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CONTENTS

Oldham RLFC v Leigh Centurions

FEATURES

- 4 In The Chair with Chris Hamilton
- 6 Direct From The Dug Out Looking ahead to today's game
- 8 Roger And Out with Roger Halstead
- 7 40/20 Vision with Ian Wilson
- 10 In Yer Face with Geoff Cooke
- 12 Chit Chat From Around The Club
- 14 Around & About with The Heritage Trust
- 16 Visiting Today Leigh Centurions
- 17 Journalistic License by Matthew Chambers
- 18 Halstead's Choice A profile of Lee Wingfield
- 22 Stats
- 23 The Boot Room A look at the current squad and their sponsors
- 24 Roughyed Kids & Co Events for all the family and today's mascot
- 26 Picture Review
- 28 Club Cash
- 29 Oldham Rugby League Social Club
- 33 National League Talk Time for more help? with GARETH WALKER
- 34 Fixtures & Sponsors
- 36 Today's Teams View both of today's teams in full, plus match officials

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. Jude's, 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 (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.

CLUB DIRECTORY

The Roughyeds
Oldham Rugby League
Football Club (1997) Limited

14 Waterloo Street
Oldham OL1 1SQ

Telephone: 0161 628 3677

Fax: 0161 627 5700

Club Shop: 0161 627 2141

CHAIRMAN

Christopher Hamilton

DIRECTORS

Christopher Hamilton

Sean Whitehead

HEAD COACH

Steve Deakin

ASSISTANT COACH

Alan Hadcroft

PHYSIOTHERAPIST

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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

Well we have reached the milestone of our last home game of this season contrary to what many people thought/hoped/expected. There is no doubt whatsoever that to get this far given our financial problems has been a major achievement even though on the field the season has been a very disappointing one culminating with our relegation to National League Two.

Although we still need to pay a further £28,000 which won't be easy we will hopefully find a way but it must be stressed that what we have achieved this season will not suddenly leave us once the balance is paid - we will still need to be very astute as the ramifications will go beyond the end of this season.

The enormity of what has been paid back was brought into focus again last week when Halifax announced that they are in dire straits and need £90,000 by 10 September to cover a shortfall on players wages - how Steve Deakin wishes he had £90k to spend on players never mind just an overspend!

What the Halifax situation does do however is keep us all reminded as to just how precarious the situation is at most clubs. Halifax seemed to be one of the best earners on the commercial front from kit deals given their relationship with Halifax Bank of Scotland but even this appears to have been not enough and you can only wonder what is around the corner for clubs outside of Super League where, in the main crowds are decreasing at an alarming rate.

We have suffered from that for obvious reasons this season and we have also had complaints about match day prices. The truth of the matter is that the decision to increase prices at the beginning of the year was made with the amount of money needing to be repaid to the Crown in mind - and even then we were not the dearest ground in NL One - and it was interesting that we had no complaints prior to the start of the season as I think that people saw the increase as one way of helping to repay the debt.

It is a simple fact of rugby league life at Oldham that we have to maximise income from home games. Bearing in mind that we are only guaranteed 12 home games

in NL One and we make no money whatsoever from sales of food or drink at the ground gate receipts are absolutely vital to the survival of the club.

After today the club will enter a period of nearly five months where we have little or no income other than fundraising which given that we are always being told the club has to be run as a business is pure craziness.

We are obviously hoping to keep a number of this season's players at the club for next season as well as recruiting others to enable us to be in with a shout next season for promotion but I think a lot of people are underestimating the strength of the Second Division and it will certainly not be the walk in the park many think it will be.

Myself and Sean will, as ever, be trying our utmost to get the club in the best position possible to move forward and it almost goes without saying that we have not had a single telephone call from anybody wanting to take over so if you know any of the so called "mystery backers" please remind them of the phone number of the office which is 0161 628 3677 - WE WOULD BE ABSOLUTELY DELIGHTED TO HEAR FROM THEM.

Finally to all of you who have stuck with us this season can I, on behalf of everybody connected with the club, thank you for your support this season and although we have 2 tough games left the players are working hard to get that first league win of the season to give you something to cheer about.

Please get behind the lads and enjoy the game.

Enjoy the game

Chris



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direct from the dug out

with Steve Deakin



I know I surprised a few people with my praise of the lads after what appeared a severe thrashing by Widnes a fortnight ago. With hindsight, however I wouldn't change a word of what I said. When you consider the quality of the side they put out with Super League experience and recent experience at that, abounding and compare it with the team we were forced to put out I thought we did exceptionally well.

I still don't think people appreciate how many of those lads who stepped out were carrying injuries, even at the end of the season, that should have prevented them playing.

But as I said in the last programme that attitude just sums up the spirit at the club despite all the adversity. Hands went up to play and players like Alan Hadcroft who hadn't played for months, Lee Wingfield carrying a bad head injury, Simon Svabic with a neck injury and Gareth Barber with his longstanding ankle trouble all went through the pain barrier to help their team-mates.

There has been good news with Andy Gorey signing a new contract. There is a lad who sums up the attitude of the players. Every week facing men almost twice his size he never shirks a tackle and at the same time has managed, with ten tries, to be our top try scorer so far. I have to admit however I didn't back him to outstrip Denis Moran to the line in his length of the field try against Widnes but I'm glad to say he proved me wrong. The

other good news was of course the tremendous gesture by Oldham Athletic in reducing our rental for the last three games. I have to agree wholeheartedly with their Director, Ian Hill, when he said there is too much negativity about Oldham's view of their professional sporting teams. If everybody was a little more positive and got behind them more it would be to the benefit of both clubs.

However, despite my last comment, it is to our loyal band of fans that I now turn. You have been tremendous throughout the season cheering the lads on despite the results. I don't think there has been a match when you haven't clapped them off the field. It means a lot to the lads and, no matter how disappointed and tired they are they always make their way to our small band of followers at away games and show their appreciation.

If you had to choose two games at the end of the season it certainly wouldn't be Leigh at home and Whitehaven away but that is our task and as always we will face it positively, determined to get that one win at least that would so please our fans and everybody to do with ORLFC. On that note can I thank everybody who has helped and encouraged me since I joined the club mid-season? It's not been easy and a lot of lessons have been learned. I am sure we can turn these into positives next year in what will be a tough Division Two. Hope to see all of you and a lot more back next year and although you will now have a rest from rugby league, let me tell you we will start straight away planning for the new season.

Enjoy the game,
Deaks

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club corner

As this is the last programme of the season can I take this opportunity of thanking all the contributors to what I think is the finest programme in the League and content-wise in the whole of rugby league at present.

They really are a well informed, rugby mad set of people who never let me down and are always willing to do that little bit extra when required. We have lost a faithful servant in Don Yates this year and it would be nice if we could find somebody else to contribute a regular column in our programme.

It is a pity that it appears to be away fans who appreciate the programme more than our own supporters as was proved at the Widnes game when we sold out a quarter of an hour after the Widnes coaches arrived and therefore left many home fans disappointed, and 2 out of three letters I receive complimenting us on our programme are from away fans.

I would also like to thank our printers Dijiprint of Leeds for whom nothing is too much trouble even when I am really tight on the deadlines. It has not been easy to stay positive this season but I think we have managed it and at the same time reported things as they were. Look forward to greeting you in the first programme of the new season and don't forget if you have any ideas for new aspects of the programme or indeed would like to contribute to next season's programme please let me know via the Club offices 01616283677 or e mail me on nigel.marland@ntlworld.com.

Cheers

Nigel Marland

ORLFC PREDICTION LEAGUE

Week 16 Overall		
1	Nigel Marland	203
2	Ian Wilson	195
3	Paul Hulbert	194
4	Colin & Dorothy Johnston	192
5	Matthew Chambers	188
6	Peter Buckley	187
7	Michael Ackroyd	182
8=	Wayne Halstead	181
9	Geoff Cooke	181
10	Ashley Baxter	178
11	Tim Boycott	176
12	Jeff Bates	175
13	Brian Walker	174
14	Roger Halstead	173
15	Roger Ivens	172
16	Harry Whitehouse	170
17	Four Red Lions	168
18	David Webster	166
19	Frank Pullen	165
20	Sara Jackson	164
21=	Chris Hamilton	163
21=	Terry Bailey	163
23	Steve Baldwin	160
24	J Hulmes	162
25	David Lord	158
26	Nick Henry	154
27	David Stephens	142
28	Val Webster	136
29	John McAndrew	124
30	Janet Yewdale	NR
31	Paul Gough	NR
32	Iain Ashworth	8
33	Peter Illing	96

Clarice Stevens and Gordon Kent have both paid £20 but will not be taking an active part in the competition.

It was a relatively high scoring round with a lot of bunching at the top. I reckon the top 10 are still all in with a chance. The monthly winner is Terry Bailey with 43 points from the three games in August and he wins a signed ball. As I am away for the last two games can you phone the office Terry and arrange to pick the ball up? As I don't return from holiday until the 17 Sept. I'm afraid you'll all have to wait for the final result, sorry about that but weekly competitors please e-mail predictions as usual at least before midnight on the day preceding the game. I'm e-mailing my predictions to Paul Hulbert before I go so he can't moan I cheated if I win.

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roger and out

by ROGER HALSTEAD

I want to talk lotteries this week, mainly because Roughyeds need income on a regular basis --- and after today's Leigh game there will be no money at the turnstiles for the best part of six months.

Cash flow off-season is always a problem for any business, sporting or otherwise, whose doors are not open to the public for 12 months of the year.

In that respect, Roughyeds are no different to any of their rivals or indeed to hundreds of professional or part-time professional rugby league, rugby union and football clubs the length and breadth of England.

What does set Roughyeds apart this year --- from most of them at least --- is the fact that ONE QUARTER OF A MILLION POUNDS has been paid to the Inland Revenue in the past 12 months just to keep the club in business.

Now, we are not talking here of a Super League Club with its vast pay-out from Sky, with average home crowds of five figures and with a multi-millionaire at the helm; we are considering what has been achieved by Chris Hamilton and Sean Whitehead as owners of a National League outfit with average crowds this year below 1,000 and with no ground of their own.

I wrote in my last 'Roger And Out': "Lesser men that Chris Hamilton and Sean Whitehead would have buckled. A year on we can see that the rugby league community in the town owes a great debt of gratitude to Chris and Sean for keeping the flag flying.

"They were determined there would be no repeat of 1997 when the Bears went bust --- and I have no hesitation in describing their awesome achievement in keeping the club afloat as one of the most remarkable success stories in the sporting history of this town."

I was reminded of that last Saturday when the television cameras zoomed in on Huddersfield chairman Ken Davey as the teams were being presented before the Powergen Challenge Cup final at Twickenham.

One member of the BBC team, Ray French I think, remarked: "That's Ken Davey, that's the man who kept the Giants alive in the club's darkest hours."

Could those "darkest hours" have been any darker than those through which Chris H and Sean W battled 24 hours a day for months on end to prevent what many in the town believed to be inevitable --- winding-up?

There is clear light now at the end of a very long, dark tunnel and Chris hinted in his programme notes for the Widnes game that a great and glorious victory was in sight.

He wrote: "It remains to be seen if the Revenue accept our latest proposals for the payment of the remaining amount but, regardless of that, WE HAVE CERTAINLY NOT COME THIS FAR TO FAIL NOW."

It was the first public suggestion from the board that the winning post was in sight, yet it was tucked away half way down his column and it didn't get the public acclaim it merited.

Everybody with Roughyeds at heart can feel relieved and can look forward with renewed hope and optimism, while always

bearing in mind that Chris and Sean can only do so much.

Survival had its price --- relegation. And now comes the next battle for the club's intrepid owners, who have to steer the Roughyeds through a long off-season (no play-offs for Oldham this year) while keeping a tight grip on the purse strings, yet attempting to build a squad which will have a realistic chance of bouncing straight back to the first division within one season.

Halifax, £90,000 overspent on players and players' contracts and wages, have already warned their fans to fear the worst this off season unless they can acquire this money to honour their commitments.

All clubs, even those without Oldham's recent financial history, will find it tough going now and the start of next season.

I submit, therefore, that Chris and Sean don't merely NEED the financial support, no matter how small, of every loyal fan, but DESERVE that backing unconditionally for their Herculean efforts on the financial front since news of the cash crisis was unveiled some 15 months ago.

There are various ways fans can help in the close season --- by using the social club, by supporting special efforts like Chris's annual Challenge, by attending the monthly quiz night (next one September 12) and other social club events or by joining the Club Cash lottery.

At £1 a week it costs little to join, but there is strength in numbers and the potential for growth throughout the club's huge catchment area is vast. Many of you may have been visited in the past week or two by canvassers. If not, there might come a knock on your door soon.

People throughout the borough have been joining, and lots of them are not Roughyeds fans, but Oldham people who have read of Chris and Sean's heroic fight to keep the club afloat and who wanted to do their bit to help.

The following little story is but one of many similar incidents. A club rep knocked on a door and was confronted by a gentleman with a southern accent. "Not interested", he said.

Moving on, our rep went next door and left there to find the southerner waiting for him at the bottom of the garden path.

"I've changed my mind," he said. "I closed the door on you, remembered what I had read about the Roughyeds, and felt guilty. Come on in."

"I've lived and earned a living in Oldham for 20 years and if I can't find £1 a week to help out its a poor do. Count me in, and here's a tenner to be going on with."

True story, friends, and one I'll leave with you as we get ready for the end-of-season break. See you in February,

ROGER AND OUT

Postscript: see Club Cash advert on page 28 --- and ring John McAndrew on 0161 628 3677 to join.

with Ian Wilson

To conclude the season, and to try to banish what has inevitably been a year rather dominated by negatives, I thought I might award myself three RL-related wishes for the coming year!

First, because I think in the long-run it matters most for the game's prospects, I wish for the continuing development and success of international rugby league. The best boost it has had for a long time was surely the New Zealand victory in the 2005 Tri-Nations tournament. What is next required is a super-competitive set of games in this year's event down under, with huge crowds and quality matches. That would then surely, given some genuine vision from the game's leaders - remember this is a wish-list! - enable a convincing build-up during 2007 to the best ever World Cup competition in the autumn of 2008.

My second wish would be for the health and vision of the domestic game in the UK. Without going into minute details, there needs to be continuing development of the depth in quality of Super League - with a real reduction in the number of non-GB-qualified players permitted to play in it. [How do Wakefield manage to get away with playing so many overseas players, for example?] Then, in my ideal future, there will be a mechanism to allow some stability for ambitious clubs making it to Super League, but with the opportunity for promotion into the elite too. Finally, all clubs will come together again to

promote the whole unified competition - which would include Featherstone v Batley at the semi-pro level, with its own media profile, and Gloucestershire v Cornwall in the development sector, as well as Wigan v Toulouse, Warrington v South Wales and Leeds v Cumbria in Super League. [Maybe not all for 2007! Say by 2009 for this set of wishes!]

Finally, and naturally, my third wish relates to our club - and is made up of three parts. In no particular order, the first is that we have a convincing and positive close season, with Steve Deakin being allowed to bring together a squad which gives real prospects of playing success both in 2007 and beyond. The second is that the ownership and management of the club be expanded, on an agreed and co-operative, unified basis, giving the opportunity for both continued stability and expansion. Finally, the wish is that Rugby Oldham are able to secure the objective of a dedicated RL ground in the town. The three together should ensure the foundations of the restoration of Oldham to where it belongs.

See you next year!

40/20VISION

in^{yer}face

with Geoff Cooke

Although on the day St. Helens were deserving winners of the Challenge Cup, it cannot be right that a week before the game Huddersfield, fighting for their Super League existence, had to field their best possible team while St. Helens played a virtual second string in their fixture with Catalan Dragons.

O.K., so a trip to France was a bit more taxing than a home fixture but I would have more sympathy if Saints didn't have a track record of playing under strength sides when it suits. Although the most notorious examples are recent, the club has a record going back 30 years of this sort of behaviour. It was my impression that the rules state that a club is duty bound to field its best available side. Anything less short changes the spectators who pay the wages. In my view the Challenge Cup has lost some of the magic it once had. Given that Saints also have salary cap infringements to their name it's time to bring them back into line. No club is bigger than the game as a whole.

I have refrained from saying too much about Oldham's performances this season as the on-field action has spoken for itself.

Given the financial difficulties it was always going to be tough and those who have stayed loyal to the club deserve unstinting praise. The good thing is that those of you reading this today know you will have a club to support next



year and that it will - in effect - start debt free. Spare a thought for the fans of Halifax who could be watching their club for the last time in today's fixture against Whitehaven. It clearly shows that if you pay big money and the team under-perform you're in big trouble because attendances just don't hold up. It must be an horrendous task trying to budget for the year before a ball is kicked there are so many imponderables. The truth is that if you exclude Hull K.R. Leigh and Widnes (or Castleford last year) no-one else can boast attendances to make the game viable. There can be barely a club outside Super League that doesn't face the severest financial pressure with the possible exception of Doncaster whose millionaire Chairman dips into his own pocket on a weekly basis. In that sense the closing of the door to Super League might just make sense as it could stop clubs paying out more than they can afford chasing the dream of promotion - or then again maybe not.

Anyway congratulations to all at O.R.L.F.C. for keeping the flag flying. 2007 is a new start. Onward and upward!



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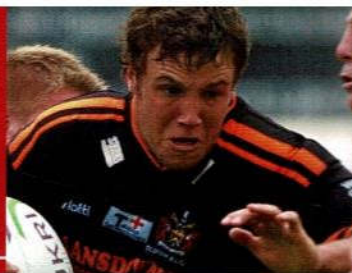
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chit chat

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)

AS you may have read in the Press, Roughyeds are extremely appreciative of the gesture by Oldham Athletic to reduce the rental for our use of Boundary Park for our last three home games of the season from £3,250 to £1,500 per game.

The new price takes in the games against Halifax, Widnes Vikings and today's opponents, Leigh Centurions, and follows talks that took place between the two clubs in the lead-up to the Halifax game on August 6.

Latics trimmed £500 per match off the rental at the start of the season --- down from £3,750 to £3,250 --- and now comes the new three-match package to take us up to the end of the current campaign.

Said Roughyeds chairman Chris Hamilton: "It goes without saying that we are very grateful to Latics for their assistance --- a huge help."

"I approached them before the Halifax game, given that we still have a difficult financial situation due to our obligations to the Inland Revenue and the fact that we have been drawing smaller crowds."

"We remain liable for stewarding costs, but match rental for the last three games was cut to £1,500 per game and this terrific gesture by Latics underlines the excellent relationship we now have with them."

As part of the three-match package, Roughyeds paid up before the Widnes game to the end of the season with the result that rental for today's game is already paid.

Added Mr Hamilton: "This represents significant progress because it means that, for the first time, we come to the end of a season without owing Latics any money. Once again, and on behalf also of my fellow director, Sean Whitehead, I wish to express our gratitude to Latics for their help and understanding."

Stressing the point that Latics and Roughyeds were working closely together in harmony, Latics director Ian Hill said it was important that supporters of both clubs --- and, indeed, the town --- were made aware of the situation.

"Things may have been a little different at one time," he said, "but that's in the past --- history. It was nothing to do with the present owners of Latics. For the past three years we have worked well together."

"In that time we have done as much as we can to help the rugby, and we know it is much appreciated. Our town is full of negatives. We need to be hearing more of the many positives, and this is one of them."

"We continue to lose significant sums of money, but despite that we are happy to help the Roughyeds at a difficult time for them. The reduced rental is something we can ill afford, to be honest, but it's our way of doing our bit to give the rugby club a lift at a difficult time."

"What I would really like to see is Latics fans going along to support Roughyeds, and the rugby fans reciprocating when Latics play at Boundary Park, as both sets of supporters used to do in the past."

"Both clubs are finding it hard to attract good crowds, but they both represent Oldham and the town would benefit enormously if they were getting decent gates and moving forward together."

"Sometimes, this town just baffles me, with all its negatives and all its doom and gloom. Let's be positive. And for starters let's make sure everyone knows that Latics and Roughyeds are working well together."

ON the playing side, winger Andy Gorey is the latest member of the current squad --- at the time of writing, that is --- to pen a new deal for next season. The former Royton Tigers half-back, who has performed consistently well all season on the wing, has signed a new one-year deal to join John Hough, Carl Jones, Nan Hadcroft, Lee Wingfield and Chris Baines on the register so far for the 2007 LHF Healthplan National League second division campaign.

Currently the club's leading try scorer this term, with ten touchdowns in 20 appearances, 20-year-old Gorey won the Roughyeds' man-of-the-match award for his performance against Widnes last time out.

His length-of-the-field try followed his two similar touchdowns at Batley in the previous game and underlined the progress he has made this year --- his first as a regular member of the match-day 17.

Said coach Steve Deakin: "Andy has shown that you don't have to be a strapping, six-foot tall winger to win the appreciation of the crowd."

"He is like a Jack Russell in defence, jumping in to assist and getting back

to cover. He is safe under kicks, he can show a clean pair of heels and he knows how to get across the finishing line."

"His signing is great for the club. He epitomises everything that we are about. Out of adversity you always get positives."

Gorey said: "The club has been good to me and I wanted to give something back."

He signed for his hometown club when he was 16 and worked his way up through the Academy and Alliance sides.

When the club decided two years ago to run with only one team for the time being, he still had a year left on his contract and he was given the option of fulfilling that contract or being released.

"The club was thinking of what was best for me, given that there was to be no alliance or academy side," he said. "The chairman rang me up and spoke to me personally. I really appreciated that, and I also appreciated that they were putting my interests first."

"It helped me to make my decision to stay and be patient --- and as events have turned out it was definitely the right decision."

FANS who are members of our weekly Club Cash lottery scheme were crossing everything and looking for black cats on Friday when the jackpot accumulator on offer rose to a cool £750.

It goes up £50 each week until one lucky punter strikes it rich.

Print deadlines made it impossible to include the results of Friday's draw in this programme, but watch our website at www.roughyeds.co.uk and the local press to see if somebody has cause to celebrate.

Recent winners of the guaranteed £300 weekly prize were Mrs C Baxendale of Shaw (week 37), Mrs Reilly of Shaw (week 38) and J Jacobs of Diggle (week 39).

Winning £100 were Ms Ward of Chadderton (week 37), R Eastwood of Shaw (week 38) and K Knox of Oldham (week 39).

£10 winners (five each week) were Bernard Walker of Oldham, Harry Dobbs of the Oldham Chronicle, Norman Hunt of Oldham, Mr Lingard of Oldham, Mrs McAndrew of Royton, Miss E Davies of Failsworth, Mrs G Fish of Fitton Hill, S Tuson of Lees, Mrs Szwilanka of Chadderton, Mrs May of Springhead, T McKler of Moorside, W A Bostock of Wigan, Matthew Chambers (the Chronicle's rugby league reporter), Mrs Minshall of Chadderton and K McDonald, c/o Corals of Oldham.

Lucky winners from all around the borough, and beyond. You've got to be in it to win it, of course, but it's only £1 a week to have a flutter and all you have to do to join is ring John McAndrew, the lottery co-ordinator, on 0161 628 3677.

FOR the benefit of those who perhaps couldn't obtain a programme at the Widnes game --- they were sold out half an hour before kick off --- we repeat details of Chris Hamilton's annual fund-raising Challenge to take place in October.

This year it will be a gruelling 210-mile walk over six days from Bridgend in South Wales (home of Celtic Crusaders) to the Roughyeds' social club where he will finish at a Pink Party in aid of the club's adopted breast-cancer charity, Breakthrough.

Leaving Bridgend on October 8, Chris will spend 8 to 9 hours a day on the road and time his challenge to finish at the social club on October 13.

He chose his starting point because the Crusaders ground in Bridgend will be the longest trip the Roughyeds make in division two next year, assuming the Welsh club does not win promotion.

Sponsorship forms are available from the club office in Waterloo Street, from the social club and from the Oldham Advertiser office on Yorkshire Street, for whom Chris will be writing a weekly column as he prepares for his biggest-ever challenge over the course of the next few weeks.

Proceeds from the Pink Party will all go to Breakthrough, for which the club has raised around £14,000 in the past three years, but sponsorship of Chris's epic walk will be split equally between Roughyeds and the charity.

He said: "I'd like to make this Challenge the best yet in terms of money raised. And if anyone would like to donate prizes for the Pink Party or sponsor the Challenge as an event we would like to hear from them."

■ **Thursday 7.00pm & 9.30pm**
Repeated Friday 12.30 & 9.00pm, Saturday 5.30pm, Sunday 1.00pm



The weekly Rugby League programme from Channel m

Highlighting Salford City Reds plus features on Swinton, Oldham, Rochdale, Leigh, Wigan and the local BARLA clubs. Including a mix of match action, big game previews and reviews, player chat, club history and community activities.



Free in Greater Manchester, just tune a spare channel into frequency 39 or **ntl: Digital Cable** Channel No 26

channel m

AROUND & ABOUT

with The Heritage Trust

CAP IN HAND

Alex Murphy, Billy Boston, Brian Bevan, Harold Wagstaff, Neil Fox, Tom van Vollenhoven, Vince Karalius, Roger Millward and Gus Risman share two things in common. They're all former rugby league stars and they all belong to an elite band of players that have been voted into the Rugby Football League's Hall of Fame.

Augustus 'Gus' John Ferdinand Risman - according to our sport's foremost historian, Robert Gate - was God's gift to God's game. A natural all-round footballer, strategist, tactician, tremendous tackler, incisive attacker, full-back, centre, stand-off, leader of men and who's achievements were extraordinary. His playing career spanned over 25 years, 873 first class matches, 232 tries and 1,677 goals. He played in five ashes series - all of which were won - made three Lions tours, played in 17 tests and 19 internationals and led his two main clubs Salford and Workington Town to their greatest honours (arguably, his greatest achievement was, whilst playing well into his 40's, leading the Cumbrian outfit to both championship and Challenge Cup success within six years of the club being formed). If ever our game needed a role model for its young sportsmen Risman would be ideal.

By the mid 50's Risman had retired from playing so I never saw him in action but I do remember back in 1960 when he became Oldham's first full-time manager-coach and some years later when he was mine-host at the Nont Sarah's - an eagle's nest of a pub - perched high on the moors above Saddleworth, a favourite watering hole for Pennine crossing rugby league fans in the days before the M62.

A few months ago both Mick Harrop and I went over to Chester to attend a sporting memorabilia auction organised by the renowned Bonhams. On behalf of the Heritage Trust we were interested in Lot 243 an

Edwardian era Oldham rugby cap won by the famous Roughyeds' international George Tyson - an Oldham born winger who scored a try in each of the three test matches against the first Australian touring side to visit these shores.

The same day the great Gus Risman's Great Britain cap



Oldham manager Gus Risman with his assistant Frank Stirrup

was also due to come under the hammer. Though why what must have been one of his most treasured possessions was to be disposed of in that way, beggar's belief.

During his playing career Risman would have been awarded one cap for each of his three tours, a Welsh cap to represent the 18 times he played for the principality - which is currently displayed in the reception area at RFL headquarters - plus the one and only cap which represented the 17 times he played for Great Britain, the very cap that had been made available to the highest bidder.

The auction had been well covered in the media. Hungarian football legend Ferenc Puskas' (the Galloping Major) huge football collection had created massive interest but had been withdrawn at the eleventh hour; the Hungarian government having struck a side-deal with his wife Elizabeth. Nevertheless, there was still more than reasonable sized gathering who knew what was what in the sporting memorabilia world. Many items had been subjected to pre-auction bids and the phone banks were hot. A cricket bat authenticated by former Surrey and England batsman Jack Hobbs as being the one which he'd used during the 1924 Lords test match, and which was forecast to raise somewhere between £800 and £1,000 cost the successful bidder a cool £20,000! There was plenty of cash about.

Mick and I had speculated on how much Risman's cap would raise and whether we should put in a bid but we decide to concentrate on the job-in-hand. We

got Tyson's Oldham cap for a little less than that which we had expected to pay and now it was the turn of Risman's. There were no pre-sale bids, no phones ringing and no real interest.

The former Oldham's manager's one and only Great Britain cap is now in the Heritage Trust's collection, costing less than a Roughyeds' season ticket.

I later spoke to Bev Risman about his father's cap. The former Leigh and Leeds player who himself had represented Great Britain was, to say the least, disappointed. It would appear that Gus' collection had, some years ago, been dispersed amongst his family and friends so the route to the auction house isn't clear and might never be traced.

It happens so often. Many old rugby caps, both union and league, fail to realise their true value and are snapped up by the likes of interior designers who use them for pub or restaurant décor. In a feast or famine marketplace those caps that are identified as being of significant historical importance are very often bought by agents acting for overseas buyers, particularly in Australian, New Zealand and South African and consequently they never see these shores again.

That being said, one would have thought that if the Hungarian Government was prepared to step in to keep the Puskas collection in Hungary then the RFL might just have considered securing the future of the Risman cap for the benefit of generations of rugby league fans to come.

SUNDAY, BLOODY SUNDAY

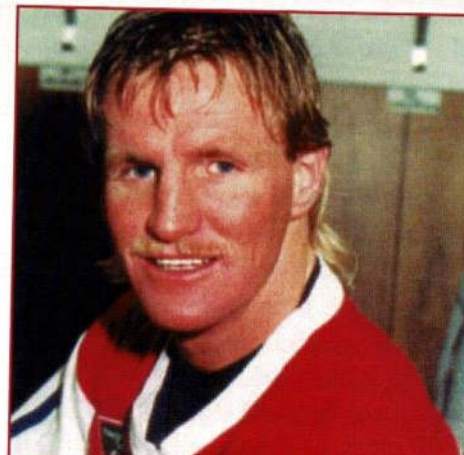
Hopefully Steve Deakin will pull a rabbit from the hat and provide us with a league win from the remaining two fixtures. None of us fancy the idea of going through the campaign without at least two points. But, compared to the Runcorn Highfield side, which, between October 1988 and March 1991 went a record 75* league and cup matches without picking up a win, our plight is minor.

At the beginning of this disastrous run John Cogger - remember him - both coached and played in the Runcorn side. He was then replaced on the coaching bench for a short period by club stalwart Geoff Fletcher (who, of course, was both a former Leigh and Oldham favourite). Later ex Great Britain forward Dave Chisnall took charge.

Players who pulled on the black shirt during this period included former Oldham players Clive Hunter, Keith Ashcroft, Arthur Daley and Derrick Seabrook plus the likes of Eric Prescott, Mick Nannyn and Ken Kelly.

* Includes one drawn match. 61 of the matches were lost in succession.

BRIAN WALKER



Former Runcorn and Oldham player, Aussie, John Cogger.

visiting today

LEIGH CENTURIONS

Paul Ballard

Paul Ballard is one of two brothers currently active within the game. He is mainly seen as a winger or fullback and came through the Academy ranks at Wigan before joining Widnes in 2005. He is renowned for his speed, body swerve and try-scoring ability.

ADAM BIBEY

Two years ago, Bibey was earmarked as a forward of great promise following his performances against the Australian Institute of Sport during the England Academy series triumph. As an aggressive prop he was a scourge of the pack, looking set to step into the limelight following an equally impressive junior career. He has the opportunity to do just this again at Leigh where he could form part of a fearsome front row with brother Ricky.

RICKY BIBEY

Ricky Bibey returns to Leigh for a second time having previously served the club during a loan spell from Wigan in 2003. After completing that stint, Bibey made an unusual move in transferring from Wigan to St Helens. He quickly became an important member of the squad and won a second Challenge Cup winners medal in 2004 joining a select band of players to have won a final for and against Wigan.

LIAM COLEMAN

Versatile Liam Coleman will be looking to continue his development after stepping into the first team towards the end of last season. Seen mainly as a stand-off or loose forward, his defensive qualities and quick footwork were well to the fore last term particularly in a testing debut against Leeds when he was one of few players that created problems for the Rhinos defence. Grandson of Leigh director Tommy Coleman, Liam has been on the scene for the last three years.

CARL FORBER

Carl joined Leigh at the tail end of last season, making his debut in difficult circumstances at Huddersfield. Unfortunately Leigh were crushed that day but Forber created a try and gave

glimpses of his talent before helping the Centurions to competitive displays against Widnes and Salford.

DEAN GASKELL

Dean is an exciting player signed on a two year contract from Warrington Wolves during the close season. He made his first team debut as an 18 year old in 2002 and whilst with the Wolves, Gaskell became a Super League regular, making 59 appearances in the top division and 62 in total. Gaskell is also an Ireland international, recently representing the Wolfhounds in their Autumn Euro Nations series. He is a strong and forceful runner with solid positioning sense, good hands and pace over 50 metres.

TERE GLASSIE

The addition of Tere Glassie to the Leigh squad gives the pack enormous stability. The Cook Islander enjoyed a superb debut season in England, showing great versatility and work ethic for Oldham in their successful bid to avoid relegation. Those traits saw him quickly snapped up via a brief non-playing spell with York.

MICK GOVIN

Able to play both halfback and hooker, he was rewarded with a fulltime deal at the start of last season and was tipped to make his mark on Super League. An elusive runner with a shrewd short kicking game, Govin signed a new deal with the club before being told that he needed an operation. He will be looking for regular first team action upon his return later this term.

LEE GREENWOOD

The capture of proven Super League flyer Lee Greenwood was seen as a coup in some quarters. The 26 year old winger came through the system at Sheffield, switching to home town Halifax a season later before moving to London where his try scoring record was nothing short of prolific. A loan switch last season saw him end the term with Huddersfield Giants and despite other Super League interest, the tall winger then linked up with the Centurions for 2006.

SCOTT GRIX

2004 saw Grix push through to the Halifax first team as a utility back and he made his debut in a Challenge Cup tie in Limoux. He went on to play 18 times that season, scoring 8 tries, including one that helped preserve Fax' National League One status in a narrow 34-30 win over York. Last season Grix played for Warrington's Senior Academy alongside his brother.

TOMMY GRUNDY

Youth, hunger and determination are three traits that Tommy Grundy has in abundance. Following 12 months as a first team player with Blackpool, Grundy returns to the Coliseum looking to break into the Centurions top grade side at either centre, or second row.

DANNY HALLIWELL

The try-scoring centre will be hoping to put the injury nightmare of the last 12 months behind him when he takes to the field this season. Danny previously played for Halifax, Keighley, Wakefield and Warrington and has been with the club since 2003.

AARON HEREMAIA

Heremaia is an exciting new face on the British RL scene this season, hoping to make a name for himself at Leigh after two years in the NSW Premier League with Wests Magpies and North Sydney Bears. He is the first New Zealand scrum-half to play for Leigh since Kiwi test ace Shane Varley.

CHRIS HILL

Chris is an exciting forward prospect whose rise through the Coliseum ranks last season was nothing short of phenomenal. Having only just turned 18 and standing at 6'3 he has the size and frame to make a big impression. Fine footwork, defence and a solid work ethic mark him out as one to watch.

journalistic license

by Matthew Chambers

WITH the enjoyable Challenge Cup final out of the way and the play-offs yet to start, the spotlight has once again focused on the promotion and relegation issue this week.

But while both the protectionists and those in favour of a revolving door policy seem to be equally entrenched in their views on the topic, it is a tough task to try and work out what course of events would be best for the good of the game as a whole.

Give the best-run clubs time to develop talent without an axe perched over their heads? Or maintain the vitality of both Super League and the National Leagues alike by allowing the NL1 champions a shot at the big time?

The root of the current problem lies in the fact that the gap between National League One and Super League is so massive.

In a sport which these days is all about strength and fitness, a team of players brought up in a part-time environment will never compete as well as those for whom rugby is their sole occupation.

Leigh, Widnes or Hull KR may well be full-time in name and indeed attitude, but playing against substandard opposition every week - in comparison to Super League sides - doesn't do a lot to sharpen the competitive edges.

Whichever one of these sides ends up in the elite league next year will inevitably struggle.

These three clubs currently exist in limbo - far too good for the rest of the National League, not quite good enough for Super League (at least, without destabilising, wholesale changes to the playing squads).

At the same time, a NL1 competition where the top three places are guaranteed before the season kicks off simply isn't going to excite interest outside of the hardcore supporters.

People have lost interest in National Leagues. The evidence is there in the declining, and frankly pitiful, attendance figures; outside of those few successful sides, support for rugby league at National League level is haemorrhaging.

Super League apart, the professional game is dying. Just look at Halifax, on their knees and proffering the begging bowl. More are certain to follow.

What is needed is a rethink. Clubs shouldn't be in a situation whereby they lose money by playing games, nor should it be the responsibility of a few rugby-nut beneficiaries to prop up the famous old names.

Rugby league is an exciting, fast-paced sport with thrills and spills aplenty. A great product to sell, in the hands of a salesman who knows what he or she is doing.

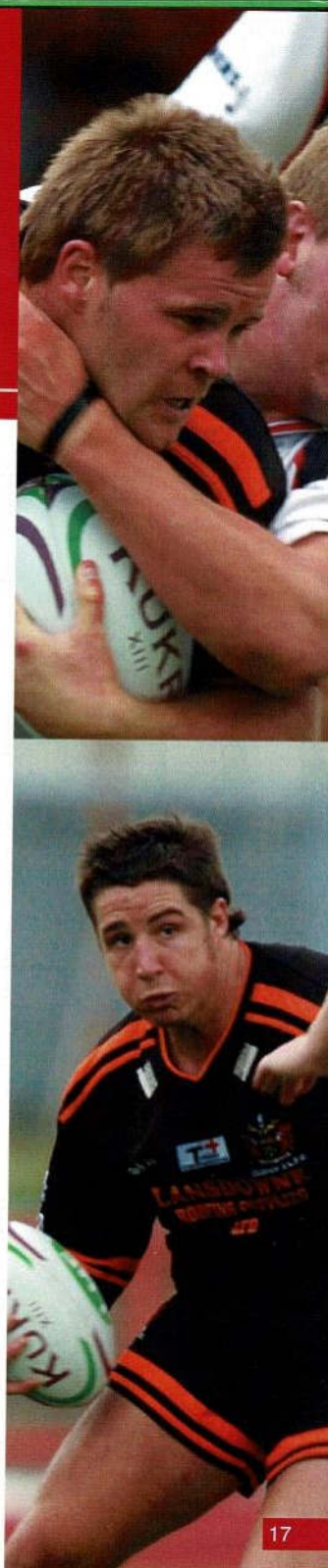
So where are the kids? Looking around the various (invariably empty) grounds this season, most of them do something else on Sunday afternoons.

Mind, the media coverage is also pitiful so perhaps many don't realise the fixtures are even taking place. It is a painful struggle to find out match results at this level through any media channel and as for team line-ups or scorers - fat chance.

But when you consider that the governing body's own website contains a bare minimum of information on the National Leagues, it is perhaps little wonder that few others outside the usual local media circles can be bothered either.

It would be a shame to let rugby at this level simply wither away. What is needed is a strategy and a vision for the future at all levels of the pro game, coming from the top. Attitudes have to be changed, backside kicked and a realistic approach to finances adopted. A television deal to screen live games - possibly with Sky, given that they have stopped their coverage of the Aussie game - would definitely be a good starting point, but all in all there is much to do.

Matthew



halstead's choice

by Roger Halstead

LEE Wingfield dismisses as "a bit of fun" his habit of playing for the Roughyeds in yellow boots.

But in most things associated with his passion for rugby league the 25-year-old former BARLA Great Britain international, who has played for his country in Russia, France and Australia, is deadly serious.

He is serious when he looks back with deep regret at his decision to temporarily turn his back on the sport at the age of 12.

He is serious when he recalls how determined he was to fight back from a serious injury that sidelined him for six months shortly after he won the first of his many Lancashire open-age appearances.

He is serious when he talks of the many things that went wrong on BARLA's ill-fated tour to Australia in 2004, which hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons.

He is serious when he reveals that he was "on the verge of jacking" the sport again in 2005 because he considered some of his colleagues at Leigh East were not as committed as they might have been to pulling the club out of a bad patch.

He is serious when he describes his decision to sign pro for Oldham on a two-year deal as the best move he ever made in rugby league.

And he is serious when he predicts that Roughyeds will do well next year in what he believes will be an extremely tough LHF Healthplan National League division two.

Life in rugby league has never been easy for Leigh-born Lee, whose cousin, Craig Wingfield, played for Leigh, Swinton and Chorley.

To start with, he fell out with the game when he was 12 after he had played for a few years as a small boy with both Leigh Miners Rangers and Leigh East.

He was lost to the sport for most of his years at Bedford High, a rugby-draft school in Leigh that has provided a conveyor belt of professionals down the years.

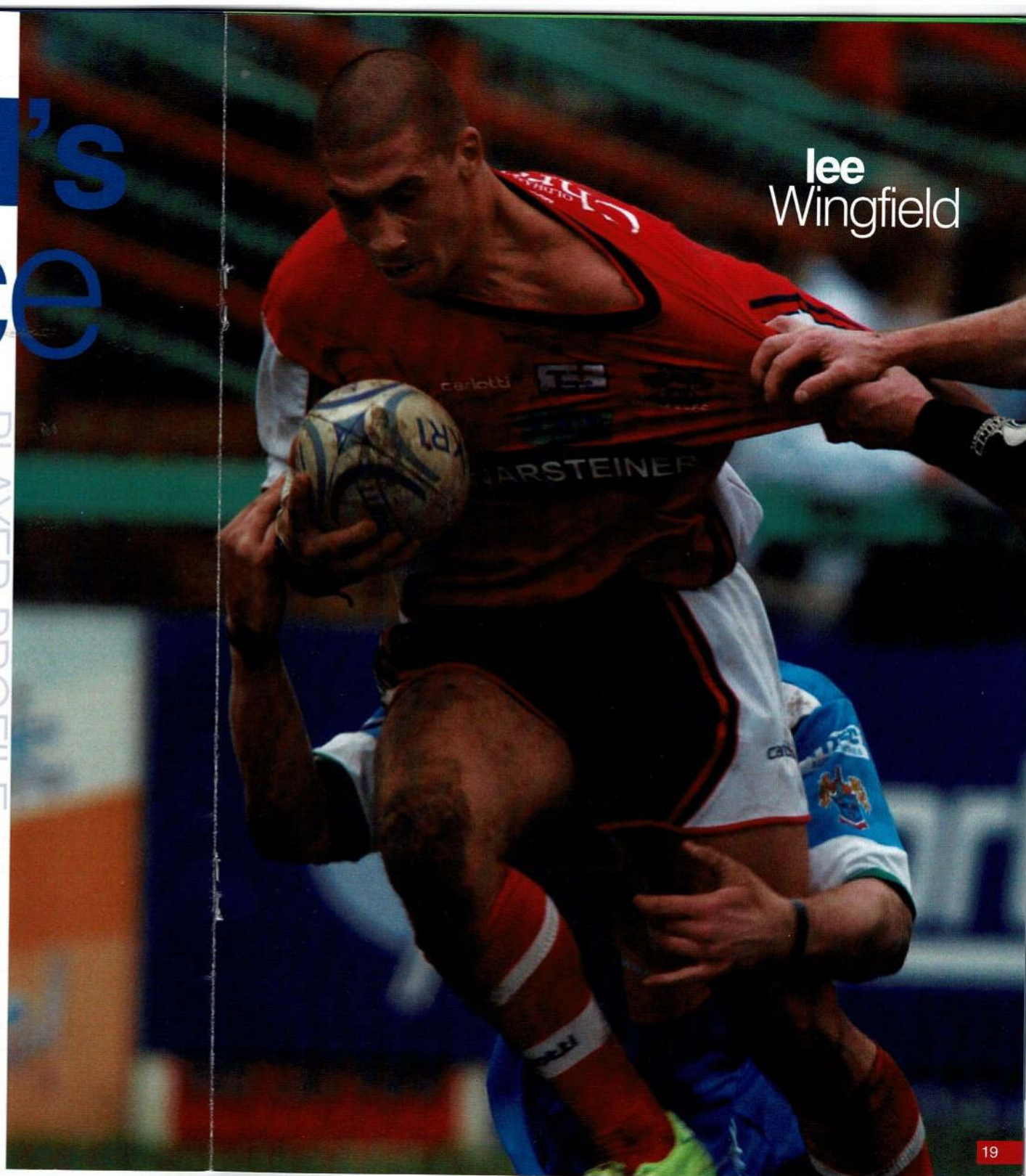
The young Wingfield had played for his town team as a ten-year-old full-back and for his school as a stand-off, but from the ages of 12 to 17 he lost all interest in rugby and turned to fishing and other teenage pursuits for his recreation.

"If signing for Oldham was the best rugby decision I ever made, walking away from the game at the age of 12 was definitely the worst," said Lee this week as he looked ahead to today's clash with his home-town pro club, Leigh Centurions.

"Though I say it myself, I was quite good as a kid. I was in a good team at Miners at the time and if I had not had those five years out I think I might have been given the opportunity to turn pro a lot sooner than I did.

PLAYER PROFILE

lee
Wingfield



lee Wingfield

Continued...

mind about going back, but I always dismissed it. I usually ended up thinking I had had my chance and blown it -- and that, in any event, it would be too late now to make any sort of impression.

"Then one day I woke up and decided instantly that I WAS going to start playing again. It was weird. After five years of doubt and uncertainty, I suddenly knew it was something I had to do."

Lee returned to the game not with Miners, but with Easts. And in the next two or three seasons he progressed through a crack Easts under-18s side -- one defeat all season -- to a second-row place in the open-age side, and then his first county call-up.

By now he had his sights on Great Britain. But a huge setback lay in waiting. In a club game against Skirlaugh on Humberside he broke his right forearm in two places and the damage was so severe that he needed a bone graft as well as having the arm plated.

It was a long road back. But he was rewarded for his determination when, in 2003, he was picked for the first time as a BARLA Great Britain second-rower for a tri-nations tournament against Russia and France, to be played in Russia.

Soon afterwards, he was in the GB amateur side which beat the full French national squad in Carcassonne -- the first time BARLA had ever achieved anything similar on French soil.

A GB regular by now, Lee's growing reputation earned him another cap against France at Whitehaven before he was named in the touring squad to go Down Under in 2004.

On that tour he, skipper Paul Davidson from Cumbria and his fellow Leigh lad Tommy Goulden were the only ones to turn out in every game.

It was a tour that started badly -- and went progressively worse.

Said Lee: "It was a huge let-down: shocking. It was meant to be the trip of a lifetime, but it was just one big disappointment."

"The facilities were really poor. The boys felt let down. We didn't know whose fault it was, whether it was the result of a breakdown in communication or whether it was due to cost-cutting."

"It didn't matter. It was hugely disappointing and it was reflected in some of the things that went on."

On returning home, Lee was one of the few members of that tour party to be picked for a second trip to Russia. But there was more disappointment to follow when the venture was cancelled.

To crown everything, Leigh East were going through a dreadful patch in the National Conference premier division and a frustrated Wingfield reached the point where he seriously considered packing in the sport because he felt some of his team mates were taking defeats for granted.

"A few of us were dedicated," he said, "and it meant training Tuesday and Thursday nights, being in bed by 10pm on a Friday and staying off the ale. But some of the lads didn't follow those guidelines, they seemed to accept defeats as inevitable, and as one defeat followed another the whole thing began to get me down."

"I was on the verge of jacking. Leigh East had been very good to me over the years, always supporting my county and GB ventures, and I couldn't have brought myself to play for another amateur club."

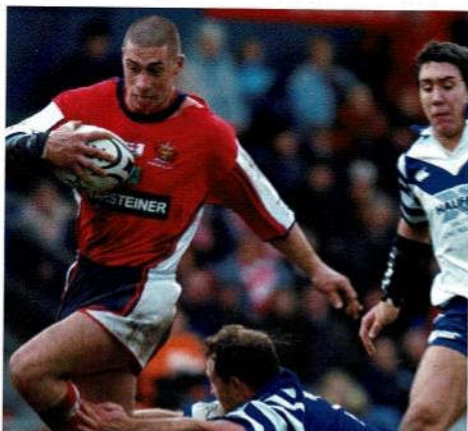
"Easts deserved better than that. I was ready to call it a day altogether, but then John Pendlebury came in and offered me the chance to join Oldham. I was made up."

"I had always wanted the chance to test myself at that level; to see if I could hold my own. There was the chance of a two-year deal and that suited me fine because I figured that I would need the first season to settle in, find my feet and establish myself."

"I like to think I've done that to some degree, although I've missed quite a lot of matches through injury, and then a four-game

"Quite a few of the lads from that team were snapped up while still kids, including Rob Jackson, who signed for Wigan, and Dave Radley, who went to Halifax."

"Occasionally, during the five years, the thought crossed my



suspension.

"I've had a sternum injury, and I played against Widnes a fortnight ago only three weeks after an operation on my cheekbone."

"After a few weeks on the sidelines I was desperate to play again and, as it happened, the club faced an injury crisis and I was one of only several players who put up their hands to give it our best shot when, in normal circumstances, we wouldn't have been on the field."

"By the time we play Leigh in our last home game I should be okay, and I sincerely hope so because it would be something special for me to play against my hometown club."

"In some respects this season is nearly over for us now, and I think we are already looking towards what we will have to do in the second division in 2007. The aim will be to win promotion at the first attempt."

"Personally, I am setting out my stall for a big year. I've learned a massive amount about the game in my first season at Oldham -- and I know I've got a whole lot more to learn yet."

"As an amateur you tend to play what you see -- off the cuff, where and when type of thing -- but at this level you have to understand what you are doing, and why. I know far more about the game now than I ever did before coming to Oldham."

"And I have every confidence in our coach, Steve Deakin, to carry on teaching me things and to improve my game as an individual as well as to improve team performances."

"I'm all geared up for next season. It will be a very hard division from which to bounce straight back, but we have learned a lot this season and I think the lessons will stand us in good stead."

"We have done a lot of defending this year and we haven't scored many points. It isn't a level playing field when three teams in your division are full-time professionals, but next year we'll all be setting out on the same basis, and that's fair enough."

"I think we'll do well. I have confidence in my own ability; confidence in the lads who will be staying; and confidence in Deaks to bring in the right players to complete the squad."

Second-row is his preferred position, but Lee has taken to centre and although he feels more at home in the pack, he is just happy to wear the Roughyeds jersey wherever and whenever he is picked.

A roofer, and father of five-year-old Jake, Lee will marry his girl friend Laila next summer.

In the meantime, he will continue to play in those bright yellow boots.

"I ordered them before I signed for Oldham," he explained, "just to have something a bit flashy. Once I had them, I had to carry it through -- but it's just a bit of fun, really."

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Oldham RLFC 2006 season's statistics

Oldham match stats upto August 20th 2006

NAME	PLAYED	TRIES	GOALS	POINTS
A.Bailey	9	0	0	0
G.Barber	17	5	24	68
M.Callan	9	0	0	0
G.Corcoran	12	1	0	4
W.Corcoran	16	3	5	22
C.Dean	6	0	0	0
A.Gorey	20	10	0	40
D.Gorton	21	6	0	24
D.Guest	5	0	0	0
A.Hadcroft	6	0	0	0
G.Hayes	22	1	0	4
I.Hodson	21	2	0	8
C.Hough	12	0	4[+1 d-g]	9
J.Hough	17	1	0	4
J.Kirkland	7	0	0	0
C.Maye	17	3	0	12
D.Nanyn	9	0	0	0
C.Percival	10	8	0	32
M.Redford	8	1	0	4
M.Roberts	13	1	0	4
S.Svabic	22	5	1	22
A.Wilkinson	14	4	0	16
L.Wingfield	13	5	0	20
C.Campbell	4	3	0	12
D.Best	12	0	0	0
J.Best	1	0	0	0
C.Baines	15	1	0	4
P.Ashton	9	2	5	18
C.Redford	2	0	0	0
A.Wallace	2	0	0	0
S.Stephens	2	0	0	0
K.Kerr	1	0	0	0
D.Ligairi-Badham	1	0	0	0
D.Williams	9	4	0	16
T.Kilgannon	8	1	0	4
M.Bottom	12	2	0	8
C.Jones	6	0	0	0
S.Williams	7	0	0	0
A.Sharple	2	0	0	0
P.O'Connor	3	1	0	4
P.Farrell	5	1	0	4

Final 2006 stats can easily be obtained by amending the above to show the final 2 games - they will appear also in the first match programme of 2007

the bootroom

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Kids & Co

Hi Kids

Well summer's finally over and it's back to school tomorrow for most of you.

Today sees the last home game for this season and it would be nice to hear all you "Kids" cheering long and loud for the boys on the pitch today. Although the year has not gone as well as we would have liked there have been some very brave performances out there against teams who are full time so we shouldn't be too down. Anyway there will be some great club trips next season to places we have not been to before so keep up the support.

Two mascots take centre stage today for the first time, they are brothers Reece and Ellis Bradshaw who both go to Littlemoor Primary School. Reece is nine years old and plays for Watershead under 10s while Ellis who is only five also plays at Watershead for the under 7s. Both boys love rugby and WWE wrestling and their favourite player is Andy Gorey. Give them both a big cheer when they lead the team out.

Good luck to Steve and the lads.

See you all soon.

Janet and Carole

SUPPORT GROUP NEWS

Today we see the last home match of what has been a very difficult season. How you perceive the season depends entirely on your expectations and hold on reality. To be realistic, it was almost too much to expect a season at all when the extent of the debt was known. However, due to their usual determination and resilience, Chris and Sean ensured the campaign started with a trusted coach and a decent squad in place. No-one then, could have anticipated the problems to follow - the early departure of the coach and a series of serious injuries which decimated the side and left young players with a lack of leadership and cohesion.

Problems yes, but with a new coach, what has prevailed through these testing times, is plenty of enthusiasm, great spirit and a commitment to work hard. Along with the fantastic achievement by our 2 directors in paying off the debt, these are great positives for the future and have prepared a strong base to work on. Here's to THAT FUTURE!

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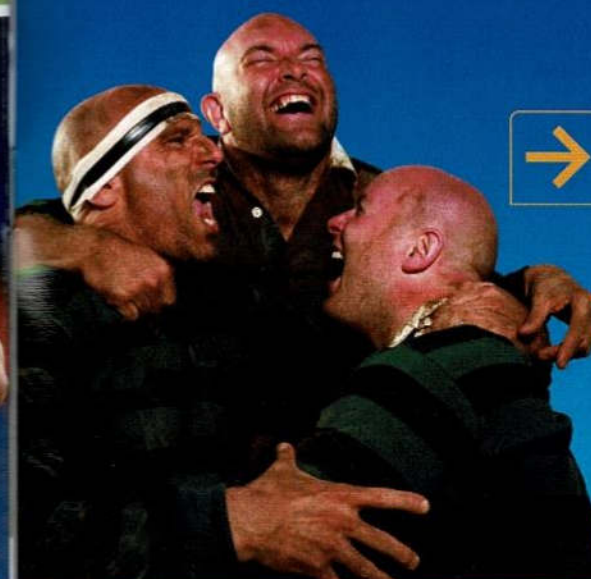
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WALKATHON

In aid of ORLFC and BREAKTHROUGH BREAST CANCER CHARITY.

Chris Hamilton is aiming to walk the 204 miles between the Celtic Crusaders home ground in Bridgend to the Alfred St

Club starting Sunday 8 October in time for the BREAKTHROUGH PINK PARTY on Friday 13 October 7.30. Tickets £5 Adults and Senior Citizens, £3 Children. Available from the Club offices Waterloo St. Incredible raffle prizes and entertainment from HALO. Welcome Chris back in style.

Sponsorship forms available from the club office, the Social Club and reception at Boundary Park today. Please support Chris in what promises to be his hardest challenge yet.

Enjoy the facilities

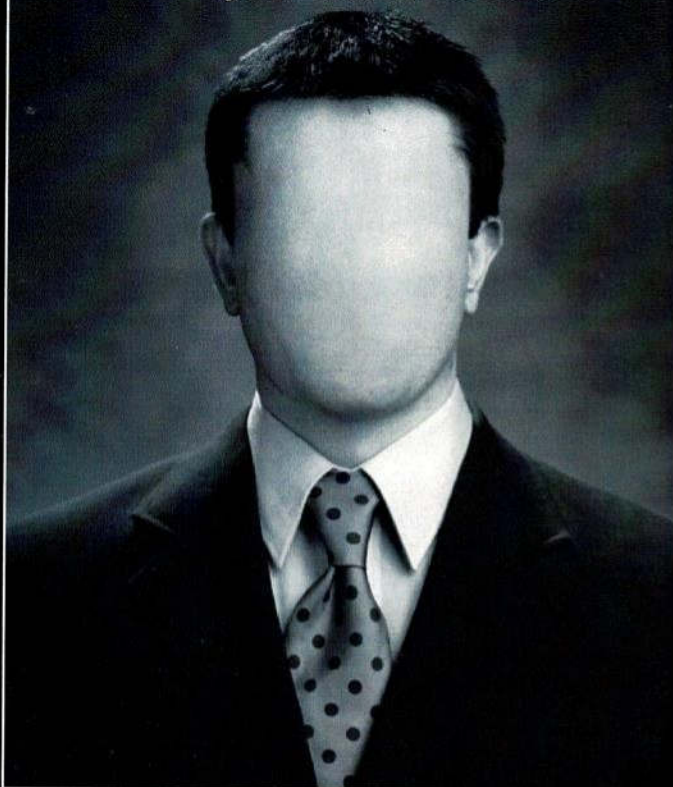
Indoor team bowling - every Tuesday
Games night snooker - every Thursday
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Ladies darts - every Monday

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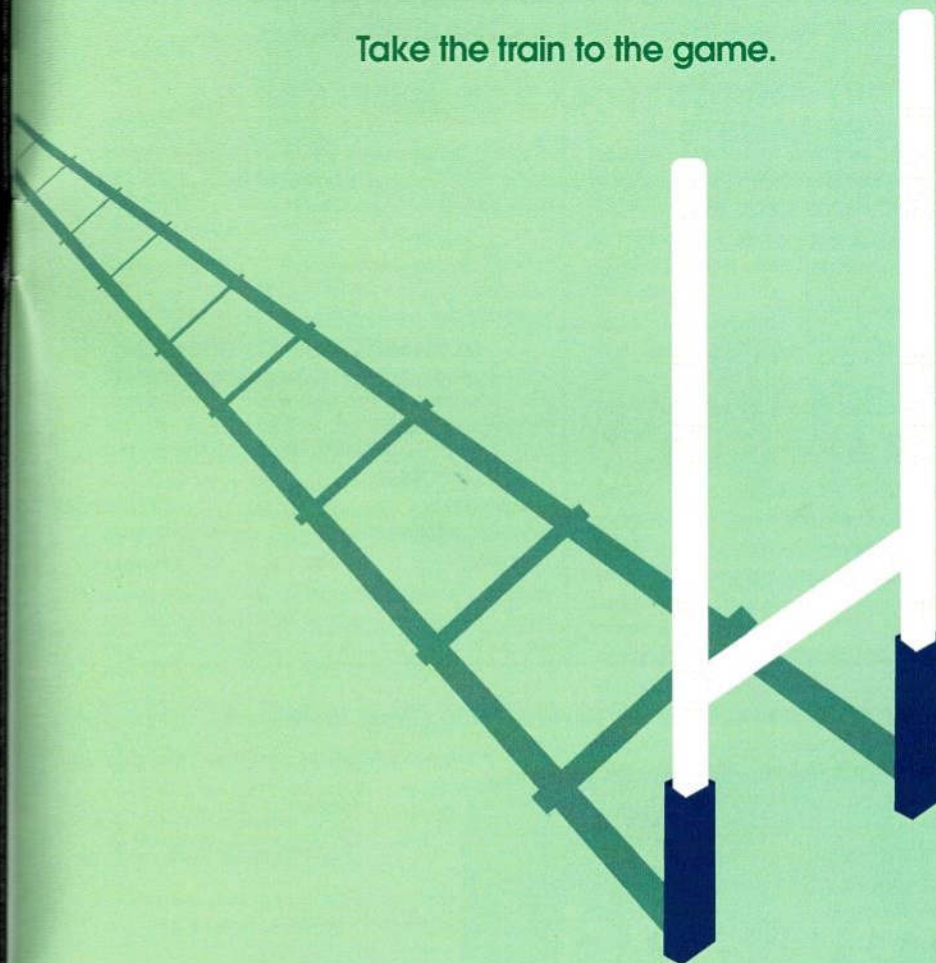
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with GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS



TIME FOR MORE HELP?

HALIFAX face one of the most crucial games in the club's long history this Sunday – and it has little to do with what will happen on the pitch against Whitehaven.

Fax's board of directors have announced that there will be a £90,000 shortfall this season – and that if they do not raise the figure by September 11, the club will be wound up.

It's a somewhat strange situation in that Halifax don't currently owe anyone any money – the £90,000 figure is what the wage bill is for the last three months of the season.

But with no real projected income after today's clash with Haven, the directors have taken the step of publicly revealing the club's financial position.

Some would call that admirable – as clubs throughout the history of any professional sport regularly continue to trade knowing they will not be able to meet their obligations.

But that should not mask the fact that another National League club has found itself in significant difficulty on the balance sheet.

Fax hope to get themselves out of trouble by attracting a crowd of between 5,000 and 6,000 to Sunday's game with Haven, which would raise enough money to cover the bills.

They have also set up a fighting fund to help, and are currently selling club memorabilia on

ebay – remarkably including the NL2 play-off winners silver salver they won by beating York in 2004.

Everyone in Rugby League should wish Fax well in over-coming what appears to be a short-term problem.

But at the same time, it should highlight the fact that National League clubs are still finding it difficult to operate on a sustainable basis.

The RFL's Club Support Unit has undoubtedly helped, and should be applauded.

But with crowds down in both NL1 and NL2 this season, and precious little central funding compared to Super League clubs, more can be done.

The lack of a television deal for National League continues to be a prominent issue, and one that needs sorting quickly. Any kind of regular exposure would be beneficial.

Further advice on marketing and community work would also help.

So while everything may well be rosy in the top flight's garden, nobody should forget about the importance of clubs with rich histories at this level of the game.

Halifax, having been in Super League just three short years ago, are a prime example.

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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	28-10	L	1103
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	18-22	L	713
9/7/06	Widnes Vikings	NL1	A	15:00	72-18	L	3213
21/7/06	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	H	19:45	8-40	L	729
30/7/06	Doncaster Lakers	NL1	A	15:00	58-10	L	712
6/8/06	Halifax RLFC	NL1	H	15:00	8-56	L	906
13/8/06	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	A	15:00	44-16	L	700
20/8/06	Widnes Vikings	NL1	H	15:00	22-72	L	1099
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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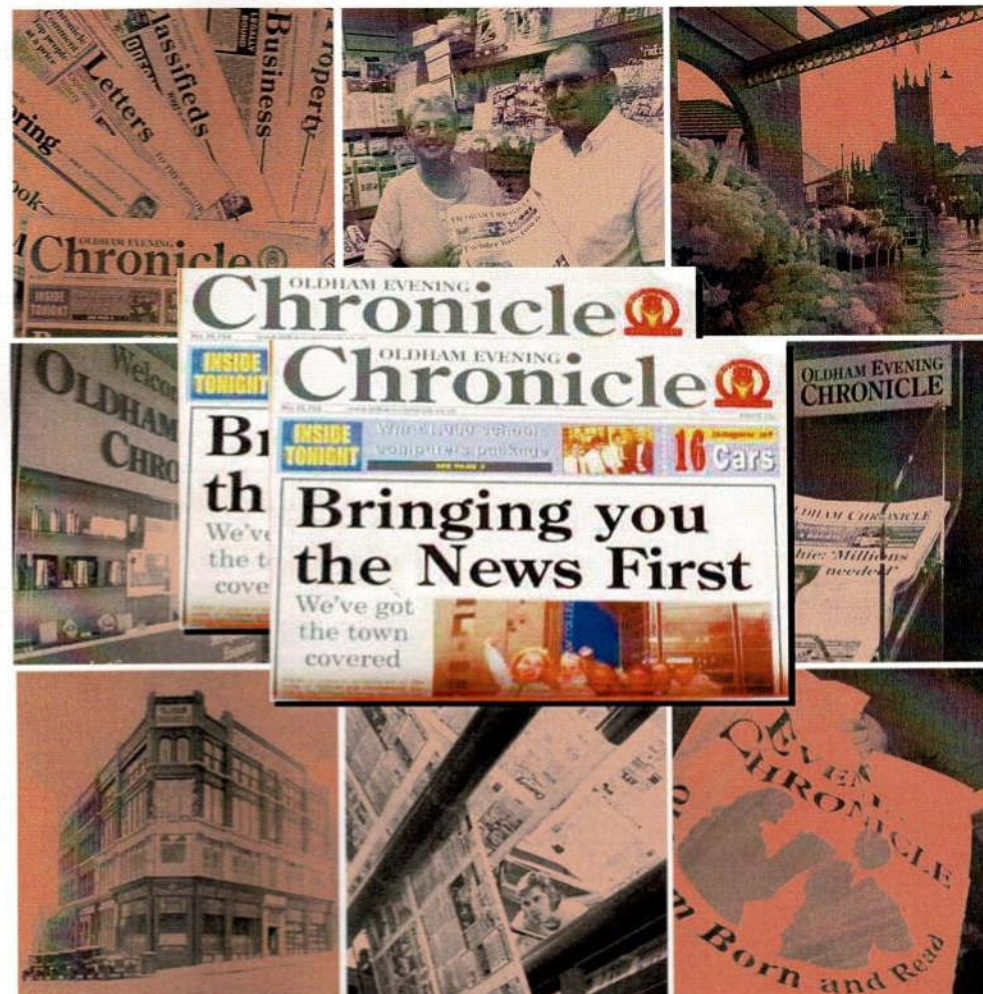
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