

game line-up

OLDHAM R.L.F.C

OLDHAM SQUAD	Played	ROCHDALE HORNETS SQUAD
PAUL ASHTON		PAUL ANDERSON
CHRIS BAINES		ERIC ANDREWS
JASON BOULTS		ANDY BAILEY
GENO COSTIN		SIMON BALDWIN
ANDY CRABTREE		ROB BALL
ANDY GOREY		RYAN BENJAFIELD
ALAN HADCROFT		MARK BLANCHARD
JOHN HOUGH		WAYNE CORCORAN
DREW HOUSTON		BALOUAGI FAGBORUN
SIMEON HOYLE		CHRIS GILES
GARETH LANGLEY		JOHN GLEDHILL
CRAIG LITTLER		ANDY GORSKI
RICHARD MERVILL		TOMMY GOULDEN
PAUL O'CONNOR		PHIL HASTY
MARK OGDEN		GARY HULSE
STUART OLDHAM		NICK JOHNSON
NEIL RODEN		KEVIN KING
WES ROGERS		IAIN MARSH
IAN SINFIELD		DAVE MCCONNELL
KRIS SMITH		MARK MCCULLY
MICHAEL STOUT		PAUL NORMAN
SAID TAMGHART		LEE PATTERSON
ALEX WILKINSON		CRAIG ROBINSON
LEE WINGFIELD		DANNY SAMUELS
		BYRON SMITH
		SIMON SVABIC
		MATT WHITTAKER

ROCHDALE HORNETS

match officials

REFEREE: Phil Bentham **TOUCH JUDGES:** S Lee, C Waywell
4TH OFFICIAL: R Cowling

Designed & produced by DijiGroup 08444 775 008

SUNDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2007 • K.O. 3.00pm

ROUGHYEDS

Price £2.50

V ROCHDALE HORNETS

SUNDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2007

K.O. 3.00pm

BOUNDARY PARK

MAIN SPONSORS

**THE WILLIAM
QUINN GROUP**

Official Kit Supplier

IMPACT RUGBY

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

Remember this?

Law Cup, Scotland, New Year's Day,
1998. The 'new' Roughyeds were
alive and kicking (see page 9)



OLDHAM RLFC OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME





demolition



remediation



validation



asbestos



knotweed



Bennett Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M12 5NL

T 0161 276 8160 F 0161 276 8167 E info@wmquinn.co.uk



Developments of Commercial, Residential & Land Purchases
Remediation • Earthworks • Aggregates

CONTENTS

Oldham RLFC v Rochdale Hornets

FEATURES

- 4 In The Chair with Chris Hamilton
- 6 Deeks's Coach Approach A look at the preparation for today's game
- 9 Roger and Out
- 10 Cooke-ability With Geoff Cooke
- 12 Player Profile Wes Rogers
- 14 Heritage Trust with Brian Walker
- 16 Support Group
- 17 The Boys and their backers
- 18 Bootroom pen pics
- 20 Rougheds Roar by Ian Wilson
- 22 They came from a land Down Under by Roger Halstead
- 23 Newsflash
- 24 In the Hornets Nest
- 27 Men and Matters
- 29 Keeping the dream ALIVE!
- 31 Journalistic license by Matthew Chambers
- 34 Fixtures and Sponsors
- 36 Today's Teams View both of today's teams in full, plus match officials

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 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.

CLUB DIRECTORY

The Roughyeds
Oldham Rugby League
Football Club (1997) Limited

Lansdowne Road, Chadderton,
Oldham OL9 9EF

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

PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Phil Hayward

TIMEKEEPERS

David Lord

John Wynne

KIT MAN

Paul Hulbert

LOTTERY

John McAndrew

PROGRAMME EDITOR

Nigel Marland

HALL OF FAME MEMBERS

(SPONSORED BY J. W. LEES, BREWERS)

Arthur Lees 1891-1907

Joe Ferguson 1899-1923

Herman Hilton 1913-26

Jack Read 1925-40

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



What are the odds of most of today's crowd being in a state of shock?

Events at the club, both on and off the field, have left everybody looking forward with a great deal of enthusiasm to the coming months.

To start with the performance by the squad against Warrington was beyond everybody's

expectations in so much as it was like the lads had been playing together for years. Taking all factors into account it was without doubt a major fillip for everybody concerned and I know from the reaction of fans since that game that everybody is looking forward to the season which begins in earnest today.

We are certainly not going to get carried away by one performance but what that has done is to send out a message of hope and belief via our fans that the club can bounce back from the traumatic events of last season.

To a degree the pressure is on today because we need to build upon what we achieved against Warrington and our local rivals Rochdale will be in no mood to let us do that without a fight. Our group in this year's Northern Rail Cup is a hard one with games against two First Division sides in Rochdale and Dewsbury and the others against last season's Second Division Grand Finalists, Swinton. However we have underachieved in this competition in previous years and now is as good a time as any to put that right and I know the players are determined to get off to a good start. I have always said that you cannot switch form on and off and we certainly want to try and get into the winning habit prior to the start of the league season.

We have also in the last few weeks been delighted to announce several new sponsorship deals with various companies and in addition to renewing several more with existing sponsors we have been very pleased with the response to the hard work that has been put in. We would like to officially welcome those people to a new season and hope that our relationship with them will be a long and successful one.

Probably the biggest news to come out was announced this week when myself and Sean agreed to sell part of our shareholding in the club to Bill Quinn which will see him become the majority shareholder in the club as he has agreed to invest in the club monies which can hopefully help to get Oldham RLFC to where everybody wants it to be.

We have shaken hands on a deal and are now completing the legal side of that.

I said at the top of this piece that I think many people are in a state of shock and certainly the reaction to the agreement with Bill is one that has taken many people by surprise. There is no reason why it should because myself and Sean have made it quite clear, on numerous occasions, that should somebody come along who was in a better position to take the club forward than we were then we would allow them to do that and the first time we have had an opportunity to do that we have been true to our word - again.

With the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise now paid off the timing of the start of the season could almost have been scripted and we all hope that 2007 can be a fresh and exciting chapter in the history of Oldham Rugby League Club.

Today also sees the return of the players of 1/1/98 who took part in the first ever game of the new club which was against Rochdale in the Law Cup. With 2007 being the tenth anniversary of the club this reunion will be the first of a number of events that are planned for this year.

We hope they all enjoy today's game.

Finally the players commented on how they appreciated your vocal support against Warrington and turning up the volume today can be a vital factor in trying to get the THREE points!

Enjoy the game

Chris

Adamsons

CRASH REPAIR CENTRE

MOTOR BODY ACCIDENT REPAIR SPECIALISTS

Approved repairers to all
leading insurance companies

Telephone

0161 627 4001

0161 624 1904

Cross Street Bottom o'th Moor
Oldham OL4 1JG

24 HOUR RECOVERY SERVICE
• QUALITY WORKMANSHIP ALWAYS •

LEVER'S FISH & CHIP RESTAURANT

UNITS 2 & 3

MARKET HALL

OLDHAM

MON - SAT 10.30-5.30

0161 633 0074



Totalplus Communications Ltd specialise in the design, installation and management of structured cabling systems for all types of environments, ranging from single outlets to full site cabling and roll out programmes. We place a strong emphasis on designing clients specific systems to meet both existing and future needs.

for further information or quotations contact



Northern House, Moss Street East, Ashton-u-Lyne
Manchester OL6 7BX

Tel: 0161 343 8181 Fax 0161 343 8181

alternatively call Bob Thompson on 07973 684 299 or Paul Gough on 07973 764 938

deek's coach approach

with Steve Deakin



YOU can rest assured that, whether we have been successful or not, every possible attempt will have been made over the past ten days or so to get Mark Ogden and Said Tamghart on the pitch today.

Apart from our long-standing injury victims like Alan Hadcroft and John Hough, Mark and Said were the only members of the squad who didn't get any field time in the warm-up match against Warrington Wolves.

Mark missed out with a groin injury and Said had a hamstring problem, but physio Phil Hayward has been working overtime on them this week because, while it would be foolish to take risks, it is also important we get everyone on the pitch as soon as possible.

That's been the objective these past few days. The longer we leave it, the greater is the chance that they will be coming back to play against opponents who have already got a game or two under their belts, and that would merely put our fellows even further behind the eight-ball.

That doesn't detract from the importance of any particular game --- it's just that everyone needs to be given as much field time as possible early in the season.

Apart from anything else, if everybody has had a crack we can start to establish a little bit of pecking order within the squad. It can change week to week, of course, but I want everybody to put their hand up and I want to get some consistency.

It's a balancing act. On the one hand we are seeking consistency of performance, on the other we want to give everybody a game and I can only play 17 at any one time.

In an ideal world those who didn't play against

Warrington --- Mark and Said --- will play today against Rochdale and those who don't play against Rochdale will play against Swinton here at Boundary Park next Sunday. That way, if we are able to do it, most members of the squad will get at least two games back to back and the rest will play in two out of three.

Going back to the Warrington game, we have done a video session and identified areas we need to improve upon.

There are clearly going to be times when opposition defences are more aggressive with us and when we won't get out of our own half as efficiently as we did in that game.

We asked a lot of questions of a very competent Warrington side. They were a young side, but they included about ten full-time professionals and, in any case, Super League players are getting younger and younger by the year.

Talking to the Wolves people after the game, it was evident they expected to get a much better result. Whether their lads under-achieved or ours over-achieved only time will tell.

Certainly, we dominated them physically and I think that was due to all the hard work we have done at the judo club in Rochdale. Our tackling technique was very good --- a lot better than last year.

In the next match I expect Drew Houston and Richard Mervill to do better. They had only been in England a week and they had only had two sessions with us. In those circumstances they could not be expected to be at their best. But that will come.

There were many positives to be taken from the game, but we know we have an enormous amount of hard work ahead of us. Winning pre-season friendlies doesn't get you promotion: everything is geared up for us to have a big season in the league.

As far as the Northern Rail Cup is concerned, Roughyeds have never qualified for the knock-out stages. I would dearly love to do that and if we do we would fancy our chances in a one-off knock-out tie against a NL1 side.

Enjoy the game,
Deaks

RYDER & DUTTON

Opening up the world of property

Branches at: Oldham, Chadderton, Glossop, Shaw, Middleton, Heywood, Saddleworth, Mossley, Ashton-U-Lyne, Wakefield, Halifax & Huddersfield

Telephone: 0161 652 1234
www.ryder-dutton.co.uk



Official Suppliers of sports medical products to the Roughyeds



Kit out your club, school, clinic or fitness centre with the very latest in sports medical care

To contact us, either drop into our Oldham office, (individual purchases welcome) or call us on 0161 633 5533 or log on to www.fit4sportltd.com

Fit4Sport Ltd, Unit 2 Milking Green, Hartshead Street, Lees, Oldham, OL4 5EE

mann's furnishers

112/114 Yorkshire Street, Oldham



**Fantastic range of
Fireside, Manual
and Lift and Rise
Recliner Chairs**



**Beech-effect
Wardrobes ...**
choose from hinged,
folding or sliding doors

Tel: 0161 624 1779

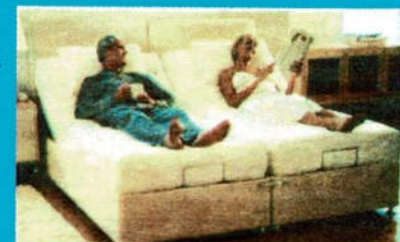
www.mannsfurnishers.co.uk



Easy access for the disabled

mann's sleep shop

Electric and Adjustable Bed Specialists



**Fantastic range of Silentnight Miracoil Beds
Metal and Wooden Bedsteads
Pocket and Memory Foam Beds
Dunlopillo Beds and Mattresses
Sealy Mirrorform and Posturepedic Beds**

Tel: 0161 627 5592

53 Union Street, Oldham
(behind Spindles Shopping Centre)



FREE PARKING AT THE REAR
ON SILVER STREET

www.mannsfurnishers.co.uk



W R I G L E Y
C L A Y D O N

S O L I C I T O R S since 1795

John Armstrong, Clerk Of The Peace, Oldham and Lancashire rugby player, early pioneer of both Oldham Rugby Club and solicitors Armstrong, Whitticker and Ogden forerunners to today's Oldham RLFC solicitors Wrigley Claydon.



29/33 UNION STREET OLDHAM OL1 1HH

DX 23607 OLDHAM EMAIL@wrigleyclaydon.com WEBSITE www.wrigleyclaydon.com

FAX 0161 624 3743 TEL 0161 624 6811

SPECIAL OFFER...SPECIAL OFFER...SPECIAL OFFER...SPECIAL OFFER...SPECIAL OFFER...SPECIAL OFFER...SPECIAL OFFER

**Better
come and
see for
yourself**

Better.

**FREE
DAY PASS**

**Better Health & Fitness
for all Oldham Rugby Club's supporters**

To claim your free pass call us on

0161 628 9897

Featherstall Road South, Oldham OL9 6HL

Please produce this advert at receipt on to claim your free day pass at Better Health Club. One advert per person.

roger and out

by ROGER HALSTEAD

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

IT gives the club great pleasure to welcome back as guests at today's match the 18 players and coaching staff who took to the field at Spotland in our very first game on January 1, 1998. It was a New Year's Day to remember for everyone associated with Oldham Rugby League Club (1997) Ltd, directors, coaches, players and supporters alike.

A new club was born, a dream was fulfilled for chairman Chris Hamilton and his fellow directors --- and more than a few tears of joy were shed on a never-to-be-forgotten day in the sporting history of Oldham and its rugby league.

Only a few months earlier Oldham Bears had gone into liquidation. Watersheddings had been demolished. The old club was dead. Players -- and current Hornets boss Darren Abram was one of them -- were left with no job, no income. The town was in mourning for its rugby league club.

No one would have imagined, on that early-autumn day in 1997 when news of the liquidation first broke, that only a few months on a 'new' Oldham club would be sending out a team to do battle at Rochdale in the Law Cup.

THIS TOWN OWES A GREAT DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO THE FOUNDERS OF OLDHAM RUGBY LEAGUE (1997) LTD, TWO OF WHOM -- CHRIS HAMILTON AND SEAN WHITEHEAD -- REMAIN AT THE HELM TO THIS DAY.

So, why today for the reunion? Well, it's appropriate that it should happen on a day, when the current Oldham and Rochdale teams are facing each other. More importantly, this is the opening day of the tenth season in which the new club has been operating --- a decade full of memories, some glorious and exciting; some downright frightening in terms of the club's future prospects.

It's been a rocky old road, taking us to summits like the Grand Final of 2001 and to valley floors like the financial hardships of the past two years, culminating in relegation to NL2 at the end of last season.

Throughout it all, the two in charge have never wavered. They have stood side by side, steadfast in their determination to keep the club in business; united in their struggle to keep the flag flying.

Now, at the start of season ten, they can celebrate the clearing of a £250,000 debt to the Crown authorities --- and a new beginning for the club.

Time for a fresh start, but also time for a look back at how it all began. And it began, in playing terms, on the day referred to above when the fledgling Roughyeds ran out for the first time at Spotland and won 36-16 in front of a crowd of 3,097.

Brian Quinlan kicked six goals from six attempts; Joe McNicholas raced in for a couple of tries; and others were scored by Aidie Mead, Mike Prescott, Martin Maders and Ian Sinfield.

Remarkably, two members of the current Roughyeds squad played that day, namely Ian Sinfield and John Hough, the latter having had an unbroken association with the club ever since.

Today will be extra special for John.

He played his part in a fabulous first-game performance which sent fans into raptures. A month or two earlier they wondered if they would ever see their favourites in action again. And here they were, a brand new team launched from nothing -- not even a pair of old boots --- taking on and beating the club's traditional derby rivals.

This writer missed it -- he was in New Zealand for his youngest son's wedding --- but the stories since of the sheer joy and elation that swept through the ranks of Oldham fans at the end of the game, have become part of Roughyeds folklore.

The team lined up like this: Aidie Mead; Chris Eckersley, Steve Wilde, Sean Cooper, Joe McNicholas; Craig Barker, Neil Flanagan; Danny Guest, John Hough, Martin Maders, Brian Quinlan, Mike Prescott, Emerson Jackman. Subs: Darren Robinson, Paul Round, Afi Leuila, Craig Diggle, Ian Sinfield. Coach, Paddy Kirwan; assistant coach Mick Coates.

Afi Leuila is back in New Zealand now and Darren Robinson will be playing for Hunslet today, but we hope most of that team will be here today, to be introduced to the crowd at half time and to go back to the social club after the game to meet supporters and talk of old times.

It will be the start of a series of special events which we plan to hold during this tenth anniversary season, full details of which will be given as they come up in this programme, on the official club website www.roughyeds.co.uk and in the local and trade press.

Following on from today's match-day reunion of the Class of '98, we plan to stage a reunion dinner in the social club on Friday, March 16, built around the members of that very first team, who will again be guests of the club.

Then, when Swinton Lions come to Boundary Park in NL2 on Sunday, May 13, we hope to launch an Oldham Ex-Players' Association with membership open to anyone who has played professionally for either the former club or the present-day Roughyeds.

We are also planning, as part of our tenth anniversary, video evenings featuring Oldham tries of the decade and, separately, our 2001 Grand Final series; competitions to be run in conjunction with the local press; the sale of commemorative limited edition shirts and other memorabilia; and, maybe, a quality club ten-year testimonial magazine.

All this, and maybe more, culminating in a grand tenth anniversary club dinner to be held at the end of September at a fashionable venue.

Hopefully, it will be a memorable 2007 season for Roughyeds on and off the field. But first things first and we trust fans will give a real Roughyeds welcome at half time today to the Class of '98 and then meet them after the game in our social club. They were, after all, the boys who set us in motion.

ROGER AND OUT

with Geoff Cooke

cooke-ability!

Rugby League has never been backward at introducing features designed to improve the game and I don't want to condemn the new points system out of hand (3 points for a win, 2 for a draw and 1 for a defeat by less than 12 points)

But I found it odd that my weekly rugby paper chose to illustrate the effect by redrafting last season's Super League table (minimal) when the system will only apply at the levels below. As a correspondent this week has pointed out it will be possible for a team winning fewer matches to finish above a team winning more games by accumulating bonus points for defeats by less than 12 points. Since the top team in N.L2 is promoted by right and not through the play-offs that cannot be right but even securing home advantage in a play-off by virtue of superior bonus points can't be right either. I appreciate the intentions of the law makers are basically good and are designed to incentivise teams facing defeat but a rethink may be necessary to prevent the scenario above. Ideas on a postcard to Red Hall!



Gotcha! Stout defence in the Warrington game



Sports Injury?

Capio Oaklands Hospital is a leading private hospital situated in Salford, Greater Manchester offering a range of treatments for Pain Relief, Physiotherapy and Sports Injuries.

Conveniently situated for the A580 and the M602, other treatments available include:

- Cosmetic Dentistry • Cosmetic Surgery • Dermatology • Ear, Nose & Throat Surgery
- Gastro-Enterology • General Surgery • Maxillo-facial Surgery • Orthopaedic Surgery
- Ophthalmic Surgery • Podiatry • Urology • Vascular Surgery
- X-ray, MRI and Ultrasound

For more information please call 0161 787 3461 or visit www.capio.co.uk



Capio Oaklands Hospital

Your health in good hands.

Capio Oaklands Hospital
19 Lancaster Road
Salford
Manchester, M6 8AQ

halstead's choice

by ROGER HALSTEAD

WES Rogers, Oldham's new club captain, is no stranger to the responsibilities of team or club leadership.

In his second three-year stay with Swinton Lions he was team vice-captain in season one, team captain in season two and club captain in season three, enjoying life with the Lions and describing them as "a nice club run by nice people."

Then came the BUT.

"But there's nothing quite like coming back to your hometown club, the one you supported from the terraces as a boy, and being asked to captain it. I watched Oldham up at Watersheddings for years. And when I think of some of the players who have captained the club in the past it gives me a great thrill to be following in their footsteps.

"I bumped into one of those earlier captains, Terry Flanagan, the other day. He congratulated me on the appointment and shook my hand. It struck home then that I have a lot to live up to.

"I regard it as a major honour --- not just for me but for my family as well."

Family-man Wes, who was 29 last November, lives in Lees with his wife Rachel and children Holly (6) and Fenton (3).

The youngest of three brothers, he was brought up in a rugby league environment, and at one period all three played in the juniors at Hollinwood: Jason, who would then be 15; Darryl (13); and kid brother Wes, all of seven.

Jason went on to play for St Anne's and Waterhead; Darryl became the first Rogers boy to sign for Oldham when he joined in the Peter Tunks era; Wesley, third in line, was to move out of town to join his first professional club, but more of that later.

Fast-forward to 2007 and we find Wes firmly rooted in Oldham with rugby league interests, family ties and business associations inextricably linked.

Brother Darryl's wife, also called Rachel, is Mike Ford's sister. The two Rachels, sisters-in-law, have opened a hairdressing and beauty salon in Lees, Wilson and Rogers, and the other partner, Pam Wilson, is the wife of another former player, Steve Wilson, whose father was the late and legendary Ken 'Tug' Wilson.

"Rugby league is never far away from my life," said Wes, "and that's the way it's been since I was a small boy."

He was only seven when he followed his elder brothers down the road to play for Fred Halliwell at Hollinwood.

After three years there, playing against much older boys, he had two seasons at St Anne's in teams run by Arthur Drurie. Arthur loved his rugby league and loved his cricket --- he

was heavily involved with Oldham CC youth teams at The Pollards --- but at the time Saints didn't have an under-12s team, so Wes moved on again to link up with the combined Waterhead and Oldham Juniors set-up.

He was to spend four years there, playing alongside Paul Sculthorpe, and at the age of 15 he got his first big break.

... selection for the North-West Counties under-16s squad which toured Fiji, New Zealand and Australia. Team manager was Aiden Walker of Wigan who, some seven years later, was to join the fledgling Roughyeds as academy coach under Mike Ford.

Pro clubs began to take interest in the young Rogers and that interest increased when, in 1994, he was picked for England schoolboys to go to France under the wing of another Wigan-based coach and manager, Denis McHugh.

McHugh doubled up as assistant coach to Phil Larder at Widnes so it was perhaps no surprise when Wes, still aged 16, signed for the club then known as The Chemics. He was to have three seasons on the banks of the Mersey, working first under Larder and McHugh, then John and Tony Myler, then Colin Whitfield.

His first season was little short of sensational. Aged 16, he made his first-team debut in the second-row against St Helens at Knowsley Road. And as well as earning selection for Great Britain Academy, he had three more first-team outings against Salford, Wakefield and Featherstone Rovers.

At the end of his third season he knew it was time to move on. Australia beckoned, but Tony Barrow nipped in with a contract offer to take him to Swinton and in three seasons in his first stint with the Lions he worked under coaches of the quality of Barrow, Les Holliday, Peter Roe and Mike Gregory.

Next stop was hometown Oldham in Ford's first season, but things didn't work out as he had hoped and he made only 12 appearances all season -- ten of them off the bench.

Two current team colleagues, John Hough and Ian Sinfield, were already here when Rogers arrived and another, Neil Roden, came on board part way through the season.

There was huge competition. Jason Clegg (30 appearances), Andy Proctor (27), Leo Casey (25) and Danny Guest (20) monopolised the front row, while back-rowers included Mark Campbell (28), Kevin Mannion (27), Shane McMenemy (22), Phil Farrell (21) and Sinfield (21).

Said Wes: "I was young and naive at the time. I enjoyed it,

but I only stayed one year. It was next stop Rochdale."

He was to have three years under Martin Hall's coaching at Spotland and in that time he enjoyed several derby tussles against his hometown club. He was devastated to miss the 2001 play-off semi-final -- the one Oldham won after mounting a sensational comeback --- after breaking an arm against Hull KR in the previous game.

There was more play-off heartache for Hornets -- and Rogers --- in another season when Hull KR pipped them with a score in the dying seconds. Hornets went for a drop goal, it was charged down and Rovers went the length of the field to snatch a lucky win.

Recalled Wes: "We always seemed to beat Oldham in nothing games, but when it came to the crunch they always seemed to beat us."

It's always nice when a player is asked to return to a former club. It's happened twice for the popular and reliable Rogers.

After Rochdale, he had three more years at Swinton, this time with Paul Kidd as coach, and then he was delighted to get the opportunity to return "home" to Oldham when Steve Deakin was assembling his squad for 2007.

"It's given me a brand-new lease of life," he said. "It's good to be back and I'm loving it. The spirit is second to none and all the players are mindful of the fact that the loyal fans who stuck with the club last season deserve a huge pat on the back.

"Hopefully, we can repay them this season for all they put into the club last year. The atmosphere in the dressing room is great. I'm expecting a big season.

"We know where we want to go, but we won't be getting carried away just because we made a good start in the friendly against Warrington.

"We hadn't had much field time so we were all pretty pleased with it, but it's a long season and you never know what the next game, the next training session or the next phone call will bring. We will just take things one step at a time.

"We have a great bunch of lads. Whoever comes in fits in quickly. We have no big-name stars and that's a plus. Teamwork will be our strength -- and we all have to work hard to get a place.

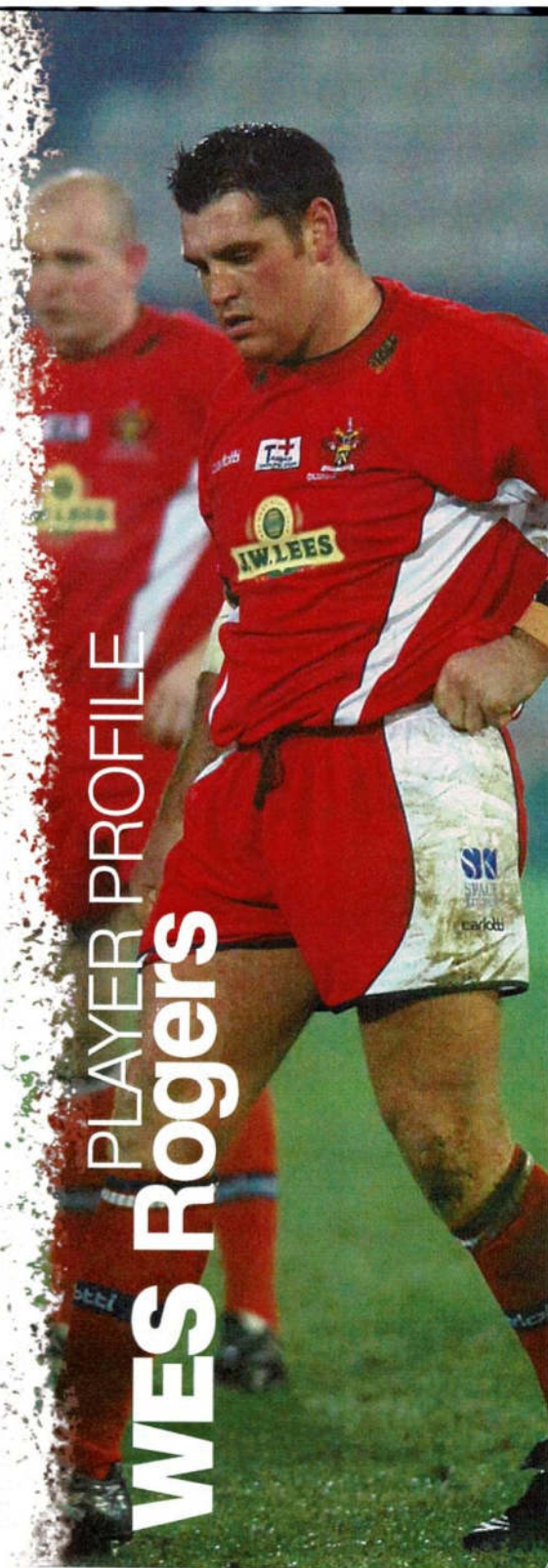
"As a group our goals are set game by game. You can't afford to look too far ahead.

"On a personal level I want to see the club win promotion and I want to see more people supporting us through the turnstiles. The fans who pay their money are part and parcel of any success that comes along.

"They can make a difference, too. If we could be running out at Boundary Park with 2,000 fans solidly behind us it would be worth a few points start.

"Everyone at the club is working very hard. Chris, Sean, Deaks, all the staff, and all the players are doing everything within their power to take the club forward and we hope that, for the supporters as much as anybody, we can reap the rewards.

PLAYER PROFILE
WES Rogers



AROUND & ABOUT

with The Heritage Trust

Today the Roughyeds kick-off what should be an exciting 2007 campaign against the club's oldest of 'enemies' Rochdale Hornets. A fitting start then to a season that will include at least two important anniversaries for the Oldham club and one for the game itself

10 years ago:

New Year's hangovers had barely subsided when Oldham Bears faced Swinton Lions in the last official match preceding the demolition of Watersheddings. Before the next rendering of auld lang syne foundations for a new des-res would cover the old ground's centre spot, Bob Lindner's men would have played in the World Club Championships - both here and in Australia (defeating North Queensland Cowboys along the way) - finished bottom of Super League 2 - forcing the club, already in financial disarray, into liquidation - culminating in a new club, Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd. being formed.

Coincidentally, the new club's first match was against today's visitors at Spotland, where, in front of a 3,097 crowd, the Roughyeds pulled off a somewhat surprising 36-16 Law Cup victory.



Last match at Watersheddings January 1997.
Bears 20 Lions 16.

50 years ago:



Bernard Ganley collects the RFL Championship Cup.

Bill Dorrans of the Oldham Evening Chronicle wrote, "Not for a long time on the field of rugby have so few brought so much colour into the grimy Oldham life. Off the field too, Oldham have managed to keep things hotted up in the world of controversy; retirements, transfer requests and revolt have all helped them to be the most talked-about team this century. But Oldham will be best remembered for its rugby ... its charming, hair-raising, honest-to-goodness, far-winning rugby league."

Not all plain sailing then, but the older supporters amongst us will still retain the fondest memories of that fabulous Oldham side of the 50's. On the 18th of May it will be exactly 50 years to the day since the Roughyeds defeated Hull 15-14 in front of a 67,000 Odsal crowd to lift the Championship. Oldham topped the league that season and also won both the Lancashire League and Lancashire Cup. There have been some excellent Oldham sides down the years and it beggars belief that the club has never won a major trophy since. What odds would the bookies put on last season's Grand Final and Challenge Cup winners St Helens not lifting either trophy again until 2056?

100 years ago:

Postal worker Albert Baskerville's letter, seeking approval for a tour of the Northern Union (later to become known as the Rugby Football League) by a group of New Zealand rugby union players, had dropped through the Oldham letterbox of its treasurer, Joseph Platt, in the early weeks of 1907.

When, later that year, Baskerville and his trail-blazing New Zealand tourists hit Watersheddings they had already played 13 matches against both English and Welsh club sides. They were here to face their biggest test of the tour so far. They were here to play a star-spangled Oldham team that had won all 12 of its matches played during the season to date and which had already booked a place in the Lancashire Cup final.

Come the end of the campaign the club would top the league - consisting of 27 clubs - seven points ahead of its nearest rivals.

Despite snow, hail and rain a crowd of 12,000 turned up at Watersheddings - ensuring a big payday for the Kiwis - who, whilst they lost 8-7 on the waterlogged Watersheddings pitch, went on to win the test series against Great Britain by 2-1.

Meanwhile, in Australia, the rugby union hierarchy had refused to accept the proposal of payments to its players in compensation for time lost whilst off work due to injuries incurred on the

field of play. This resulted in a breakaway group of eight clubs forming the New South Wales Rugby League. Having heard of the success of the New Zealander tour, and in an effort to quickly improve its status, the fledgling league also arranged to send a tour party to Great Britain.

It was as if the New Zealanders had departed the revolving door in one direction as the Australians entered from another! International rugby league was well and truly up and running.

The RFL are in the process of organising an inbound tour by the Kiwis to mark the centenary and I'm sure that there will be organised celebrations to mark both the 10th anniversary since the formation of Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd and the 50th anniversary of Oldham lifting the Championship but certainly a more detailed report of both events will appear in this column at the appropriate time.



New Zealand's 1907 tour vice-captain George Smith (painting) stayed on to play for Oldham. The winger, who had played an important part in the organisation and promoting of the tour, is honoured by the player-of-the-series during Great Britain vs. New Zealand test matches being awarded the G. W. Smith medal. Currently it is held by New Zealand scrum-half Stacey Jones.

SUPPORT GROUP NEWS

Following several months without our 'fix' of rugby league at Boundary Park we are now back AND looking forward with renewed interest to a fresh start. Last season had to be endured in the interests of the club's survival, but for those who stuck by the Roughyeds during this difficult period there is now anticipation of an exciting time ahead.

As we all appreciate, the Roughyeds, like all sports clubs, rely heavily on a voluntary force to support its operation on match days and otherwise. As we start to build for the future an increase in the voluntary help available would be valuable. You do not need to be a member of the Support Group, just have a little time and enthusiasm to offer assistance in some way. If interested, please do not hesitate to contact Janet in the office, on 0161 628 3677, and she will be pleased to hear from you.

Our quiz evenings have continued over the close season and are keenly supported by a loyal band of people who enjoy the camaraderie and have a bit of fun whilst raising valuable funds for their beloved Roughyeds. Our next Quiz will be held in the Social Club lounge on Tuesday, 20th February at 8.30pm. SUPPORT THE ROUGHYEDS.

Sheila

HALF TIME TEASER

'Try' this half time teaser. The following are anagrams of NL1 and NL2 grounds. Answers and relevant clubs will be in next week's programme.

- 1) AKGRUPROCA
- 2) RUDREEONNITARGCO
- 3) NAVRRKEPAC
- 4) YPRCOVKRAIT
- 5) ADMUMRAIST
- 6) TENRAKWERDP
- 7) STUNTAIDHINUMTONG
- 8) SLAPTUNNOMEAT
- 9) SYHEATH
- 10) STONLADUIHAMT



HIGHNOON

In the real world nothing comes easy,
It isn't at all like shelling peas-y,
Hard graft and effort are the rule,
Those who think different are just acting the fool.

In the last ten years we've seen it all,
No ground, no luck, we've had sod all,
When things got tough, we took a wee chance,
But the crown said, "No, we're taking a very firm stance!"

They made us pay up, every damn groat,
But we paid it and we hope, that it sticks in their throat!
That was it, that was the Roughyeds "High Noon,"
And good times are surely coming, coming real soon.

We've got the coach, we've got the team,
Just one thing missing, you know who I mean,
The public, the fans, need to come back in force,
And it's you that I mean, yes you, of course!

Underdogs we've been, underdogs no more,
Look at the Wolves friendly, just relish that score,
So, no more baying at the moon,
Good times are coming and they're coming real soon!

Grant Somerville

the boys and their backers

(Sponsor a player -- and help the club)



**PAUL
ASHTON**
SPONSORED BY



**CHRIS
BAINES**
SPONSORED BY



**JASON
BOULTS**
SPONSORED BY
M NEILD
(BUILDERS) LTD
0161 627 1662



**GENO
COSTIN**
SPONSORED BY
TOTALPLUS
0161 343 8181



**ANDY
CRABTREE**
SPONSORED BY



**ANDY
GOREY**
SPONSORED BY
NEATPLANTS.
CO.UK
01261 821535



**ALAN
HADCROFT**
SPONSORED BY



**JOHN
HOUGH**
SPONSORED BY
MESSAGE
BOARD 15



**DREW
HOUSTON**
SPONSORED BY



**SIMEON
HOYLE**
SPONSORED BY
NIGEL
MARLAND



**PAUL
O'CONNOR**
SPONSORED BY



**GARETH
LANGLEY**
SPONSORED BY
SADDLEWORTH
SPORTS LTD
01457 872515



**CRAIG
LITTLER**
SPONSORED BY



**RICHARD
MERVILL**
SPONSORED BY



**MARK
OGDEN**
SPONSORED BY
TOTALPLUS
0161 343 8181



**STUART
OLDHAM**
SPONSORED BY



**NEIL
RODEN**
SPONSORED BY
H MULLANEY AND
SON (SKIP HIRE)
LTD 01457 832870



**WES
ROGERS**
SPONSORED BY



**IAN
SINFIELD**
SPONSORED BY



**KRIS
SMITH**
SPONSORED BY



**MICHAEL
STOUT**
SPONSORED BY



**SAID
TAMGHART**
SPONSORED BY
JOHN AND
LYNDA
MCANDREW



**ALEX
WILKINSON**
SPONSORED BY



**LEE
WINGFIELD**
SPONSORED BY
O.R.I.S.A
0161 633 9578



**STEVE
DEAKIN**
COACH
SPONSORED BY



**PAUL
HULBERT**
KITMAN
SPONSORED BY



**GOAL
KICKER**
SPONSORED BY

For details of all sponsorship packages please ring 0161 628 3677
www.roughyeds.co.uk

the bootroom

THE MEN WHO CARRY ROUGHYEDS' HOPES AND AMBITIONS INTO 2007.

ASHTON, Paul (half-back): Son of former Watersheddings scrum-half star Ray Ashton, Paul is fulfilling a lifetime's ambition to play for his hometown club. Though born in Widnes, he was only a few months old when his parents moved to Oldham where his father carved out a career that earned him GB tour honours in 1984 during 212 club appearances which reaped him 72 tries.

Aged 27, Paul learned his trade at Saddleworth before playing for Halifax, Rochdale, Keighley and Swinton. He was in the Cougars side, with his new Roughyeds team mates Simeon Hoyle and Richard Mervill, that won promotion to NL1 in 2003.

He got his big chance at Oldham in 2006, initially on a week-to-week basis, and did enough to earn a full contract for 2007. Will be challenging for both half-back spots as he feels equally comfortable with both No 6 or No 7 on his back.

BAINES, Chris (back-row): A young forward who also did enough for coach Steve Deakin last year, while on loan from Warrington, to win a contract for 2007. He proved to be a good, hard-working forward in his first season with the Roughyeds and the experience he gained will serve him and the club well in NL2.

He was in his third season of under-21s rugby at Warrington when he first got the chance to move on loan to Roughyeds. He had three separate and continuous one-month loan spells and when the Wolves said they would release him he had no hesitation in grabbing the chance to commit himself to Oldham for the remainder of 2006 and then 2007.

A product of Chorley Panthers, where he played until he was 13, and then Wigan St Pats, he toured New Zealand with Great Britain Young Lions in 2003, also representing his country at youth level against Australia and France.

BOULTS, Jason (prop): One of many new boys in the Roughyeds squad for 2007, 23-year-old Jason arrived on the recommendation of two of his former Halifax team mates, Jamie Bloem and Alan Hadcroft.

Alan, already established here as one of coach Steve Deakin's senior men, wasted no time in tipping off the boss when he learned from Bloem that Boult was ready to leave The Shay to take up a new challenge.

At 16 stone and 6ft 2in, Jason can play his weight in the front-row, as he proved in his two seasons at Fax where he was an ever-present with 30 appearances in 2005 and then added 27 more in 2006 — statistics which show he is as durable as he is consistent.

Started off at Siddal under-16s, spent four years as a young pro with Bradford Bulls and signed for Halifax in November, 2004.

COSTIN, Geno (prop or back-row): A non-quota Aussie, 22-year-old Geno is in England for the first time and hoping to make an impact in NL2. Former Halifax stand-off Carl Briggs, lined up originally to become Gateshead Thunder's new coach, planned to take Geno to the North-East with him. When that move broke down, Briggs pointed Geno in Oldham's direction, much to the delight of coach Steve Deakin.

Geno first established himself in the Queensland Cup competition with Wynnum-Manly, alongside another Roughyeds recruit Mark Ogden, but last year played in the same comp for Logan Souths. Has long had a yearning to embark on an adventure to England and now that opportunity knocks he intend to make the most of it. Arrived in Oldham with his mate Mark Ogden on Boxing Day — just in time for his first training session on freezing Oldham Edge two days later.

CRABTREE, Andy (hooker): One of half a dozen players signed by Roughyeds from Swinton Lions for 2007. Andy is eager to fulfil the early promise that earned him not only a spot on the books of Wigan Warriors but also a place in a talented Great Britain academy side that boasted several players who have gone on to big things at the highest level.

At Swinton in 2006 he faced immense competition for the specialist No 9 role, but he made nine appearances, three starts and six off the bench.

A tidy footballer with good hands and a rugby brain, the youngster has the attributes to play loose-forward as well as hooker, but it is with No 9 on his back that he has accomplished most of his achievements so far. He can also kick goals.

GOREY, Andy (winger): A scrum-half in his Royton Tigers days, local lad Andy became a good full-back in the former Roughyeds academy side. He was under contract on the break-up of the academy side, but he pledged to fight for a place in the first team rather than go elsewhere.

In 2006 he became a fans' favourite with gutsy performances, capped off with a couple of length-of-the-field tries. Diminutive, but pacy, he established himself as a regular on the wing, making more than 20 appearances and taking his try tally into double figures to finish the season as the club's top try scorer.

Not many of last year's squad were offered new contracts, but Gorey was and he quickly put pen to paper as he looked to further develop his career with his hometown club.

HADCROFT, Alan (centre): Robust, and renowned for solid defence and strong running, 29-year-old Alan is also vastly experienced. He signed from Halifax for the 2006 season, but his campaign was marred by a series of shoulder injuries. He was the first player, not already on a longer contract, to sign for 2007, but then he dislocated his shoulder again in the final match of the season at Whitehaven.

While on the injured list earlier in the campaign, he served the club well as coach Steve Deakin's No 2, a position he may take up again if it is decided his playing days are over.

Earlier in his career he played many seasons for his hometown club, Leigh Centurions, and it was while he was at Hilton Park that he represented the National League against the touring New Zealand 'A' side.

HOUGH, John (hooker): Cut 'Houghie' in two and you will find Roughyeds' running right through him. He was the first player to sign for the 'new' Roughyeds club when it was formed by Chris Hamilton and his fellow directors in the autumn of 1997, following the demise of Oldham Bears.

Currently two seasons into a three-year contract, 29-year-old Oldham-born John will have completed ten years with the club at the end of the 2007 season and will thus qualify for a testimonial.

A product of the Waterhead club, he signed for Warrington Wolves while still a boy, but he carved himself a niche in the history of the new Oldham club when he signed as a free agent on December 2, 1997.

It was the beginning of a long-term relationship in which John has played more than 230 games for the Roughyeds — most of them at hooker.

HOUSTON, Drew (second-row or centre): One of the two overseas quota men for 2007, 23-year-old Drew comes highly recommended by another new Roughyeds recruit, Simeon Hoyle.

Hoyle played in Australia in 2005 and liked what he saw of the Dapto pair, Houston and a former Keighley colleague Richard Mervill. Houston, once a youngster linked with Melbourne Storm, had two seasons with a Storm feeder club, Norths in the

Queensland Cup, before heading south for Dapto, champions of the Illawarra competition.

Drew comes to Oldham with a reputation as a good line runner and a big hitter on the edges of the rucks in defence.

He helped Dapto to the championship of the Illawarra competition last year and he also earned selection in the competition's representative side.

HOYLE, Simeon (hooker): Formerly with Keighley Cougars and Halifax, hooker Simeon was one of the first of the new boys to be signed up by Roughyeds for 2007. He is a hooker of the old school — a tough and industrious operator in defence while having enough know-how to make things happen from dummy half.

It was while he was at Keighley that, in 2003, he helped the Cougars to win promotion to NL1 from a third-place finish in the league. Sheffield, Chorley and Keighley finished neck and neck on 26 points, with Cougars third on points difference.

However, with Hoyle at hooker, Paul Ashton at stand-off and Richard Mervill on the bench, Cougars won through to the final, beating Sheffield 13-11 at Widnes with Hoyle winning the League Express man-of-the-match award.

He later headed Down Under for a spell before returning to Halifax, from where he opted to sign for the Roughyeds.

O'CONNOR, Paul (full-back): Had three games for Roughyeds while on loan from Widnes Vikings last season and made such an impression on coach Steve Deakin that the boss didn't hesitate to go for him again when he learned he might be available. His signing takes into account that he will miss June, July and August due to a pre-arranged trip to Australia and New Zealand.

A former Ireland and Great Britain international at Students' level, 22-year-old Paul spent two seasons with Widnes, his hometown club, operating mainly in the under-21s at full-back or on the wing.

He played his early rugby at Widnes Tigers and Widnes St Maries and later, while at university in Liverpool, he earned his Students' international honours, highlighted by his appearance for GF Students against Australia in 2004.

Pacy, and with an eye for a gap, Paul enjoyed his spell with Roughyeds last year and he went back to the Vikings only because he wanted 'one last go' at bidding to get into the Widnes first team.

He should be fit and ready for anything the rugby league world throws at him, given that away from his chosen sport he is a consultant for a company specialising in promoting and advising on health and lifestyle.

LANGLEY, Gareth (winger): Pacy, and a good finisher, 'Gaz' Langley comes to the Roughyeds after five years in one of the most professional learning and development schools in rugby league — the youth and academy set-up at St Helens.

Born in the well-known rugby league district of Parr, near St Helens, 22-year-old Gareth didn't take up the sport with Blackbrook until he was 15. By the time he was 16 he was playing for Salford under-18s, having been headhunted by the then Salford academy coach Steve McCormack.

He wasn't on contract and it didn't take long for hometown St Helens to take him to Knowsley Road.

He was the Saints senior academy player of the year in 2005 and runner up to player of the year in 2006, a season in which he made his Super League debut in a young Saints side that took on Catalans Dragons in Perpignan.

LITTLER, Craig (centre): How appropriate that Littler comes next Langley in alphabetical order ...

for that's exactly how they have lined up, as centre and wing partners, in the Saints academy teams of the past four years. A year younger than 'Gaz', at 21, Craig was offered the chance to have another year at Knowsley Road, but he opted to sign for Roughyeds instead — and one of the reasons was that he could continue his partnership with Langley.

They are said to have built up a good partnership and a good understanding of each other's style of play — and Roughyeds boss Steve Deakin hopes they will put that understanding to good use in NL2.

A scorer of tries, as well as a try provider, Littler also played in France at Super League level for the Saints in the 2006 campaign.

He didn't rush into putting pen to paper for Oldham but, having sought advice from various quarters, he took the view that there was much to be gained from playing in NL2 under an experienced boss like Deaks.

MERVILL, Richard (prop): Formerly with Halifax and then Keighley, Richard comes to the Roughyeds for 2007 from Australia — a similar route to that taken by his former Cougars team mate, Simeon Hoyle.

Mervill played in the 2003 Keighley side that won promotion to NL1, alongside hooker Hoyle and stand-off Paul Ashton, and later jetted off Down Under, where he has been playing for Dapto in the Illawarra competition.

Hoyle, who had also played out there, alerted Roughyeds to the availability of both Mervill and his Dapto team mate Drew Houston and it was thanks largely to Hoyle that Oldham got their names on contracts.

Said to have a high work rate and a good offload, Mervill has experience of the game in both hemispheres and, with Wes Rogers and Jason Boult, he will provide much of the Roughyeds' go-forward from the front-row.

OGDEN, Mark (stand-off): A 23-year-old from Queensland, Mark also occupies a spot on the Roughyeds overseas quota. An accomplished play-maker, he is said to have the ability to guide the side around the park from outside-half.

He was in the Brisbane Broncos development squad as a teenager and in 2000, aged 17, he represented Queensland Schoolboys. Like his mate, Geno Costin, he represented Wynnum-Manly at various levels, building a reputation as a reliable goalkicker and a clever half-back in the modern mould.

As he worked his way up the Wynnum ladder, he picked up several awards as player of the year and leading points scorer, but last year he transferred to Logan Souths.

He has never previously been outside Queensland, so his move to Oldham is an adventure in every sense of the word.

OLDHAM, Stuart (winger): Formerly with St Helens and Swinton, Stuart has good pace and also has experience of the full-back position. While at Saints, he impressed the then academy coach Dave Rotherham, who spoke highly of him to Oldham boss Steve Deakin. He lives at Eccles and played his first serious rugby with Sedgley Park RU club before moving up the ladder in union with Liverpool St Helens.

From there, he was spotted by Saints and it was from Knowsley Road that he moved on to Swinton two years ago.

He comes with a reputation for producing excellent speed on the break with a good kick return — qualities that Oldham will need in NL2 if they are to challenge for promotion at the first time of asking.

RODEN, Neil (half-back): Neil has rejoined Roughyeds from Leigh after leaving the club initially

to go to Batley in 2004. In his first stint with Oldham, after joining from Wigan Academy, he amassed 290 points (68 tries and 18 drop goals) in 142 appearances over four and a half seasons.

No other player in the nine-year history of the 'new' Roughyeds club has tallied more tries than Roden, whose 68 pushed Mark Sibson (61) into second place.

Neil also has the distinction of having played for the Roughyeds in the 2001 Grand Final against Widnes at Spotland.

A competent and highly-skilled half-back, whether at No 6 or No 7, he shows all the know-how required for these two highly-specialised positions.

ROGERS, Wes (prop): At the age of 29 — and appointed as club captain for 2007 — Wes brings experience, a cool head and stability to Oldham's front-row. Oldham-born, he first played for the Roughyeds in the club's early days, but he returns, from Swinton, as a much more experienced and matured front-row forward, who is delighted to be coming back for a second chance with his hometown club.

On leaving the Roughyeds last time, he spent three years with Rochdale, followed by three more seasons with Swinton, and he is one of six ex-Lions who will be wearing Roughyeds colours in 2007, the others being Kris Smith, Stuart Oldham, Michael Stout, Andy Crabtree, and Ian Sinfield.

SINFIELD, Ian (back-row): Another vastly experienced forward who is returning to his hometown club. The brother of Leeds Rhinos captain, Kevin Sinfield, Ian played in the first ever Roughyeds game at Rochdale on New Year's Day, 1998. He had come initially on loan from Salford, but soon afterwards he was signed on a permanent basis, with Roughyeds paying out an undisclosed fee for his services.

'Sinny' had four seasons at Oldham, making more than 70 appearances, before moving to Rochdale, then to Keighley, and on to Swinton. While at Keighley he played in the NL2 Grand Final alongside Simeon Hoyle, Paul Ashton and Richard Mervill.

He was club captain for much of his time at Swinton Lions, for whom he appeared in his second NL2 Grand Final against Sheffield Eagles last October.

SMITH, Kris (back-row or centre): Another vastly-experienced player, this 28-year-old has been on the books of four Super League clubs, namely Leeds, Salford, London and Halifax. He has also played in France with Pia and Carpentras and it was while he was briefly at Carpentras that he was a club mate of the Roughyeds' new French signing, Said Tamghart.

He is a big man of 6ft 4in and 15 and a half stones and he has had brief experience of Super League with both London and Halifax. A product of the Eccles amateur club, he was snapped up by Leeds Rhinos while still a teenager.

He then moved to Salford where a knee injury hampered his progress. His French excursion followed before he returned to England to play with London and Halifax before enjoying a four-year stint with Swinton.

He showed his versatility with Swinton last season when he played 14 times in the second-row, five at loose-forward and once at stand-off, coming into prominence with outstanding displays in the second-row as the Lions beat Featherstone Rovers and Celtic Crusaders, both away, to earn their Grand Final appearance against Sheffield.

STOUT, Michael (second-row or centre): Another Roughyeds signing from Swinton, Michael has a good turn of speed for a forward and likes to use it while breaking wide out — a quality that also enables him to do a stint in the centre.

This Warrington-born school teacher played in the academy squads of both Warrington Wolves and Widnes Vikings before joining Swinton Lions a year ago. In his one season with the Lions he made 19 appearances and scored seven tries. He played four times at centre, once on the wing, four times in the second row, once at loose-forward and nine times as a substitute.

Swinton wanted to keep hold of him and made him an offer for 2007, but he chose instead to sign a one-year deal with the Roughyeds.

Like many other players brought to the Roughyeds this season by Steve Deakin, he will be regarded as a versatile player who can offer much to the squad and to the team in a variety of positions.

TAMGHART, Said (utility): The description 'utility' perhaps fails to do justice to this French international, who has represented his country at every level, including fully-fledged Test matches against Australia and New Zealand. He played prop against the Aussies and second-row against the Kiwis, but both he and coach Steve Deakin have confirmed that he can operate equally well at loose-forward and also in the backs at centre or wing.

On his way up the ladder to full French international honours, he played for Carpentras, Avignon and UTC (better known now as Perpignan-based Catalans Dragons) and it was while he was at UTC that he came under the wing of Deaks, who holds him in the highest regard.

He reached the pinnacle of his career two years ago when he played against Australia and New Zealand, but he has long had an ambition to play in England and he didn't hesitate to take the opportunity when Deaks invited him to come to Oldham.

WILKINSON, Alex (centre, wing): Oldham-born Alex played his early rugby with Royton Tigers and toured with GB schoolboys to Australia in 1999 and with England academy to New Zealand and Australia in 2001. Super League giants Bradford Bulls snapped him up and, while at Odsal, he had a loan spell with London Broncos, where he played six times in Super League. He then moved on loan to Huddersfield, where he added another 13 Super League games to his tally.

He played a similar number while on loan to Hull FC, who offered him a two-year contract. However, Alex wanted to complete his degree and with part-time rugby the only option he chose his hometown club.

Injuries dealt him some cruel blows in 2006, but Roughyeds didn't hesitate to offer him another deal for 2007 and he will be hoping the New Year brings new luck.

WINGFIELD, Lee (second-row): This 24-year-old second-row forward, signed last year from amateurs Leigh East, can also operate equally well at centre. He won many honours in the amateur game and played on numerous occasions for Great Britain. He played against France and Russia in Russia in 2003 and kept his place for international appearances against France at Carcassonne and then for the return game at Whitehaven.

Perhaps the pinnacle of his achievements in the amateur game came in 2004 when he toured Australia with GB amateurs and played in every game. He signed a contract to cover 2006 and 2007 and he proved to be one of Oldham's top performers in the early part of the 2006 season until first a ban and then an injury at work kept him out of the side. Although he prefers to play in three pack, he has also operated well in the threequarters.



with Ian Wilson

roughyeds'

roar!

For this first "proper" game of the season, I am sure that we would all agree that it is very important that we should look forward, rather than back to 2006 and particularly in view of recent happenings at boardroom level.

Some things, of course, remain the same – the coach and the ground, in particular. But it is very much a new side. And we have very different objectives this year than at the outset of '06. Then, we had the major financial crisis at the forefront of our minds, and the best that could realistically be hoped for in playing terms was probably survival in National League One. Now, however, things are different. The almost unbelievable achievement of clearing the full debt means that affairs on the field can receive everyone's full attention, and there the objective is very simple – to get out of NL2 at the first opportunity to do so.

Before we put 2006 completely to bed, however, I feel it is worth one final retrospective, if only to emphasise exactly how low we sunk, and where we are really starting this season from. Elsewhere in this programme you will find the player statistics for the full 2006 season – and, as well as noting how depressing they are, it will also be clear how many of the players who had to experience the year have now gone – I make it that there are only eight still on the books.

So how bad a season was 2006? Perhaps the following article, which was written soon after it ended, puts it into some perspective :

"Let's get the statistics out of the way first. Oldham have just finished the worst season in their proud 111-year history as an RL club, in terms of the playing record. All matches in National League 1, of course, were lost, with an average points score of 12 - 52 per game. Furthermore, taking into account all competitive fixtures, only three matches were won out of a total of 26 ; these were against Saddleworth Rangers in

the third round of the Challenge Cup, and twice against Keighley in the group phase of the Northern Rail Cup. [It is interesting to note too that Keighley finished their league campaign equal on points with Blackpool at the foot of National League 2, and that Oldham defeated them by margins of just 1 and 4 points.]

There have been other poor years amongst the 111, inevitably. Up to 1973, when the competition was largely structured in one division, the club's worst year was 1969-70. Oldham finished that season in 29th place out of 30 clubs - but 6 league games plus 2 cup contests were won. Since the competition split into two or three divisions, the worst years have been 1997 and 1999. Before then, Oldham had been one of the so-called "yo-yo" teams, regularly gaining promotion from Div. 2 but then being relegated from the top league, but even during the least successful of those years, at least 7 league games had been won. 1997, however, the second year of Super League, was a fateful one for Oldham. The club was not uncompetitive on the pitch by any means - 7 victories in total, including 2 in the Challenge Cup and one, incredible as it now seems, against North Queensland in the ill-fated World Club Challenge competition - but the end of the season saw the ultimate crisis in the form of liquidation of the Oldham Bears, as the club had rather laughingly been named by Jim Quinn and his board of directors at the outset of the Super League summer era.

Chris Hamilton, Sean Whitehead and two other local supporters who have since quit the board re-established a new club later in 1997, of course,

even though there was no longer a ground or indeed any other assets in existence. They began on a wave of emotion , and finished fifth in the equivalent of National League 2 in 1998, with a very creditable 11 wins under their belts. The following year, however, lack of resources told badly, and the club ended the season with only one club - Doncaster - below them in the league hierarchy. Even so, given that there were 5 league and 2 cup wins, there are not really any grounds for arguing against the view that 2006 has been the worst ever.

So why? Is it possible to identify specific reasons? Certainly the dramatically dwindling band of supporters would put forward several strands to their explanations.

Lack of money, everyone would agree, has been a, or maybe the, vital factor. Then add in a terrible run of injury set-backs, a coach who quit in very strange circumstances almost before things had really got going properly, and the apparently annual mid-season eviction from the rented "home", Boundary Park, and the outcome was maybe inevitable. I think it is also valid to claim that the overall standard of the competition has risen. York, for example, who have also been relegated, would, I am certain, have been at least a mid-table Div. 1 side in previous seasons. And Barrow, who finished midway down Div. 2, played very decent quality rugby indeed when they thrashed Oldham in the Challenge Cup in April.

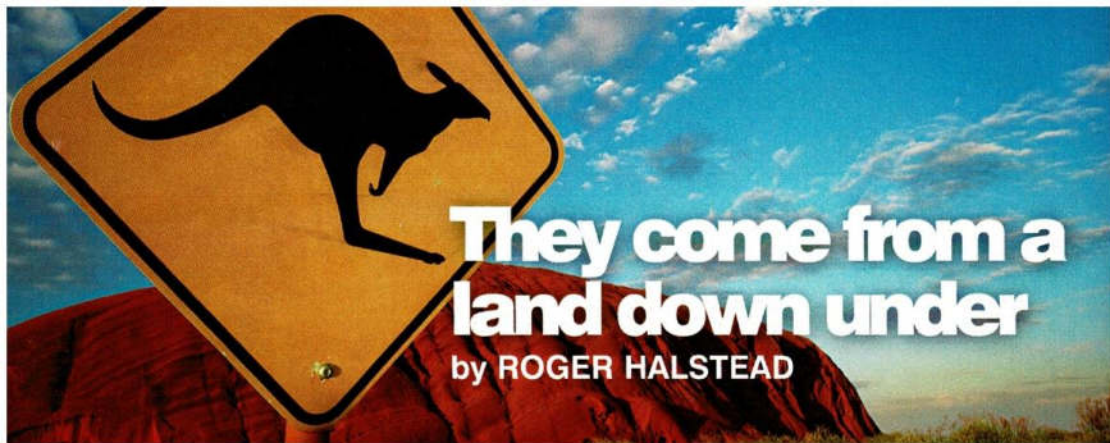
The fundamental reason for the club's woeful results in 2006, though, has been the lack of players of the required quality who have been available. In turn ,the major reason for this was probably an inability to pay the necessary going rate - which in turn goes to the issue of debts which had to be paid to the tax authorities, and the problems faced by the Hamilton regime in generating income over the nearly nine years of its control of the club.

What, then, of the future? The Chairman has emphasised the importance of stability, particularly in stressing that coach Steve Deakin remains in position to build a squad with the aim of promotion back to NL1 next season. It is interesting that, throughout the awful run of results this year, Deakin has received very little criticism from any quarters - which is proof enough that the explanation for playing failure in terms of lack of resources is generally accepted by the club's followers. The avowed aim is to allow the committed Deakin to build his own squad - he in effect had to take over the rump of the departed John Pendlebury's this season - and in good time to hit the ground running in 2007. Seven players have already been signed up, in fact - almost unprecedented in the club's recent history!

The other element of the promised stability, however, is in the club's ownership - Hamilton and Whitehead to remain in charge. And whilst no-one argues against the miracle they have achieved in keeping a pro club in existence in the town, there are many who now feel that it is only with new blood that more money can be attracted - and that this is the sine qua non if there is to be any chance of former glories being re-created. We shall see."

So much for the history, then. We can but wish Steve Deakin and the team every success in their playing objectives – and perhaps too messrs. Hamilton and Whitehead some success in at least beginning the long haul back towards where we want to be within the game as a whole.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Since Ian Wilson submitted this Rougheds' Roar piece (most of it referring to an article written soon after the end of last season) major changes have been announced at boardroom level, including the arrival of Bill Quinn as major shareholder and new club chairman.



They come from a land down under

by ROGER HALSTEAD

The arrival of three young Australians to play for Roughyeds this season is a reminder that the men from a land Down Under have played hugely significant roles in the post-war story of both Oldham and Rochdale Hornets.



Stand-off Mark Ogden and forwards Drew Houston and Geno Costin have to follow in some pretty formidable footsteps of fellow countrymen who have donned Oldham's red and white jerseys over the years.

My own memories of Australian players go back to childhood and of a clutch of young men from the Sydney area imported to the Athletic Grounds by Rochdale Hornets. Even the manager-coach at that time was an Australian, Cec Fifield. He brought with him the brothers Ron and Reg Stanford, Wally Elean, a scrum-capped loose-forward of sublime skills, Tommy Duffy and

Geoff Kelly. As Hornets at that time had another Geoff Kelly, a local lad later to play for Oldham, the Aussie version came to be known as Geoff 'Babe' Kelly, this reflecting his youth compared to his namesake.

A year or two later came Wally McArthur, on his day a magnificent crowd-pleasing winger, an Aborigine with pace to burn. He never quite fulfilled his enormous potential, yet anyone who watched Wally in full flight would take a long time to forget his effortless running. It was poetry in motion.

Years later, when covering Watersheddings affairs for the Oldham Chronicle, there was an Aussie who reminded me a little bit at times of McArthur and that was Wally Gibson. Both Wallys played full-back as well as wing and both could swallow up the yards, as indeed could David Liddiard. Remember his solo try straight from the kick off in a match against Carlisle here at Boundary Park when he received Carlisle's kick in a deep position and glided through the entire opposition to score under the posts at the Rochdale Road end?

I recall far too many Aussies playing for Oldham to mention them here, but some were perhaps worthy of special recognition and I would number among those players like Paul Taylor, David and Glen Liddiard, Chris O'Sullivan, John Cogger and the one and only Bob Lindner.

For me, Parramatta's Taylor, who had two spells at Oldham, was pound for pound the player from Down Under who gave the club best value for money. He was never a star, but he was a workhorse the stars always wanted in their side -- just ask Jack Gibson and his star-spangled Parramatta line-up of that time.

Glen Liddiard was only a kid when he arrived with his parents and elder brother David. But he was a kid with a very special talent -- so much so that when David Topliss was injured in a car crash and had to miss the 1986 cup semi-final against Castleford, coach Frank Myler had no hesitation in throwing the 16-year-old in at the deep end.

O'Sullivan, a classy stand-off of Canberra Raiders fame, was always a fans' favourite, as was loose-forward Cogger, another player who would never be a star but who, like Taylor, would bust a gut for his team, his club and his mates.

Bobby boy Lindner, regarded in Queensland circles in the same league as Wally Lewis and Mal Meninga, had a reputation for saving his brilliant best for State of Origin or Test matches. But his sensational displays for Oldham when the club battled against relegation at the end of the 1993-94 season, culminating in a fantastic 30-26 win at St Helens to clinch survival, proved what we always knew... his class would surface whenever he was in the mood.

We've had a few Aussies in the ranks since the 'new' club was formed in 1997 and, from memory, Shane McMenemy would take some beating. He served us well at prop or second-row and it was perhaps no surprise when he moved on to Halifax, then in Super League, and ultimately to Hull FC where he remains to this day.

The men from a land Down Under have given us great pleasure over the decades. Over to you Mark, Drew and Geno.

NEWS FLASH...

HOW ROUGHYEDS BROKE THE BIG NEWS

by ROGER HALSTEAD

The Roughyeds will soon have a new owner following an agreement in principle for Manchester business man Bill Quinn to buy 52 per cent of the shares in Oldham Rugby League Club (1997) Ltd.

The bolt-from-the-blue announcement was made at a press conference in the Roughyeds social club on Tuesday morning.

Local and national media were informed the day before that an announcement of significance would be made that morning, although there were no hints at that stage that it would involve a change of the club's ownership.

A wide cross-section of local and regional media personnel were present --- newspapers, radio and TV in the shape of Channel M.

Chris Hamilton, chairman since the club was founded in 1997, opened the proceedings by announcing that he and his fellow director Sean Whitehead had agreed to sell a majority shareholding in the club to Mr Quinn, managing director of the Manchester-based William Quinn Group of companies, which became the club's main sponsors only three weeks ago.

He said contracts had been drawn up, hands had been shaken on the deal, and the matter was now in the hands of solicitors.

He said both he and Sean had each sold 26 per cent of their shares in the club to Mr Quinn, thus leaving each of them with 24 per cent and Mr Quinn with 52 per cent.

Mr Quinn will become the new club chairman, but Chris and Sean will remain on the board as shareholders and Chris will retain his role as chief executive, working full time for the club on a day-to-day basis.

He went on: "Sean and I always said that if somebody came along in a better position financially to take the club forward there would be no issue as regards Sean and I moving aside.

"I need to stress, however, that we have been talking to Bill for a period of time: it certainly isn't a case of him coming in as main sponsor and then simply taking over. Sean has known him for a number of years through business."

He went on to explain that all three parties believed this was the right time to announce the changes.

"It was a tremendous boost for the club," he said, "when we finally paid off the debt to the Crown authorities. Then came a convincing performance from the team against Warrington.

"Now we have another 'good news' story for the club ahead of the new season and the first game against

Rochdale Hornets at Boundary Park on Sunday in the Northern Rail Cup.

"We hope all these 'good news' happenings will help to put the club on an upward curve. Our fans deserve a club that's moving forward and this hopefully will help to provide it.

"Bill, like Sean and myself, has every confidence in our coach, Steve Deakin, and Steve is looking forward to the season and looking forward to working with Bill."

Deaks, incidentally, sat alongside Bill, Chris and Sean and, like the others, was interviewed individually after the formal part of the conference had ended.

Bill Quinn said he had known Sean for 17 years through business and he revealed that talks about the ownership of the club had started 18 months ago.

"I was very impressed with the dedication shown by Chris and Sean and their determination to keep the club going. I finally made up my mind after the Warrington game. I met Steve and the players and their determination to succeed, just like that of Chris and Sean, shone through. I wanted to be part of that and part of helping to take the club forward."

When questioning went back to Chris, he said the situation "felt a little bit strange" after being at the helm for ten years.

"There were times when we felt this was never going to happen," he added, "and I daresay a lot of the fans thought that, too. But now it has, and we intend to go forward. Bill has not only become the major shareholder and chairman, but he intends to put further investment into the club, and we are delighted to get somebody on the same wavelength."

Questioned further, Mr Quinn said: "We won't be looking back, we'll be looking to the future. We want stability and an operation that can take the club forward into the future. My only aim is to do the best I possibly can.

"I've done a lot of work in Oldham, I know the area quite well and I hope the town will back us as we strive to drive the club forward."

Aged 40, Bill lives in the Chorley area. His company, one of the biggest of its kind in the north of England, specialises in excavation, demolition, waste recycling or, as he put it at the press conference, "in anything that will bring us some money".



ROCHDALE HORNETS

Roger Halstead takes a look inside the Hornets Nest.

A HISTORY OF DUAL MEMBERSHIP . .

OVER the years a huge number of players have turned out for both Oldham and neighbours Rochdale Hornets -- many of them particularly influential at one club or the other, if not both.

Digging deep into the memory bank, one can recall several who left Watersheddings to take up coaching or managerial positions at the old Athletic Grounds --- Joe Warham, Bryn Goldswain, Norman Harris, Johnnie Noon and, much more recently of course, the present Hornets boss Darren Abram.

It isn't strictly true in Darren's case because he only arrived back at Spotland for his second stint -- this time as coach -- after becoming a victim of the collapse of Oldham Bears and then going on to learn his trade as a coach with Chorley and Leigh.

Nevertheless, he is a former Oldham player now in a position of authority in the Hornets Nest. Not many have gone the other way, although one who did, Graham Starkey, had a huge influence at

Oldham in two separate spells there, filling the roles of player-coach, coach and ultimately manager.

Starkey was a man 25 years ahead of his time -- a coach with real vision and probably the first in the English game to bring out the clip board, insist on pre-match warm-ups and have the audacity to vacate the dug-out to get a better view up in the stands!

He was first taken to Oldham by Rochdale business man Arthur Walker -- a man who was Hornets chairman for years. Arthur was the man behind the club's Fijian links and was top dog at the Athletic Grounds for years. It didn't stop him defecting to Oldham when, a year or two later, he was asked to front a ginger group pushing to take control of the Watersheddings committee.

The history of the two clubs is heaving with records of dual membership --- and a glance at today's Rochdale squad shows nothing has changed with the passing of time.

but he is targeting Easter to make his return.

Other ex-Oldham players currently in the Hornets 27-man squad are Paul Anderson, Paul Norman, Iain Marsh and Nick Johnson.

ANDERSON has been dogged by injuries in the past two seasons, but he made 19 appearances for Hornets last year, mainly from the bench, and scored three crucial tries in the latter part of the season.

NORMAN, a model professional, began his career at Watersheddings and returned to Boundary Park in 2005 after several years at Leigh. Rock solid at prop, he played 18 times for Hornets last year and scored three tries.

MARSH, centre or second row, is following in his dad's footsteps, father Derek having played at the Athletic Grounds in the 1970s. A Scottish international, he played 44 games for Oldham in seasons 2003 and 2004 before joining Batley Bulldogs.

JOHNSON, Oldham born, was the Roughyeds top try scorer in 2004 with 26. Strong winger, he totalled 43 tries in 65 appearances for the Roughyeds, but he missed nearly all the 2006 season at Halifax due to injury.

player of the year and players' player of the year at Wakefield last season.

Hulse (utility back), comes from Widnes and is equally at home at stand-off, scrum-half, hooker or full-back. Played a total of 62 Super League games for Warrington and Widnes.

Samuels (loose-forward), was a regular in Wakefield's academy team last season and was on the verge of earning a full-time contract before the change of management.

Smith (prop), signed from Halifax. Tough, uncompromising and with vast experience.

Whittaker (second row), played in Super League with Huddersfield, Widnes and Castleford before spending the latter part of 2006 at Halifax.

VISITING TODAY

DERBY RIVALS ROCHDALE FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF SUMMIT HILL

TOP GUN

Has to be hooker Dave McConnell. Starting his third season at the club, he is an exceptional organiser and a major asset. Despite interest from a host of rival National League clubs, this Scottish international re-signed for Hornets to make it a red-letter day for coach Darren Abram.

SHOOTING STAR

Can't beat full-back Chris Giles for this one. He swept the board at the club's end-of-season presentations, an accurate reflection of his form in 2006. Fans won't forget his wonder tackle at Batley. Producing many man-of-the-match

performances, he caught the eye of Super League clubs --- and no wonder. Player of the season, and with the most appearances too, he turned out 30 times and, for good measure, topped the club's try-scoring chart with 21.

ONE TO WATCH

A tongue-twisting name, but a winger who will be watched with interest this season. It has to be Balouagi Fagborun, or 'Balu' to his mates. He is likened to ex-Hornets legend Henderson Gill, and if he's half as good as Gilly he'll be okay.

CAPTAIN COURAGEOUS

Andy Gorski, second-row, is club captain and starting his fourth full season at Hornets. Always leads by example and, as in previous years, is bound to be an influential player in 2007. To retain his services, Hornets fought off a number of

clubs, and had no hesitation in so doing. A model pro, and extremely consistent, he played 20 times last year and scored five tries.

BEST OF THE REST

Rob Ball (prop), big things expected of him this year; Mark McCully (centre), top points scorer in 2006 with 160, but recovering now from a full knee reconstruction; Lee Patterson (centre or wing), used his electric pace to score 18 tries in 28 games last year; Ryan Benjafield (prop), an Aussie noted for consistency and reliability; Craig Robinson (prop), small in stature, big in heart and recovering from a hernia operation.

Kevin King (centre), ex Wakefield, devastating close in. Huge frame and a goalkicker in the bargain; Phil Hasty (stand-off), elusive and experienced half-back formerly with Hunslet, Hull KR and York; Tommy Goulden (loose-forward), played the best rugby of his career last season, then picked up a serious wrist injury. A quality operator.

DEFEAT AT HUNSLET

Hornets will be looking to benefit today from the run-out they had at Hunslet where they went down 24-16 to the NL2 club.

They played the following squad: Giles, Fagborun, Patterson, King, Andrews, Svabic, Hulse, Baldwin, McConnell, Smith, Gorski, Whittaker, Goulden, Corcoran, Benjafield, Robinson, Ball, Johnson, Blanchard, Anderson, Samuel.

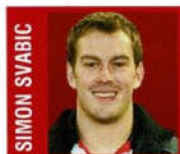
Lee Patterson, Paul Anderson, Ryan Benjafield and Simon Svabic all limped out of the game with injuries.

Coach Darren Abram wasn't despondent at the result. He

said: "The hit-out was good. We have had a good pre-season, but there's nothing like playing games (it was Hunslet's third friendly) and we were rusty in attack and defence.

"Our lack of contact found us out. Hunslet dominated the floor in attack and defence for long periods, so that's something we have to work on."

. . . AND STILL IT GOES ON



SEVEN members of the Hornets 2007 squad have played for Oldham in the recent past - three of them last season.

SIMON SVABIC made more than 100 appearances for Roughyeds before moving on to Spotland where coach Darren Abram will expect him to guide the team around the field from stand-off.

WAYNE CORCORAN has finally linked up with his hometown club after spells at Halifax and Oldham. He was used as a utility player by the Roughyeds last season, appearing in both half-back positions, loose-forward and hooker.

ANDY BAILEY joined Hornets midway through 2006 in the deal that took Phil Farrell to Oldham. He suffered a setback with a thumb injury which needed an operation,

LUCKY 13?

Hornets hope so, because that's the number of new signings they have made for 2007 -- the two from Oldham plus Eric Andrews, Simon Baldwin, Mark Blanchard, Balouagi Fagborun, John Gledhill, Gary Hulse, Johnson, Marsh, Danny Samuels, Byron Smith and Matt Whittaker.

Andrews (wing), a points machine, topped 106 for Blackpool last season and was one of the quickest wingers in NL2.

Baldwin (prop) is the most experienced of the new signings, having played nearly 130 Super League games for Sheffield, Halifax and Salford.

Blanchard (second-row), former Hull KR and York forward who averaged a try every other game for the City Knights last year.

Gledhill (second-row), ex-Huddersfield and Wakefield. Voted under-21

SADDLEWORTH SPORTS

93 CHEW VALLEY ROAD • GREENFIELD
OLDHAM • OL3 7JJ • 01457 872515
e-mail: saddsports@lycros.co.uk

GUMSHIELDS
STICK MITTS
KICKING TEES
RUGBY BALLS
TRAINING LADDERS
ARMGUARDS
HELMETS
PROTECTIVE VESTS
TACKLE SHIELDS
SHIELD CONES

OLDHAM'S PREMIER STOCKIST OF RUGBY KIT and EQUIPMENT

OPTIMUM
KOOGA
CANTERBURY
GILBERT
CLASSIC
PUMA
MITRE
CATRASPORT
HALBRO
RUGBY-TECH
WALSH

LTS
Landsowne Road
Chadderton
Oldham
OL9 9EF



Tel: 0161 626 1141
Fax: 0161 628 7078
www.ltshaulage.co.uk

LOW LOADER HIRE EXTENDABLE TRAILERS ESCORTED LOADS

LTS

01706 880884

BELVOIR!

the lettings specialist

www.belvoirlettings.com

View all our properties at
www.belvoirlettings.com/oldham
or call us on 01706 880884

R! KEYHOLE SURGERY!

for landlords

Belvoir Oldham
A Shirt Sponsor of Oldham
Roughyeds RLFC

70 Market St, Shaw, Oldham OL2 8NP
T: 01706 880884 F: 01706 881884
Email oldham@belvoirlettings.com

- > NO LET NO FEES!
- > Free Property Appraisal
- > Full Management
- > Rent Collection Only
- > Tenant Find
- > Property Insurance
- > Rent & Legal Protection
- > Rent Guarantees
- > Full Inventories
- > Property Inspections
- > Accompanied Viewings
- > Referenced Tenants
- > Innovative Website
- > Buy to Let
- > Property Sourcing
- > Open 6 Days a week

men and matters

with Roger Halstead



BY the time you read this programme, Roughyeds will have announced no fewer than NINE sponsorship deals for the season that starts today with another major agreement set to be unveiled next week.

Of the nine already in the public domain, five were renewed -- always a sure sign that sponsors are happy with the partnership --- and four were new ones, namely with the William Quinn Group, Shaw-based Belvoir, Lees-based Fit4Sport and finally Spindles Town Square Shopping Centre. The five renewals were with Wrigley Claydon solicitors, First Bus, Better Health gym, Totalplus Communications Ltd and the Oldham Evening Chronicle.

The Manchester-based William Quinn Group are main club and shirt sponsors in a deal covering two years. The deal was unveiled when Roughyeds directors Chris Hamilton and Sean Whitehead travelled to Trafford Park for a photo-shoot with the company's managing director Bill Quinn on the site of a giant former Hotpoint factory which the Quinn group --- one of the largest of its kind in the UK --- was demolishing.

Cameras were also out at the launch of the other three new deals, and Phil Hayward, the club physio, had to be game for a laugh at Fit4Sport in Lees because the medical products suppliers will have their logo emblazoned on Phil's backside --- or at least, to be more accurate, on the rear end of his match-day kit!

Up at Belvoir in Shaw, Keith Egan and his wife Carol, who own and run the franchise for the property letting specialists, were delighted to get further involved in the sport Keith loves. He is chairman of Saddleworth Rangers youth development and also a rugby league referee and a member of the Oldham RL Referees' Society.

He also has, as older readers will testify, a rather famous rugby league surname. He can't claim to be related to the legendary Wigan and Great Britain hooker of that name, but he reveals that his nickname throughout his school life in Tameside was "Joe". I wonder why.

Totalplus owners Paul Gough and Bob Thompson, Mancunians both, have loved rugby league since they first came together as props in the old Tameside Borough team. Goughie used to be a Salford fan, but Bob worked his magic on him and now there's no keener Roughyeds fan anywhere than PG.

So to next week, and sponsorship deal No 10. Congratulations to all concerned.

Keith Brennan can be excused today if he shapes to turn left into the first door on the corridor at Boundary Park which leads to the dressing rooms. He has, after all, done it scores of times in his years at the Roughyeds as player and assistant coach. It's the changing room marked 'Home Team'.

Until midway through last season it was home-from-home for the former scrum-half or hooker, who made more than 100 appearances for Roughyeds as a player and then stayed on

at the club in a coaching role.

During his time here he had numerous derby battles with the Hornets. Who will forget the 2001 play-off semi-final when Keith scored one of the Roughyeds five tries on a day when Mike Ford's men got off the canvas to win 39-32 with a remarkable fightback?

But for Keith the boot today is on the other foot. He's Hornets assistant coach now and his job will be to help plot the downfall of his hometown club.

"It will be a strange feeling," he said. "It's the first time I've been back to Boundary Park since I left and it will seem odd going into the visitors dressing room --- I haven't been in there since I played for Shaw Rhinos against Saddleworth in a Standard Cup final about eight years ago."

There was a mini reunion the other night when Keith's dad, Tommy, a proud Irishman, celebrated his 70th birthday with a party at the St Anne's club. It was a good old Irish bash. Father Dolan was there, as was Roughyeds kit man Paul Hulbert and another ex-Roughyed who will be on Hornets duty today, Shaun Gartland.

And who spent the night sharing tales and yarns of Roughyeds battles lost and won? Leo Casey, John Hough, Jason Clegg. What a front-row that was. Happy days.

SKY Sports have agreed a deal with the RFL to show NL1 and NL2 games on Thursday nights for the next two years.

One match will be picked out each week to be screened live as part of a three-hour rugby league special, also featuring Boots 'N All.

Clubs have welcomed the deal and Roughyeds are no exception. Said chairman Chris Hamilton: "This is a welcome bonus. I didn't think it would happen because the RFL have been trying to get Sky to cover the National Leagues for a long time."

"First and foremost we want increased exposure and this deal will give us that, although it will be primarily NL1 games that will be shown."

"Playing on a Thursday won't be welcomed by some, but it is worth doing for the benefit of the game as a whole."

FINALLY, congratulations to Sarah Robinson, who was 21 last week. There are few keener Roughyeds fans than Sarah, who has given up her Saturday mornings week on week, year on year to work in the club shop. She's still helping out, even though she's a young Mum with twins. That's dedication for you.

HAVE A FLUTTER --- AND HELP US TO TAKE THE CLUB FORWARD

OLDHAM R.L.F.C CLUB CASH



**FOR £1 A WEEK
YOU CAN WIN**

£300 EVERY WEEK GUARANTEED

£100 EVERY WEEK GUARANTEED

£10 x 5 EVERY WEEK GUARANTEED

Plus

Jackpot last Friday monthly

* European holiday mini-break
(courtesy of Travelcare,
Henshaw Street)

* Meal for two at Clayton Green

Plus

* In June . . . £500 vouchers for
Mann's Furniture, Yorkshire Sreet

* In July . . . Dream Holiday
(courtesy of Travelcare,
Henshaw Street)

* In December . . . £500 vouchers
for Mann's Bed Store, Union Street

Automatic pay-out - no need to claim

RING JOHN 0161 628 3677

OLDHAM R.L.F.C

FIVE ALIVE



**FOR £5 A WEEK
YOU CAN WIN**

£500 A MONTH GUARANTEED

2 match-day SPONSORS SUITE PLACES

£25 VOUCHER FOR CLUB SHOP

Plus

Built-in benefits as follows:

* Season's car park pass

* Club tie for men

* Tymbaktu voucher for ladies

* mention in programme

* Lunches with speaker

* Use of BP lounge and bar

* 10% sponsorship discount

Subs paid by cheque (quarterly
in advance) or by standing order

Automatic pay out - no claim needed

RING JANET 0161 628 3677

Keeping the dream **ALIVE** --- **FIVE ALIVE!**

(Roll call of members -- fancy
joining them?)

John McAndrew
Saddleworth Sports
FR Elsworth
Eddie Luckraft
David Webster
JFS Mortgage Services (John
Smith)
J Aubrey
Chris Broadbent
Dorothy M Johnston
Mortgage Solutions (Dave
Bassett)
Lansdowne Trading Services
(Chris Stanley)
Michael Ackroyd
Clifford Bardsley
David Whitehead
David Lord
Janet Yewdale
Nigel Marland
Christopher Hamilton
Jeffrey Bates
Iain Ashworth
Roger Halstead
Steve Deakin
Nick Henry
Interior Door Systems (Joe
Collins)
James Rochford
Noel Brady
Gareth Owen
Roy Wood

Denise Buckley
Moorside Electrical Contractors
(Neil Haughton)
Valerie Wynn
Brian Tranter
Thomas Joyce
Mick Harrop
Terry Bailey
John Barrie Gallagher
Terry Kelly
Cheshire Telecom Ltd (Sean
Lynch)
Robert Nixon
Derek King
Frank Taylor
Colin Pyke
Ernest Mayall
I and C Kershaw
Personal Tyres and Exhausts
(Pete Beswick)
Savvas Eleftheriou
Total Plus Communications
Total Plus Communications
Clarice Stevens
Sue and Mike Kivlin
William Hannen
The Bs
Promotional Print (Eric Bradley)
Tracey Bradley
Michael Bradshaw
Shirley Mullaney

Keith Mullaney
John Barrett
Raymond Sankey
Cyril Farnworth
John Heap
Mick Slicker
Terry Flanagan
Dave McGealy
Noise Killer Acoustics (Steve
Bithell)
B Giddens
Gerald Fitzgerald
Nany Fitzgerald
Jack Buckley
Ultan McGovern (Oldham
Electrical Supplies)
Mark Antony Kitchens (Mark
Harrington)
Martin Hunter
David Macauley (Chartered
Surveyors)
David Foden
Matthew Chambers
Oldham Advertiser
Paul Robinson
Mick Kilgannon
Ray Broadbent
Iain Taylor
Joseph Lawrence Perrins
Costin Electrical Services Ltd
(Phil Costin)

Keen supporters Jeffrey Bates of Shaw and Keith Mullaney of Mossley were the first two £500 winners in the new Five Alive lottery, launched by the club at the end of November. A third monthly draw was due to be held as this programme went to press so another lucky £500 winner can expect to be featured in next week's programme for the Swinton game.

In each case, of course, other members won second and third prizes -- namely two places in the hospitality suite at a home match and a £25 voucher for the club shop.

Jeffrey, the first £500 winner, was not present at the inaugural Five Alive luncheon in the social club, when the draw was made, because he was away on holiday. Imagine his delight when he got home to be informed by the club that his holiday was paid for! And imagine the club's surprise when Jeffrey told them: "It will come in handy because

I'm off again soon --- to see my daughter and family in Sweden." Talk about good timing.

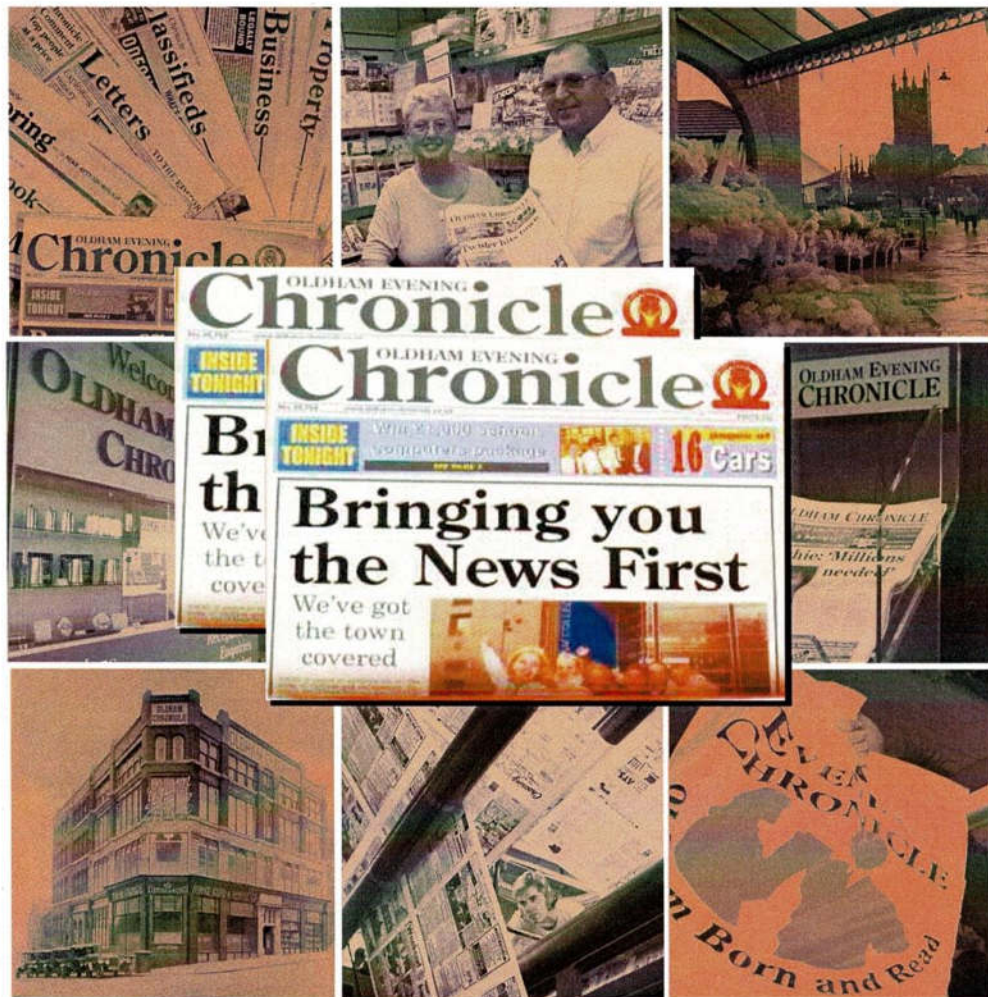
Around 50 Five Alive members attended and enjoyed the first luncheon of the year at which referee Colin Morris was guest speaker. He gave an insight into refereeing, and brought the house down with some of his 'inside' stories.

The next lunch is booked for Friday, February 23, 2007 in the social club. The speaker will be announced in the Swinton programme.

The second £500 winner, Keith, owns and runs H Mullaney and Son (Skip Hire) Ltd of Mossley with his wife Shirley and son Andrew.

Keith and Shirley are season-ticket holders, Support Group members, backers of the lotteries, frequent sponsors and regulars at most fund-raising events. "I think you can count on two hands the games we've missed since the Roughyeds were formed in 1997," said Keith.

OLDHAM RLFC
LOTTERIES



Make the most *of your* evening!

News, sport entertainment,
houses, cars, travel and more.

OLDHAM EVENING
Chronicle



172 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1EQ

Tel: 0161 633 2121 Fax: 0161 627 0905 www.oldham-chronicle.co.uk

journalistic license

by Matthew Chambers

RELATIONS between Oldham and Rochdale have been a little tense, shall we say, following the cancellation of the Law Cup.

But one benefit of the pre-season fixture having fallen by the wayside is that today's game carries that little bit of added spice. As if it needed it.

Some coaches will tell you that this Northern Rail Cup competition is nothing but a warm-up for the league season — a chance to work the muscles, brush up rusty techniques and try out a few set moves. Today's game?

Glorified training, in front of a half-decent crowd. But members of that same crowd will tell you very different. Oldham v Rochdale: it always matters.

For any supporter of these two sides, even a simple stroll to the photocopier at work can be a nightmare should you have to pass winking rival fans on the way after a defeat, whispering innuendoes concerning the scoreline.

As a proud winner, however, the same journey can be made with a broad smile and a spring in the step.

At the risk of sounding partisan it would be a pleasant change if Oldham won here at Boundary Park today. What with all the positive events off the field — a new chairman in Bill Quinn, the Inland Revenue debt having been repaid in full, an intriguing new squad having been assembled by coach Steve Deakin — a few victories on grass wouldn't go amiss.

A total of 19 consecutive losses has to be brought to an end at some point. Inevitable defeat after inevitable defeat is no fun for anyone (including the poor bloke writing about it).

After the highly encouraging 42-6 friendly win at home to a young Warrington's team a week-and-a-half ago, victory today isn't out of the question by any means.

Wily stand-off Neil Roden was the main figure responsible for cutting the Wolves defence to ribbons on that night and he looks set to be a key figure for Oldham this season.

Other impressive debutants included hookers Simeon Hoyle and Andy Crabtree, former St Helens academy winger Gareth Langley and Halifax prop forward Jason Boults. All should have a big part to play today.

The Hornets will provide stiffer opposition than Warrington did, of course. Coach Darren Abram has recruited well in the close season and his squad now includes the likes of Balouagi Fagborun, Gary Hulse and Byron Smith.

In addition, Abram can call on a raft of players with recent experience of playing for the Roughyeds: Simon Svabic (last season's Oldham player of the year), Wayne Corcoran, Andy Bailey, Paul Anderson, Iain Marsh and Nick Johnson.

It won't be easy for Oldham to beat such a talented side — but a positive mindset goes a long way in sport, and the Roughyeds certainly have that in spades at the moment.

* THE RFL's controversial new points system comes in to play for the first time today and it promises to bring an added element of intrigue to tight matches.

It could also provoke some bizarre situations, though. A team losing by 13 points with a couple of minutes remaining creating a position to go for a point-stealing drop-goal isn't a situation you would have come across last season.

On the other hand, one imagines that should either Oldham or Rochdale be leading their opponents by 12 points with the game heading for its conclusion, they will also be going that extra mile in order to deny their rivals a point.

The clubs will just have to suck it and see, but I've got a feeling it could prove to be a positive innovation for the Northern Rail Cup and National Leagues.

Matthew

Destination Blackpool



2007 Northern Rail Cup Final

Bloomfield Road
Blackpool
15 July



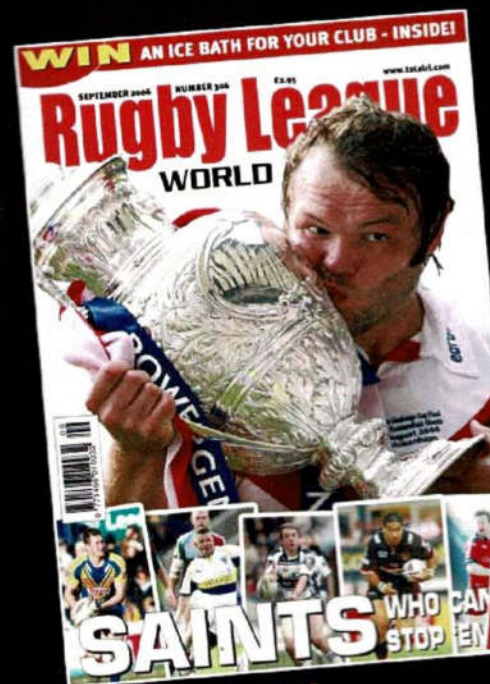
...enjoy the journey

Proud sponsor of the Northern Rail Cup

www.northernrail.org



LEAGUE LEADERS!



EVERY MONTH



EVERY MONDAY

Daily, weekly or monthly - we've got Rugby League covered from top to bottom!

For Rugby League World and Rugby League Express, place a regular order at your newsagent or call our subscription hotline on 01484 401895.

For the latest news as it happens, visit our website at www.totalrl.com



EVERY DAY



2007 fixtures

DATE	OPPONENTS	CUP	VENUE	K. O.	RESULT	W/L	ATT
31/01/07	Warrington Wolves	Friendly	Home	7.45pm	42-6	W	789
11/02/07	Rochdale Hornets	NRC	Home	3.00pm			
18/02/07	Swinton Lions	NRC	Home	3.00pm			
25/02/07	Dewsbury Rams	NRC	Away	3.00pm			
04/03/07	Rochdale Hornets	NRC	Away	3.00pm			
11/03/07	Carnegie Challenge Cup 3						
18/03/07	Dewsbury Rams	NRC	Home	3.00pm			
25/03/07	Swinton Lions	NRC	Away	3.00pm			
01/04/07	Carnegie Challenge Cup 4						
06/04/07	Featherstone Rovers	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
09/04/07	Hunslet Hawks	NL2	Away	3.30pm			
15/04/07	Blackpool Panthers	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
22/04/07	NRC quarter finals						
29/04/07	Keighley Cougars	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
04/05/07	Celtic Crusaders	NL2	Away	7.30pm			
13/05/07	Swinton Lions	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
20/05/07	Barrow Raiders	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
26/05/07	London Skolars	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
03/06/07	Workington Town	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
10/06/07	York City Knights	NL2	Home*	3.00pm			
17/06/07	Featherstone Rovers	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
24/06/07	Keighley Cougars	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
01/07/07	Gateshead Thunder	NL2	Home*	3.00pm			
08/07/07	Swinton Lions	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
15/07/07	Barrow Raiders	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
22/07/07	Hunslet Hawks	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
29/07/07	York City Knights	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
05/08/07	Blackpool Panthers	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
12/08/07	Workington Town	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
19/08/07	Gateshead Thunder	NL2	Away	3.00pm			
02/09/07	Celtic Crusaders	NL2	Home	3.00pm			
09/09/07	London Skolars	NL2	Home	3.00pm			

Play offs will take place on Sundays, September 16, 23 and 30 with the Grand Final on Sunday 7th October.
Home* venue to be arranged.

Key

NRC – Northern Rail Cup
NL2 – National League Division 2

today's sponsors

Sponsorship packages available.
All sizes catered for, large or small, individuals or party groups.

Please contact the office on

0161 628 3677

for further information and pricing

PLAYERS AFTER MATCH
REFRESHMENTS

**TAYLOR'S FRUIT AND VEG
(OLDHAM MARKET) AND
ASHWORTH'S BUTCHERS
(OLDHAM MARKET)
EXPRESS DAIRIES**

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

Allow everyone to enjoy the game.

Impact

PROUD SUPPLIERS TO



**Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd
'THE ROUGHYEDS'**