,000.

"The Ray Hatton regime steadied the boat financially with six consecutive profits as the club moved into the eighties, topped by the £77,867 profit in 1980 when the lottery boom was at its height.

"That faded almost as quickly as it arrived and the only profit since 1981 was one of nearly £98,000 in 1992 and that was due only to the sale of the training ground and players.

"There were consecutive deficits of £70,145 (1982), £29,269 (1983), £33,418 (1984), £40,589 (1985), £19,815 (1986) and £84,109 (1987), whereupon the committee abdicated and invited interested business men to form a company.

"Harvey Ashworth, a chairman in the members' club, also chaired the first board, which consisted of Jim Knox, David Gardner and Greg Pache, none of whom is now on the board.

"The losses continued -- £134,938 in 1988, £172,256 in 1989, £156,076 in 1990, £215,613 in 1991 and £264,188 in 1993."

In those days, of course, all players recruited apart from juniors were paid for by transfer fees -- and buying and selling played a key role in ongoing attempts, usually unsuccessful, to balance books.

In the first three years of the old club's new life as a limited company, the club spent £571,000 in transfer fees and recouped only £243,000 from sales.

I wrote: "Oldham's £50,000 capture of Derek Pyke from Widnes took the club's transfer market spending spree to nearly £600,000 in the three years since the new board replaced the former committee.

"An examination of the facts and figures of rugby league life goes some way towards explaining how a club like Halifax -- first division champions and double Wembley finalists in the last five years -- can suddenly find themselves on the brink of extinction.

"During the three-year period under review, Oldham recouped £243,000 from the sale of 11 players, leaving a deficit on transfers of £328,000.

"Add to that an estimated £124,000 spent on the signing of 17 youngsters in the three years and the club's total outlay on increasing the quality and quantity of its staff adds up to a staggering £452,000.

"This does not include contract money, which is expected to cost the club another £150,000 next season, or playing wages, which worked out last season at approximately £156,000.

"Most clubs are struggling in a bid to compete with the best.

"And one leading administrator at a top west Lancashire club told me this week: 'The financial facts are frightening. If we didn't put up one massive fight to stay the course there would only be Leeds and Wigan left to play among themselves.'

"The Oldham board faces a constant battle to make ends meet and I can vouch for the fact that on numerous occasions the directors have dug into their own pockets to come up with the ready."

Given the game's current economics, the Roughyeds' courageous battle by Chris and Sean to keep the club in business, and that shock £450,000 move by Stuart Fielden from Bradford to Wigan last week, it all makes for interesting reading.

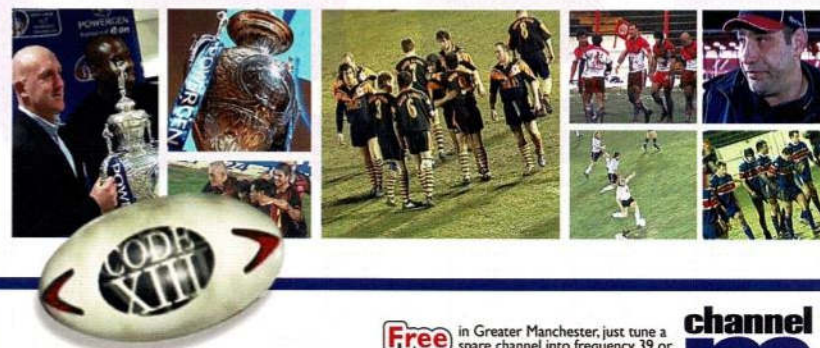
Some things, perhaps, never do change.

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in yer face

with Geoff Cooke

The fight to keep Wigan in Super League is on. Apparently, Super League without Wigan is unthinkable. Oh, really!

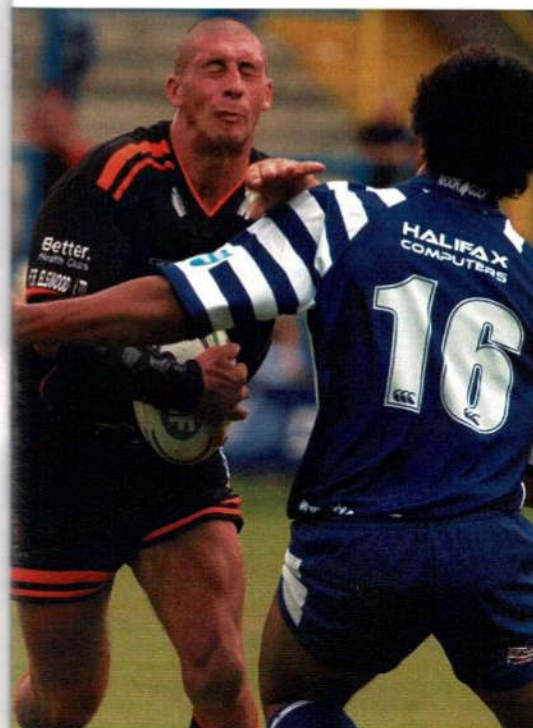
Well some people's idea of rugby league encompasses all the rugby league fraternity, prefers fair play and a level playing field above all else. If the rules say the bottom club are relegated then that's that and any attempt to circumvent the process is unacceptable. I have no problem with Chris Radlinski coming out of retirement to help his beloved club - indeed his action only adds to a glowing reputation as one of the best players of his generation. And I have no problem with Wigan paying £250,000 for the services of Stuart Fielden, after all business is business and the deal obviously suits all parties (especially with Bradford deep in debt). However, I would be interested to know how Radlinski is playing for nothing yet Fielden's wages (which will be not inconsiderable) can be fitted into the salary cap. If Wigan can pull off a Houdini act with on-field performances good luck to them but if I were a follower of Wakefield or Castleford in particular (and Harlequins or Huddersfield possibly) I'd be more than a bit worried. With Dave Whelan thinking the JJB Stadium is too good for N.L.1 what price Belle Vue (sorry, the Atlantic Communications Stadium) or Wheldon Road (aka The Jungle) being deemed not up to scratch?

Meanwhile, on the subject of grounds, will New Craven Park, home of Hull K.R., be deemed



suitable for Super League if - as looks increasingly likely - the Robins win the league and Grand Final? In theory the ground has to be fit for purpose now, not following improvement work carried out in the closed season, as Dewsbury found to their cost a few years ago.

I don't know the answer but I can't say I've been terribly impressed on my visits there but then again I'm not thrilled by Leigh's Coliseum and that was passed fit a year ago so who am I to judge? Nevertheless the whole process still seems a bit haphazard to me. If only 110 years of league had produced a) a rugby league national stadium and b) a stadium development fund (incidentally would charitable status be available for such a fund?). A levy on gate money and the receipts from high profile domestic finals and internationals could have built up to a tidy sum over the years. And, of course, money wouldn't be going out of the game to hire soccer stadia for big games but would remain in rugby league. And - just to be cheeky for a minute - guess where the ideal place for a national stadium together with a rugby league museum would be? Why, Oldham, of course.



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chit chat

from around the club

with Roger Halstead



(for fans who don't see daily bulletins on the club's official website at www.roughyeds.co.uk)

CONGRATULATIONS to our young prop, Adam Sharples, who has returned to rugby league after a year out with a first-class honours degree in sports science tucked under his arm.

He is now going for a masters, having won a scholarship to take his studies to an even higher plane.

Many fans were surprised, to say the least, to see the 21-year-old forward take his place on the subs' bench at York last Sunday. Unknown to most people, he had trained with the squad all last week after returning sooner than expected from a post-exams sabbatical to New York, where he had been playing with New York Knights.

"It was an irony that his first game back for Oldham was against York City Knights," said his father, Robin. "He had planned to stay in New York rather longer, but after five weeks there he had seen all he wanted to see and he wanted to get home and start playing rugby league here again."

Coach Steve Deakin was pleased with his performance at the Huntington Stadium — his first appearance for Roughyeds in nine months — and, in the days that followed, club-player talks were being planned in the hope of sealing a more permanent signing arrangement.

Technically, Sharples became a free agent at the end of last season when he chose to concentrate on his exams rather than sign a new deal, but he always hoped that one day he and the club would together find a route to bring him home.

THE Roughyeds' welcome mat is out, too, for a couple of Oldhamers, who have joined us for training from Warrington Wolves with a view to signing for their hometown club.

Half-back Nigel Scott and centre Alistair Williams, both aged 18, are said to be settling nicely into the Roughyeds camp and have already made a suitable impression on head coach Steve Deakin.

"They are doing fine," reported Deaks, who hinted that before the season was out he expected both of them to make their bow in Oldham colours.

The two former Waterhead lads signed three-year contracts for the Wolves when they were 16 — a similar route into the pro game as that taken by many Oldham boys down the years, including Iestyn Harris, Paul Sculthorpe, our very own John Hough and Gareth Barber, Ian Knott, former Roughyeds winger Chris Eckersley and, a few years earlier, Shaw lad Mark Roberts (not to be confused with the current Roughyeds player, a Wiganer, of the same name).

Though still under contract, the Wolves will release Scott and Williams to the Roughyeds if, after a week or two of training here, all parties wish to pursue the arrangement and take it to another level.

The local lads have had difficulty getting to Warrington daily for training, so a move to pastures new on their doorstep is viewed as a sensible move by all parties.

"We hope it will work itself out as a win-win situation for everyone involved," said Roughyeds chairman Chris Hamilton.

CALLING all Oldham RL Club ex-players — the Roughyeds are planning to launch a past-players' association before this season is over. One former Watersheddings favourite, whose identity will be kept under wraps for the time being, is itching to sign up as the new association's first member — and he reckons loads more will follow suit.

Roger Halstead, our special projects manager, will be spearheading the recruitment campaign (with the help of the aforementioned mystery man).

And after covering Oldham rugby affairs for the Oldham Chronicle for more than 40 years, until he retired last December, Roger should be ideally placed to set the ball rolling.

Initially, we would ask any former player reading this to spread the word around among others who have worn the Oldham jersey with pride, going back into the mists of time.

Then watch out for announcements soon in trade and local papers throughout the region, on radio and TV, in club programmes and on club websites throughout the rugby league.

We want to track down our Oldham heroes of the past — and offer them the recognition they deserve.

BEST wishes for speedy recoveries are sent from everyone at the Roughyeds to two prominent members of the local rugby league scene and lifelong Oldham fans who have recently been in hospital.

Don Yates, service area officer and that organisation's rep on Rugby Oldham, was under treatment for a blood disorder in the Royal Oldham Hospital. Don, a writer, is also well known for his regular "On This Day" features which he sends out to several media outlets, including the Oldham match-day programme which he hopes to be able to provide for today's programme.

Ian Wilson, Rugby Oldham secretary and Oldham RL home-match reporter for League Express, was in a Macclesfield hospital after suffering a mild heart attack.

Like Don, Ian also writes regularly in this programme. Get back to those keyboards as quickly as possible fellas!

THE mid-season dinner, which raised £3,500, got a good show on Channel M's rugby league slot, Code X111.

Chris Hamilton, Barrie McDermott, Paul Highton and Colin Hawkyard were all interviewed on TV.

The message that came through loud and clear was that former players, as well as those born in the town and with Super League clubs, cared genuinely about the Roughyeds and what the future had in store.

Guest speaker Barrie Mac said: "Roughyeds are passing through difficult times on and off the field. Things are tough, but if there is anything we can do to help we have to jump on board."

The equally popular Michael "Braddy" Bradshaw — another Oldhamer making his way up the sporting ladder as a top mascot and also in the field of corporate entertainment — was a big success as MC.

+TWO curtain-raisers were being planned for today when the programme went to print. Latest information we have is that Waterhead under-9s will be playing St Anne's under-9s and Shaw Rhinos under-8s will play Milnrow under-8s. Best of luck to all players and coaches — and a big thank-you to our friends here at Sedgley Park for making their facility available to the little ones. It is really appreciated.

RONNIE HARDAKER

The local rugby league scene has lost one of its longest-serving and most influential personalities with the passing of "Mr Saddleworth Rangers", Ronnie Hardaker, at the age of 77.

St Thomas's Church, Moorside, was packed on Monday afternoon for Ronnie's funeral service, prior to committal at Oldham Crematorium.

Carrying the coffin, draped in the Union Jack, was a Saddleworth Rangers contingent made up of Emerson Jackman, Tom Kilgannon, Shane Wilson, Robert Hicks, Liam Swift and Paul Coates.

In a moving tribute to Ronnie, Ken Fisher — his right-hand man at Rangers for more than 25 years — said Ronnie was a leader who had the knack of getting the best out of those around him.

He first joined Rangers as a player when the club had to search regularly for somewhere to play and when the team bathed in an old bath.

"Sixty years on his legacy is there for all to see," said Ken. "We have our own ground, club house, stand, floodlights and we are one of the leading amateur teams in the country."

One of Ronnie's nephews also spoke in church, while Paddy Kirwan, the Rangers coach, gave his eulogy at Oldham Crematorium.

The Roughyeds board, acting on behalf of everyone at the club, sends condolences and expressions of deepest sympathy to Ronnie's wife, Millie, and to all those closest to him, especially those at Saddleworth Rangers.

The rugby league community in Oldham and beyond was in mourning when Ronnie died in the Royal Oldham Hospital, where he was waiting to have a heart operation.

He was chairman of Saddleworth Rangers, a life member of BARLA, president of the Oldham Amateur League and a lifelong fan of Oldham RL Club.

He spent a lifetime with Rangers as player, club official, chief administrator and leading benefactor, and he was also recognised

as one of the district's leading influences in the development of amateur rugby league over recent decades, particularly at open-age level.

There was a direct link between Ronnie and the Roughyeds, given that one of the Roughyeds' two directors, Sean Whitehead, was a leading player at Rangers for many years.

Sean was a leading member of the side that, with Ronnie at the administrative helm and Mick Coates in charge of the coaching rudder, swept all before it on various trophy trails and became recognised as the top amateur club in the country at that time.

Mick and the current Rangers coach, Paddy Kirwan, both became Roughyeds coaches in later years.

Tributes to Ronnie have poured in.

Chris Hamilton, the Roughyeds chairman: "Ronnie was a huge character in the amateur game and he will be a great loss to rugby league in Oldham — no doubt about that."

Sean Whitehead, Roughyeds director: "Ronnie was a star turn. You could put your life in his hands — he was that kind of a bloke."

Colin Clare, Rangers secretary: "You couldn't put into words what he did for Saddleworth Rangers. We will keep the club going forward in his memory."

Ken Fisher, Rangers president: "He could be a hard man when it came to Saddleworth Rangers, but he could also be a softie. He was kind and generous."

Nigel Hollingsworth, new BARLA secretary: "Ronnie had been at Saddleworth since 1948. He gave the club tremendous service in many capacities, and his commitment to the Oldham League was unstinting."

Ronnie passed away in the knowledge that the club is again on the rise, having avoided the need to seek re-election to the National Conference with some excellent results towards the end of last season.

ROGER HALSTEAD

IKE SOUTHWARD

Another link with the great Oldham side of the 1950s has been severed with the death of winger Ike Southward, aged 71, in his native Workington.

One of a clutch of brilliant wingers who lit up our sport half a century ago, Ike played 11 times for Great Britain and twice toured Australia.

He and another great winger of that era, Mick Sullivan, each broke the record transfer fee twice.

Sullivan set the standard when he went from Huddersfield to Wigan for £9,500 in 1957-58, but Southward smashed the record in 58-59 when Oldham paid Workington £10,650 — the first five-figure outlay in the sport's history.

Two years later, while Ike was still at Watersheddings, Sully moved from Wigan to St Helens for £11,000. Later that season, however, Town took Ike "back home" to Derwent Park for £11,002-10s, the extra £2-10s being the price of a bottle of whisky which sealed the deal and thus smashed the record once more.

The story goes that Town's legendary chairman at the time, Tom Mitchell, chucked in the bottle of the hard stuff to create the record and to ensure that the transfer made the headlines of the back pages.

Ike played only 52 games for Oldham, but he was a true star of the sport and a master-craftsman of the wing when, or shortly after, rugby league was blessed with wingers who became legends, such as Billy Boston, Sullivan, Tom van Vollenhoven, Brian Bevan, Oldham-born Stan McCormick, the list is endless.

His passing will be felt deeply in Oldham by older generations who will recall him as a dynamic winger who could kick goals just as easily as he could score tries.

Ike was long gone by the time I started covering the Oldham club for the Chronicle in 1964, but for many years afterwards he gave outstanding performances for Workington against the Roughyeds.

He retained close friendships for many years with Oldham people and right up to the time of his death he always made a special trip to Derwent Park whenever Oldham played there in order to renew acquaintance with his friends from down here.

In later life he spent years as the Workington groundsman and for many of us a trip up there was highlighted by our strolls down Memory Lane in Ike's den — his groundsman's quarters — under the stand.

He loved to have chat and banter with Watersheddings fans of that era, such as the late Frank Diskin and Terry Doyle and others, among them Lou Lavery and Jack Roscoe.

I was privileged to be welcomed into Ike's circle of friends from Watersheddings days. He was at Oldham for two years only, but he was always proud to say he had played for the Watersheddings club.

A fan's view of Ike can be seen in Around and About by Brian Walker.

ROGER HALSTEAD.

AROUND & ABOUT

with The Heritage Trust

A FAN'S TRIBUTE

During the formalities leading up to the start of the 1955 Challenge Cup final the Duke of Edinburgh asked Workington's tin ribbed winger where he was born. "Ahs frae Elbra, old lad" was Southward's reply and according to Ike's life-long friend and former Town player Andy Key, escaped imprisonment in the Tower by the skin of his teeth.

I was an Oldham Rugby mad thirteen year-old, when, four seasons later, Oldham dished out a world record £10,650 transfer fee for the Great Britain flyer and to this day two things still remain firmly engraved on my mind.

The first is of an Oldham Chronicle photograph of the new arrival, along with his wife Betty - wearing a tea-caddy of a hat - looking at a brand new house down on Broadway and the second is of the great man himself taking time out during his first Watersheddings training session to introduce himself (I think) to us lads, who played mob-a-side rugby behind the training ground sticks. I say 'think' because not one of us had much more than a clue what he said! One wag chipped in "noo than marras, hoo's thoo gaan on is one thing but Broadway! Bloody Broadway! It's like Latics signing Stanley Matthews and moving him onto Watersheddings St!"

But, nevertheless, there he was. This great man built for speed doing laps around our training



pitch watched by a crowd the size of which we'd be only too pleased to see at today's game. The most expensive rugby player in the world. The man who just twelve months earlier had scored two tries (one an absolute peach) during the Battle of Brisbane, a legendary test match that became part of rugby league folklore after being made famous by a bruised and battered bunch who had battled to the last. The Lions had been walloped in the first test in Sydney and needed a win in Brisbane to keep the 1958 series alive. There were no substitutes in those days and when captain Alan Prescott broke his forearm as early as the third minute, like a latter-day Nelson, he stayed on to lead his men. Minutes later out-half Dave Bolton had to leave the field for good

with a broken collarbone and injury followed injury. At one stage the Brits were down to ten fit men and after the match Prescott, full-back Eric Fraser, centre Jim Challinor and loose-forward Vince Karalius joined Bolton in hospital.

The Lions won a ferocious game and went on to beat the Aussies in the third and final test to bring home the Ashes. Besides his two touchdowns in Brisbane, Southward scored a try in each of the other two tests to make him the first Great Britain man to score in each of a three test series for over 50 years. Oldham's new man was already in the 'Boy's Own Hero' class.

I'm privileged to having seen play each of Oldham's great wingers of the 50's. Dick Cracknell, John Etty and Terry O'Grady starred in an era when the sport oozed great wingmen. I think it's fair to say that Etty was far from being the speediest flanker in the business but he was a blockbuster of a player who knew the direct route to the try-line and one that other wingers hated to play against. St.Helens' free-scoring flying Springbok Tom van Vollenhoven, for instance, never scored a try against Oldham whilst facing Etty. Cracknell, on the other hand, was a deep-thinking footballer with a turn of speed. O'Grady was a fast and elusive lad who formed a great partnership with centre Alan Davies but whose career was blighted by injury.

Cracknell played 213 matches scoring 119 tries, Etty crossed the line on 90 occasions from his 150 outings whilst O'Grady turned out 140 times and scored 105 tries. But, in my opinion, whilst Ike only played 52 matches during his two year stay with the Roughyeds, he was the most exciting of the lot. He had speed to burn, was long striding, could both swerve and side-step, was big-hearted, a tough defender and a full-back's nightmare.

Amongst his 54 tries (in itself a remarkable achievement when considering it was from just 52 matches) were some absolute gems. He could score from anywhere on the pitch sometimes collecting direct from the restart and scoring at the other end. His 'trademark' was to kick the ball over the head of his opposing winger but usually at an angle towards the post seeming having the power to demand the ball bounce perfectly to allow him to gather and score under the sticks. I remember one try (I think scored against Barrow) when he kicked the ball over the opposing winger's head, gathered, followed that up with a second kick, this time over the full-back's head, to touch down.



Ike Southward playing for Workington about to be tackled by opposing Oldham winger Dick Cracknell watched by Alan Davies and Frank Daley.

Just now and again our sport turns up a player whose been born to thrill; Brian Bevan, Alex Murphy, Martin Offiah and Jason Robinson would all fall into that category. So would Southward.

The Cumbrians never did settle on Broadway, Ike returning to play for his beloved Town. Many years later, along with then club official John Chadwick, I met up with the man (who was at that time a member of Town's backroom staff) in the Workington boot-room. Packed into this smallest of spaces were Andy Key (who played a few games on trial at Watersheddings) and former Oldham scrum-half and Workington's first-ever captain Wilson Irving.

No longer built for speed, expertly balancing a cigarette on his bottom lip, which he claimed - in a now slightly softened accent - he never inhaled, it was obvious the Cumbrian still lived for his rugby. Any rugby. Out of shape maybe, but certainly wiser than during his time with the Roughyeds. I soon cottoned-on that deep-down he harboured regrets surrounding his hasty retreat from Watersheddings. He'd wax lyrical about things such as Alan Davies being the best centre that he'd ever partnered, the fervour of the Oldham supporters and insisted that he never put a foot on the whitewash when flagged back from a match-winning try late in the 1960 Challenge Cup semi against Hull at Station Rd lost 12-9 by the Roughyeds!

Sadly, Ike, a fine fellow and a rugby league hero, died last month aged 71. He'd be mightily relieved that St Peter was neither Australian nor a former rugby league full-back.

Brian Walker

MICHAEL TURNER'S NEW OLDHAM BOOK WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE AUTUMN. DETAILS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE CLUB'S MATCHDAY PROGRAMME.

visiting today

Rochdale Hornets

Paul Anderson (SECOND ROW / CENTRE): Spent the 2005 season bravely fighting his way back from a career threatening knee injury. There were signs at the end of the season that Paul is quite capable of making a full recovery and once more becoming a regular performer.

Rob Ball (PROP): Rob found the consistent level of performance he was looking for during the 2005 season and became first choice prop in the Hornets front row. His no nonsense approach was appreciated by the Hornets fans and his experience was vital at certain times of the season.

Ryan Benjafield (PROP): Ryan is in his second spell in England having previously played for Hull F.C. and York City Knights. He has been playing in Australia for Asquith Magpies in the Jim Beam Cup but was keen to have another go in England.

James Bunyan (CENTRE / SECOND ROW): One of James's great assets is his versatility being at home at either centre or back row. James is renowned for his tough tackling and strong running and has always had a good tries to games ratio. James is another player on his way back to full fitness after having closed season surgery. Previous clubs include Doncaster and Huddersfield.

Sam Butterworth (STAND OFF): Rochdale born Sam is certain to continue his love affair with Hornets supporters in 2006 having enjoyed a highly successful 2005 season scoring some brilliant tries and displaying excellent individual skills.

Chris Campbell (WING): Chris has been a consistent performer since joining the Club in 2004. His electric pace always puts him amongst Hornets leading scorers every season and last year he scored 14 in 22 appearances.

Phil Cantillon (HOOKER): Phil showed during the latter stages of the 2005 season that he has not lost his electric pace and quick thinking that have been his trademarks over the years. Hornets fans will be quick to remember his match winning performance off the bench at Doncaster that turned a remarkable game in our favour.

Craig Dean Once tipped for G.B by his coach at Halifax who was Malcolm Reilly, had problems with a number of injuries which took him out of the game, played under Darren at Chorley and formed an excellent trio with Dave McConnell and Mick Coates.

Lee Doran (SECOND ROW): Lee was voted the Club's player of the year at the end of last season, an award he richly deserved and in doing so quickly became a firm fans' favourite. He frequently busted the opposition's line, with his trademark line breaking busts. Lee was also a solid performer in defence frequently topping the tackle count.

Phil Farrell (LOOSE FORWARD): Phil was plagued with a knee injury during the 2005 season which he will now hoping to have fully recovered from. A tough back row forward with an exceptional work rate Phil leads from the front at all times and is a very constructive leader both on and off the pitch. He made 21 appearances in 2005.

Matty Firth (SCRUM HALF): Matt opted for a move to National League one after enjoying a hugely successful 2005 season with Keighley Cougars. Matt will be hoping to make an immediate impact due to the injury to Lee Sanderson.

Chris Giles (FULL BACK / WING): A real stand out performer for Hornets during 2005 at either Full Back or on the Wing. In certain matches Chris's Super League experience proved invaluable and was a model of consistency. Chris scored some vital tries in the last campaign and will be looking to improve his tally in 2006.

Ian Gordon Ian is a utility back and is at home playing 1 to 7 in the backs. He has a good kicking game and is a very useful goal kicker, at the age of 20 he could be one for the future.

Tommy Golden (LOOSE FORWARD): Joined Hornets from Leigh Miners Rangers amateur side. He captained his side with distinction for many years and was also part of a very successful Great Britain amateur set up touring Australia on more than one occasion.

Andy Gorski (SECOND ROW): His trademark breaks and tough tackling were very evident last season and his performances were recognised in the Club's end of season awards. He scored a very valuable 13 tries in 28 appearances in 2005.

Phil Hasty Ex G.B. Barla player who was voted National League 2 player of the year for Hunslet in the 1993 season, then moved to Hull KR before this season signing for York. He is a thorn in people's defences and has a great eye for a gap. Rochdale beat off a number of clubs for his signature and he has signed until the end of the 2007 season.

John Hill (PROP): After signing from Blackpool in May 2005 John made a disastrous start to his Hornets career by getting dismissed five minutes into his debut at Featherstone. After that blip John had a really successful season and was a top performer in the Hornets pack.

Kevin King Highly rated young centre, gained super league experience last season under Shane McNally, but an injury set him back, not featured under Tony Smith this season, very capable goal kicker.

Casey Mayberry (WING): In his second spell at Hornets having previously served Halifax twice and Hull KR. Casey's first spell at the club was interrupted by injury and he will be hoping for an injury free 2006.

Dave McConnell (HOOKER): Another of Hornets top performers in 2005 after signing in the close season from Leigh. David's work rate is exceptional and is at the hub of most of Hornets attacking play.

Mark McCully (CENTRE): Another player who enjoyed a really successful 2005 season topping Hornets points scoring chart in the process. Mark also had a very successful season with the kicking boot and was amongst the leading kickers in National League one.

Paul Norman (PROP) Paul signed for Hornets from Local rivals Oldham in December 2005. Regarded as one of the most consistent front row forwards in

National League one with a huge work rate ethic.

Paul Owen (FULL BACK) Paul will be hoping for a better 2006 after spending the majority of time sidelined in the 2005 season with a foot injury. He is in his second spell at Hornets after having a brief spell away from the club in 2004 at Hull KR.

Lee Patterson (CENTRE): Lee's pace and running style is sure to make him a fans' favourite at Hornets and the Club will be hoping he can repeat his try scoring feats this year.

John Pickersgill (PROP): Another of Hornets major moves of the close season when they prized John away from Warrington Wolves. He is a player that Wolves boss Cullen believes will have a major impact on the game in years to come.

Craig Robinson (SECOND ROW): Hornets snatched the young second rower from under the noses of a host of Yorkshire teams all after his signature. He is the product of Wakefield's academy and has already played at Super League level.

Lee Sanderson (SCRUM HALF): Eyebrows were raised when Hornets secured the signature of Lee from Super League Club Harlequins in the close season. Lee is recognised as being a very talented Half Back with a brilliant kicking game that will add a new dimension to Hornets play.

Matt Sturm (PROP): the popular Kiwi prop forward was another massive close season signing for Hornets. His years of experience gained playing Super League will be vital to Hornets play-off push. There is no doubt that Matt will as ever be leading from the front as he has done all his career.

Richard Varkulis (CENTRE): His power and pace made him a formidable opponent for all teams in 2005 and he had a really consistent season. He scored 13 tries in 22 appearances and in doing so collected one of the Club's end of season awards

journalistic license

by Matthew Chambers

NINE games gone, less than a century of points racked up and an 'against' column that could well hit the 1,000 mark before the season is up.

It's so tough being a Roughyeds follower this season that some former supporters have opted for the delights of excursions to B&Q and weeding the garden in preference to the latest stuffing.

In fairness, the last few weeks have hardly been the prettiest spectacles as even with players returning to the fray following injury, the team have been unable to do enough in either attack or defence to threaten to pull off a victory.

What makes it worse is that Oldham's rivals at the wrong end of the division are all picking up points.

Narrow defeat to Widnes aside, Batley's impressive run of form showing no sign of ending any time soon, while York's thumping back-to-back wins are likely to work wonders for their confidence.

Add to that Doncaster's win over Halifax last week and it is clear that a huge amount of improvement needs to be made if the Roughyeds are to even threaten to get out of the relegation mire.

Should the worst come to the worst and the club are demoted to National League Two, it would at least provide space for the squad to be rebuilt against a competitive backdrop that is less demanding.

The confidence of this current young squad has taken a battering this campaign, and the chance to pick up wins in a league of a lower standard could work wonders in bringing back a feel-good factor for the club as a whole.

Every cloud, as they say.

But still, with nine games left such talk is defeatist.

Stranger things have happened in the world of sport than Oldham grabbing six wins inside their final nine league games... such as: 1966: North Korea beat Italy to reach the quarter-finals of the soccer World Cup, having started the tournament as 1000-1 outsiders. 1980: The USA ice hockey team, made up of college students, win 4-3 at Lake Placid against a Soviet Union side unbeaten in Olympic competition since 1968. 1990: Buster Douglas knocks out Mike Tyson to win boxing's heavyweight championship of the world in Las Vegas. The only odds posted prior to the fight for a Tyson victory had him at 45-1 ON to win.

Finally, 1998: Sheffield Eagles beat Wigan 17-8 in the Challenge Cup final, despite being huge underdogs in a competition Wigan had dominated through the 1990s.

The assistant coach for the Eagles on that day was one Steve Deakin.

He's arguably got an even tougher task to tear up the form books this season at Oldham, but as things can hardly get any worse (on the field, at least), it can only be hoped they start to get better.

Beginning, Oldham fans hope, with today's big game against Rochdale Hornets.

Matthew



halstead's choice

by Roger Halstead

HIGHLIGHT of Dean Gorton's formative years as a young pro in rugby league was a trip to Australia with Salford's apprentices in 2002.

Next best? "Definitely signing for Oldham last autumn," said the 22-year-old Manchester United season-ticket holder, Salford City Reds fan and all-round sporting nut.

He can never stray far from all things sporting and athletic. By night and on Sundays he is either training or playing at the Roughyeds . . . by day Monday to Friday, and sometimes Saturday (when he is not training or watching United), he is working full-time in his father's sports shop in Swinton.

"Working for dad has its advantages," said Dean. "For one, I never have a problem with getting time off, or leaving the shop early, to train with Oldham. "He used to play football himself, he is a keen United fan, like me, and he is very supportive of everything I do in rugby league.

"I'll probably get some stick for saying I support United, but I've been going since dad first took me as a boy. It used to be Old Trafford with my dad and The Willows, to watch Salford City Reds, with my mates.

"We were all hooked on rugby league from an early age -- I first started playing at Folly Lane when I was nine -- and it was a dream come true when I signed pro forms for Salford at the age of 16."

And the Aussie trip? "It was awesome," added Dean. "All the young professionals at Salford at the time were taken to Sydney for a few weeks as part of our apprenticeship.

"We were all about 18. We played a few games out there and more than held our own, but the highlight was to get the VIP treatment when we were taken to clubs like Sydney City Roosters, Penrith and Parramatta.

"We had a few training sessions with the Roosters and just to be on the same pitch as stars like Brad Fittler and our own Adrian Morley -- a cult-figure

PLAYER PROFILE

dean
Gorton



Dean Gorton

Continued...

season so far, but it's provided me with a huge learning experience. I should have moved on from Salford a year earlier, but when it's your home-town club and the club you've supported all your life it comes as a bit of a wrench to make the move.

"Sometimes, these things have to be done. I still support Salford, and I always will, but on a personal note it was time to seek a fresh challenge and I have never once regretted the decision to come to the Roughyeds.

"I thought it was going to be a bit intimidating at first because I had never played anywhere else but Salford and I didn't know anybody here when I first arrived.

"But the coaching staff and all the lads quickly made me feel at home. It's a tough division and we've had loads of injuries. We shouldn't make too much of those because all clubs have injuries. It's fair to say, though, that we seem to have had an injury crisis all season.

"Despite all this, the camaraderie among the players has been spot-on.

"After spending several years at Salford in the under-18s and the under-21s I came in search of something to test me out. And I've been tested all right.

"It's a big step into National League division one. It's tougher and faster than academy rugby and a lot of the blokes you are playing against are older and have a lot of experience behind them.

"But I think, and I know the rest of the lads think the same way, that we will pull out of the relegation zone. It's up to us to do it --- nobody else can do it for us --- but fans can rest assured that we still believe in ourselves and in our ability to start putting a few wins together."

Always versatile, Dean was aged nine when he first laced up rugby boots at Folly Lane. By the time he was 11 he was playing for Lancashire on the wing and by the time he was 16 he was playing county rugby at centre. He went for England under-16 trials, but missed out.

Undeterred, he pushed on. And it was on the recommendation of his amateur club coach John Blackburn that he went to The Willows for four trial games in Salford's junior academy side, under-18s.

Initially, his progress was little short of meteoric. He did enough in those four games for Salford to take him on board.

And at the end of that first season, in which he mainly played at full-back, he was given his first-team squad number by the then Salford boss Steve McCormack and signed on as a full-time pro. He was still only 16.

He took to full-time training like a duck to water, but his sporting world dealt him a cruel blow when he suffered a serious shoulder injury which required a

for all Salford-born rugby league lads, I think --- was mind-boggling.

"I'll never forget that trip and I'll never forget my time here at Oldham.

"We've had a tough



major operation.

"It couldn't have happened at a worse time in terms of my development," said Dean, "and I honestly believe it was the one big factor in stopping me making the step up to first-team level.

"In 2004, both Gareth Hayes and I won club awards for our work in the under-21s. I got the player-of-the-year award and Gareth got something similar, either the players' player award or the coach's award, I'm not sure.

"I played loose-forward for most of that year, but I felt I was marking time. Academy rugby was no longer challenging me enough. I should have moved on then, but it was another 12 months before I joined the Roughyeds."

Now, with half a league season to go and Oldham at the foot of the division, he and his team mates are facing as big a challenge as they are ever likely to face on the rugby field.

Play-anywhere Dean is just happy to be in the side. "I think loose-forward is my preferred position," he said, "but I look forward to every game and I'm not fussed where I play so long as I'm in the team.

"I like to think the defensive part of my game is one of my stronger points. It's nice to take the ball in and great to get over the line, but the bread-and-butter of the sport is about tackling and about defence. Get that right, and you are more than half way to winning.

"The intensity in training right now is as high as I've ever experienced. It's been stepped up to a new level, and that's what the lads wanted because we have to fight our way out of a rut and all the lads are more than willing to have a crack at it."

Dean was down to take on a new challenge at York last week when he was named in the centre. It was a challenge for him, a challenge for the team... but that's exactly what he was looking for when he put pen to paper on his Oldham contract last autumn.

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on this day

Don Yates looks back to July 2nd yesteryear

Six years ago, when Oldham were obliged to vacate Boundary Park for pitch renovation, they played a few matches at Spotland, the home of today's visitors, Rochdale Hornets.

It was on Sunday 2nd July 2000 that the Roughyeds hit top form with a 32-0 victory Featherstone Rovers before a Spotland crowd of 2,132. Although Oldham were always in command, it was not until the 19th minute that they scored their first try and they had to play throughout the second half with only twelve men following the dismissal of centre Anthony Gibbons immediately before half-time following a mass brawl. The Roughyeds scored five tries, two from substitute Dean Cross who was making his debut following his signing from Widnes the previous month. Other tries came from winger Warren Barrow, second-row forward Shayne McMenemy and substitute Neil Roden. Centre Pat Rich landed six goals. On the same day Hornets visited Hunslet where they won 24-19. Their four tries were scored by centre Sean Cooper, scrum-half Dane Dorahy, full-back Lee Maher and hooker Darren Robinson who also landed a penalty and three conversions, one from the touchline.

It was on this day in 2002, Tuesday 2nd July, that Oldham appointed prop-forward Steve Molloy as player-coach following the resignation of John Harbin. At the time the Roughyeds were placed twelfth in the Northern Ford Premiership table. By the seasons end they had moved up to ninth. The following season Oldham finished fifth under the leadership of Molloy and twelve months later, at the end of the 2004 campaign, Oldham were placed fourth. Despite those improved league placings, the Roughyeds made little progress in each of the Grand Final play-off series and so in September 2004 Molloy was relieved of his coaching duties. During his coaching career at Oldham, Molloy was involved in 76 matches, 37 were won, five drawn and 34 lost.

Abrasive centre James Bunyan is one of several players who have played for both Oldham and Rochdale Hornets. Bunyan, who earlier in his career played Super League rugby with Huddersfield, joined the Roughyeds from Hornets for the 2004 season but never really settled at Oldham. He made 14 appearances for the club and scored seven tries before moving on to Halifax on Friday 2nd July 2004 as part of the deal which brought Jon Roper here to Oldham.

Oldham centre Jon Goddard and accurate goal-kicker Mick Naryn (Rochdale Hornets) were bitterly disappointed three years ago, on Wednesday 2nd July 2003. Both were included in the National League under-21 squad that day for a match against their Super League contemporaries at Odsal Stadium, Bradford. Unfortunately the match was controversially cancelled only minutes before kick-off with the players already stripped for action. The reason for the late call-off was to protect the pitch for the Yorkshire-Lancashire Origin Match, which took place later that evening. To add to the woes of followers on this side of the Pennines, Yorkshire ran in ten tries as they beat Lancashire 56-6.

Sixty years ago the British Lions were on tour in Australia. Included in the tour party was Oldham second-row forward Doug Phillips. He was included in the British team which met Mackay on Tuesday 2nd July 1946. It was a gentle run-out for the former Swansea RUFC forward as the Lions went on to win 94-0. Full-back Ernie Ward (Bradford Northern) landed seventeen goals with the British three-quarters accounting for seventeen of the twenty tries. Barrow winger Jim Lewthwaite led the way with seven touchdowns.

the bootroom

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Roughyed

Kids & Co

Hi Kids

Welcome back to Sedgley Park for our lasy "home" game away from Boundary Park.

Today is a real day for the "Kids" as we have four junior teams to entertain us before the match kicks off, so as well as shouting for Oldham you will be able to cheer for your favourite junior club. We're sure that many of you will have mates out there on the pitch today so give them a great big cheer.

A big thank-you goes to "Braddy" for organising the "kids" teams and also to Geoff Roberts and everyone at Sedgley Park for letting us use the pitch.

Today sees two of our youngest mascots ever taking centre stage. George and Lewis Hough are the seventeen months old twins of Chris Hough who unfortunately is out injured at the moment but uncle John is also one of their favourite players. If we have trouble getting them off the pitch it is because they are both rugby mad.

Good luck as always to the lads.

Carole and Janet

Today's Mascot

George Hough

Age:

Seventeen Months

Lewis Hough

Age:

Seventeen Months

SUPPORT GROUP NEWS

World Cup fever has swept the nation, and provided a huge market for the sale of England 'must have' memorabilia. We all want to be proud of our National team and desire success, and the hysteria created by constant media attention ensures the pockets of commercial interests are well lined. More and more, we see the trend for identifying with 'big' events and 'winning' teams and the channelling of funds to this end.

Where does this leave lower profile, professional sport? Without the will to inject resources in the form of funding, enthusiasm and goodwill, the future certainly looks bleak.

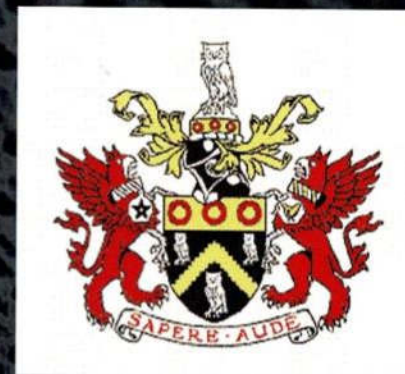
This personal view may seem rather negative, but is not intended to be I am just being realistic.

Come on 'The Roughyeds'!!

Sheila

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BEFORE THE MATCH ENTERTAINMENT

Braddy has organised two Junior Matches. K O 1.45, 20 mins. each way.

The teams will also do a lap of honour at half time.

Waterhead U9's v Oldham St Annes U 9's Shaw Rhinos U8's v Milnrow Cobras U8's

Waterhead

Coaches

Eddie Aspin, Andy Dean

- 1 Joe Robinson
- 2 Joe Chadderton
- 3 Billy McDermott
- 4 Reece Bradshaw
- 5 Matthew Jackson
- 6 Nathan Martin
- 7 Liam Rogers
- 8 Kiaran Dean
- 9 Daniel Fairfoull
- 10 Harry Godfrey
- 11 Jonathan Aspin
- 12 Azaac Johnson
- 13 Alex Gilroy
- 14 Joshua Bennett
- 15 Adam Wells
- 16 Jack Fallows

Oldham St Annes

Coaches Jason Akeroyd, Dave Berry,
Dave Charles, Tony Morrison

- 1 Josh Charles
- 2 Jordan Boland
- 3 Connell Kenworthy
- 4 Ryan Lynch
- 5 Adam Fay
- 6 Luke Skilling
- 7 Sam Taylor
- 8 Sam Akeroyd
- 9 Josh Berry
- 10 Corey Hopwood
- 11 Alex Jobson
- 12 Paul Ainsworth
- 13 Jack Morrison
- 14 Liam Brannick
- 15 Daniel Hare

Shaw Rhinos

Coaches

John Hough

- 1 Ellis Taylor
- 2 Shaun Hurley
- 3 Sophie Holden
- 4 Travis Holden
- 5 Jake Price
- 6 Joseph Hough
- 7 Jamie Ashton
- 8 Lewis Topping
- 9 Jack Evans
- 10 Connor Slicker
- 11 T B A
- 12 T B A
- 13 T B A

Milnrow Cobras

Coaches

Marvin Connolly, Zahoor Ahmed (Ziggy)

- 1 Harry Pratt
- 2 Harry McDonald
- 3 Reece Cumiski
- 4 Caneron Connolly
- 5 Holly Colburn
- 6 Hayley Fielding
- 7 Jake Glover
- 8 Dillon Critchley
- 9 Jordan Strand
- 10 Chad Rush
- 11 Kieron Turner
- 12 Matthew Lees
- 13 Matthew Ashton


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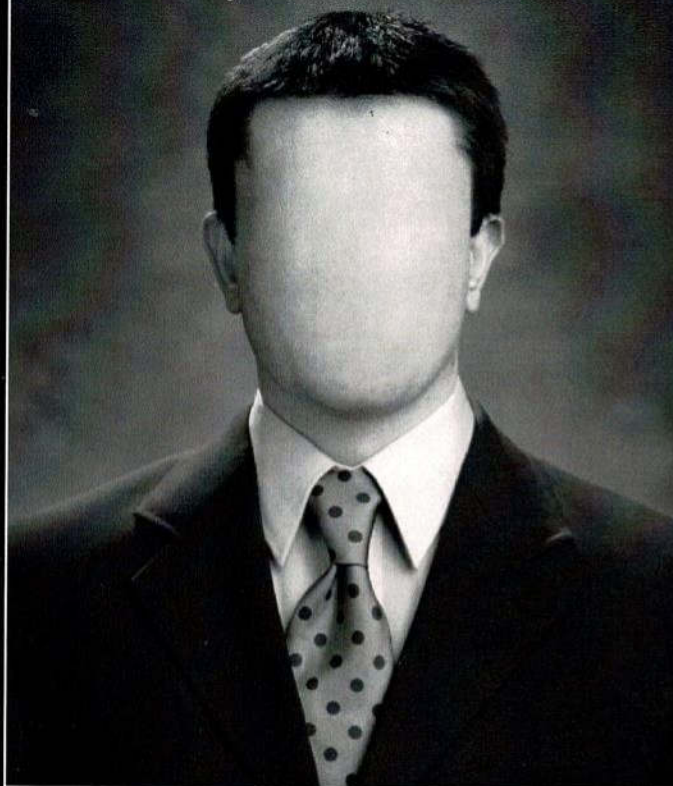
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Ladies darts - every Monday

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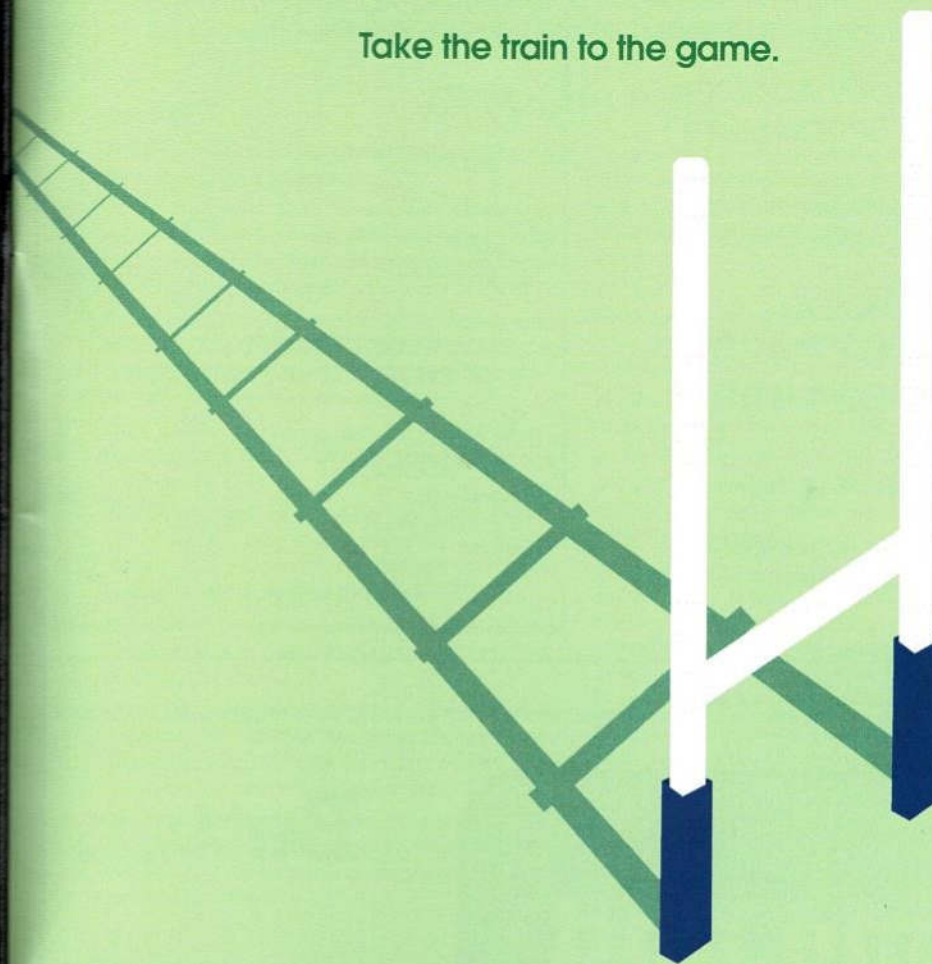
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THRILLING RACE

THE title race in LHF Heathplan NL2 could hardly be more exciting at present.

While Hull KR's 22nd consecutive win in all competitions at Rochdale pulled them six points clear in NL1, a host of teams remain in contention to finish first in the lower league.

Dewsbury Rams are currently in the driving seat, three points ahead of the chasing pack. But that pack is six teams strong, with seventh placed Barrow still only six points behind.

That means that there will be a host of all-important matches coming up, starting with this weekend.

Celtic Crusaders' recent form has pushed them up to second, and saw stand off Luke Young named NL2 Player of the Month by Rugby League World magazine this week.

Today the Crusaders entertain fourth placed Swinton Lions in Wales, hoping to maintain their push for top spot.

Don't forget that first place is even more important in NL2 than any other division, as in Rugby League's typically lop-sided manner, the top team is automatically promoted.

The Rams will be favourites to maintain their position by beating Blackpool Panthers at home, but an away trip to the Crusaders is among their remaining fixtures.

Third placed Sheffield Eagles know that they can afford precious few more slip-ups if they want to peg back Dewsbury, and their resolve will be tested to the full when they take on Barrow at Craven Park.

Of the other top seven sides, Featherstone Rovers entertain improving Keighley Cougars, and Gateshead Thunder welcome London Skolars to the North East.

In NL1, the main scramble is all about getting away from the bottom and into the top six.

York's recent resurgence has clawed back the gap with the teams above them, and the Knights are now part of a cluster of teams that could either be relegated or finish in the top six.

Giving NL2 two promotion places offers more opportunities at the lower level, but is it fair to relegate two clubs from a ten team competition? A single point could be the difference between an assault on the Grand Final or dropping down a division.

York, Doncaster, Batley, Halifax and Rochdale are all in that corridor of uncertainty at present, and again, will all face each other in coming weeks. That starts with York entertaining the Lakers today.

It's a crucial weekend all round.

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2006 fixtures

DATE	OPPONENTS	CUP	VENUE	K. O.	RESULT	W/L	ATT
22/1/06	Rochdale Hornets	Law Cup	A	14:00	42-8	L	1,114
27/1/06	Leeds Rhino's	Friendly	H	20:00	16-8	W	3,191
15/2/06	Rochdale Hornets	NR Cup	A	19:45	18-16	L	920
19/2/06	Halifax RLFC	NR Cup	H	15:00	26-42	L	1268
26/2/06	Keighley Cougars	NR Cup	H	15:00	25-24	W	764
8/3/06	Halifax RLFC	NR Cup	A	19:30	66-8	L	897
12/3/06	Saddleworth Rangers	POWERGEN CC 3RD RD	H	15:00	32-10	W	804
19/3/06	Rochdale Hornets	NR Cup	H	15:00	10-22	L	783
26/3/06	Keighley Cougars	NR Cup	A	15:00	32-28	W	946
2/4/06	Barrow Raiders	POWERGEN CC 4TH RD	A	15:00	8-40	L	975
9/4/06	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL1	H	15:00	8-48	L	1658
14/4/06	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	A	15:00			
17/4/06	Doncaster Lakers	NL1	H	15:00	10-56	L	820
30/4/06	Leigh Centurions	NL1	A	15:00	44-22	L	2215
14/5/06	Whitehaven	NL1	H	15:00	10-48	L	813
28/5/06	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL1	A	15:00	80-6	L	2859
4/6/06	Halifax RLFC	NL1	A	15:00	34-28	L	1274
10/6/06	York City Knights	NL1	H	19:00	0-62	L	684
25/6/06	York City Knights	NL1	A	15:00	56-14	L	2220
2/7/06	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	H	15:00			
9/7/06	Widnes Vikings	NL1	A	15:00			
21/7/06	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	H	19:45			
30/7/06	Doncaster Lakers	NL1	A	15:00			
	POWERGEN CHALLENGE CUP SEMI FINALS	POWERGEN CC					
6/8/06	Halifax RLFC	NL1	H	15:00			
13/8/06	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	A	15:00			
20/8/06	Widnes Vikings	NL1	H	15:00			
26/8/06	POWERGEN CHALLENGE CUP FINALS	POWERGEN CC					
3/9/06	Leigh Centurions	NL1	H	15:00			
10/9/06	Whitehaven	NL1	A	15:00			
17/9/06	LHF Healthplan Play Offs						
24/9/06	LHF Healthplan Play Offs						
1/10/06	LHF Healthplan Play Offs						
8/10/06	LHF Healthplan Grand Final & Play Off Final						

Key

NR Cup – Northern Rail Cup
Powergen CC – Powergen Challenge Cup
NL1 – National League Division 1

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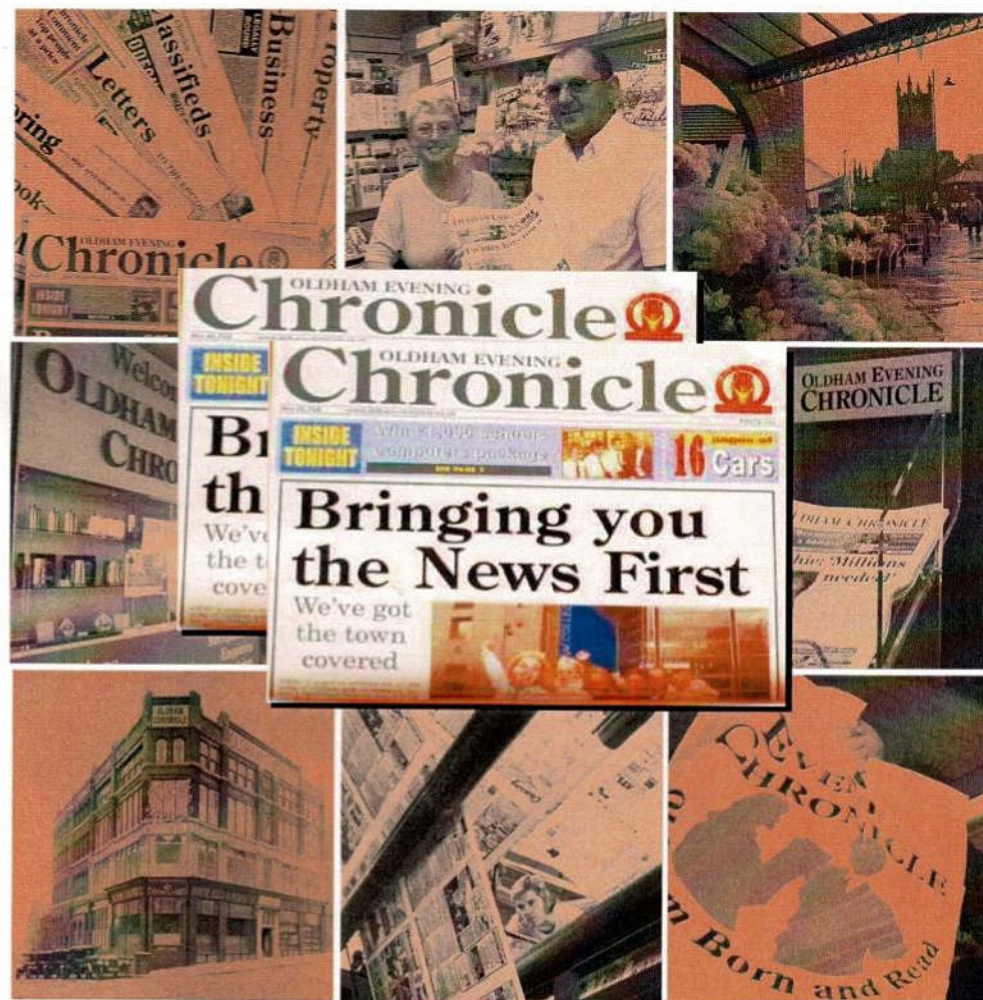
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PLAYERS AFTER MATCH REFRESHMENTS

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