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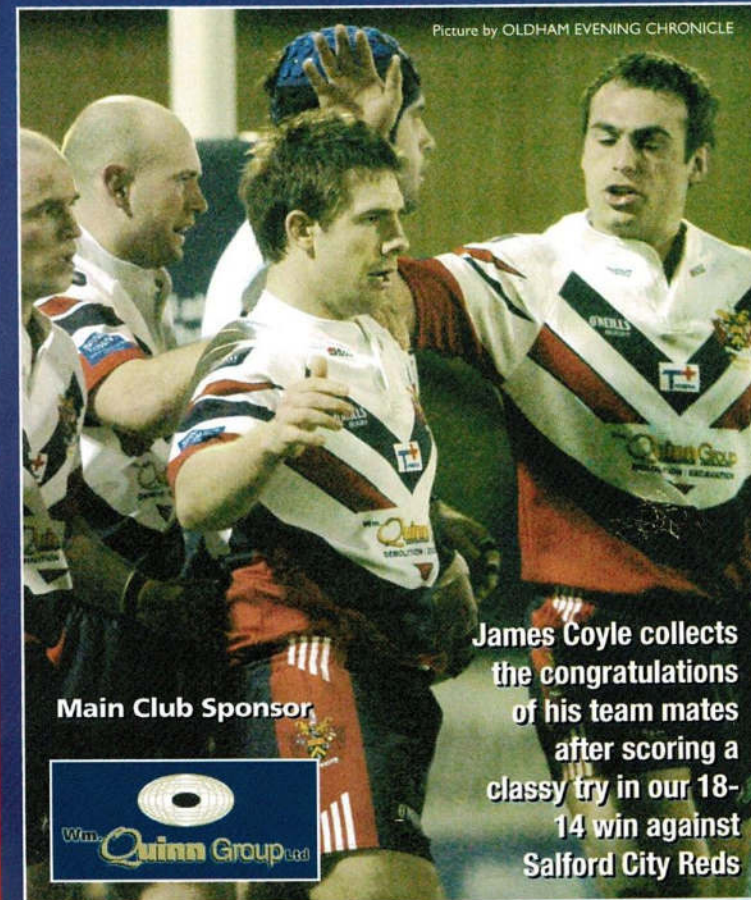


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Picture by OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE



James Coyle collects
the congratulations
of his team mates
after scoring a
classy try in our 18-
14 win against
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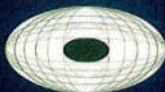
v Rochdale Hornets

Northern Rail Cup

Friday 29th February 2008

Kick-Off 8.00pm





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HOW THE NORTHERN RAIL CUP TABLES ARE SHAPING UP

By Nigel Marland

Thought I'd put these tables in the programme because if you don't take the trade press I doubt you'll have seen them.

The surprise team so far must be Gateshead who top their group. York's draw last week with newly promoted Featherstone will have also shocked a lot of people. We mustn't write off Doncaster who, whilst only having two wins, have only narrowly lost their other two and were winning against Celtic last week with 2 minutes to go. Swinton too are in the same boat and should be ignored at your peril. Leigh and Barrow look strong whilst Widnes are struggling and, don't forget, will have points deducted in the league programme. Then there is that team who play at Boundary Park who, fingers crossed, look as if they may, for the first time, make some sort of impact on this competition after the wonderful result against Salford last week. The clubs finishing first and second in each of the six major groups go through to the sudden-death knock-out stages of the competition, plus the three best third-placed teams and the winner of the all-amateur Group Seven, making 16 teams in total to go into the hat.

The dates for the knockout matches are Sunday, April 27 (last 16); Sunday, May 25 (last eight); Sunday, June 15 (semi-finals); Sunday, July 6 (final at Bloomfield Road, Blackpool).

NORTHERN RAIL CUP TABLES

Group One Table

Team	P	W	D	L	BP	F	A	Diff	Pts
Halifax	3	3	0	0	0	142	64	78	9
Whitehaven	4	3	0	1	0	100	86	14	9
Keighley	3	1	0	2	0	72	114	-71	3
Workington	4	0	0	4	2	54	104	-50	1

Group Two Table

Team	P	W	D	L	BP	F	A	Diff	Pts
Gateshead	4	3	0	1	0	118	92	26	9
Featherstone	3	2	1	1	0	136	98	38	8
York	3	0	1	2	1	52	88	-36	3

Group Three Table

Team	P	W	D	L	BP	F	A	Diff	Pts
Celtic Crusaders	4	4	0	0	0	112	58	54	12
Doncaster	4	2	0	2	2	96	78	18	8
Sheffield	4	1	0	3	1	74	112	-38	4
London Skolars	4	1	0	3	0	92	126	-34	3

Group Four Table

Team	P	W	D	L	BP	F	A	Diff	Pts
Salford	4	3	0	1	1	156	50	106	10
Oldham	3	2	0	1	0	52	74	-22	6
Swinton	4	1	0	3	2	100	140	-40	5
Rochdale	3	1	0	2	1	82	126	-44	4

Group Five Table

Team	P	W	D	L	BP	F	A	Diff	Pts
Dewsbury	4	3	0	1	1	136	75	61	10
Batley	3	2	0	1	0	97	62	35	6
Hunslet	4	0	0	4	1	56	180	-124	1

Group Six Table

Team	P	W	D	L	BP	F	A	Diff	Pts
Leigh	4	4	0	0	0	109	54	55	12
Barrow	3	2	0	1	0	88	68	20	6
Widnes	3	1	0	2	2	56	39	17	5
Blackpool	4	0	0	4	1	50	142	-92	1

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From the Boardroom

With Chris Hamilton...



I make no apologies for starting tonight's notes with a reference to last week's magnificent performance against the full timers from Salford.

Nobody needs to tell me that it is only one game and we need to keep that level of consistency up - I know all that - but performances like that - especially over a full eighty minutes are rare - even in Super League or international games - and it is a long time since an Oldham team for either the new or old club put in a stint like the team did last week for the whole of the game.

It would be unfair to pick out individuals from a performance like that because it really was a team effort from 1-17 and everybody must have been drained both mentally and physically at the end of the game.

What was especially pleasing was the way in which the lads had the strength of character to come back and win the game after Salford had taken the lead so near to the end of the match. There is no doubt however that it would have been a travesty had we not won that game.

One of the bizarre twists of sport means that as a club you strive for performances

like that but when you get one you have to talk it down so that players etc don't get carried away but when performances are sometimes below par you have to talk them up to keep morale high!

There is no doubt though that tonight's opponents Rochdale will soon bring our lads back to reality if they are not so already. Following a defeat at home to Swinton last week which means they will be smarting and their Law Cup victory over us a few weeks ago we should be in no doubt whatsoever as to what level of performance is needed tonight to give ourselves a chance of another three points as we try to secure progression from the group into the knock out stages of the Northern Rail Cup.

With two games against the same team in the space of five days there will need to be professionalism and hard work, but as we said before the lads showed that in abundance last Friday.

The support the team got in the second half was great and was reminiscent of old times but several people commented on how quiet the atmosphere was from large sections of the crowd in the first half. I know I say it every week but you really can make a difference to the team so please get behind the lads as they try to get the win over our local rivals.

Enjoy the game

Chris Hamilton

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CoachesComments

With Steve Deakin...



Welcome to tonight's game for what should be another great spectacle and hopefully another win for us as we try to make the play offs

for the first time in the pre season Northern Rail competition.

Rochdale are always tough opposition and I am confident that Bobby Goulding's players will not disappoint anyone in that regard tonight, as they look to come back from the loss last week to Swinton while we look to build on the great result that we had in victory over Salford. It is also a chance to welcome back several past players to Boundary Park, notably Simon Svabic, David Best, Chris Hough, David Newton, Andy Gorey, Craig Farrimond and the assistant coach, Phil Farrell. I know rivalry exists between clubs and I would not want that to change but I find the qualities of Rugby League players to be so praiseworthy and qualities I am proud to be a part of. I am so in respect of all opposition players that I could never find myself feeling bitter to a RIVAL, only wanting to beat them on the day and then enjoy a drink with them afterwards.

I am sure that all the fans that watched us last week were encouraged by the efforts of all the players and could see that the work that has been done in the off season can pay its dividends, the key now is to make that our level of performance on a week in week out

basis, as consistency is the major element needed, if we are to have a successful season. The down side to the game was the loss off Darryl Cardiss with a dislocated shoulder and though we don't yet know the full extent of his injuries as we go to press, it is fairly obvious that the injury will keep him out for a good while. This only goes to show that the future is laid fairly and squarely in the hands of the gods and that the best laid plans can be ruined or at best disrupted by injury. So when trying to forecast the future there are too many intangibles to make crystal ball reading one of the productive habits of a coach. That said I am sure that we are a threat to anyone on any given day and if we look after the things that we can control then we are more than capable of beating last year's efforts on the pitch and going all the way to NLI, even if we have to go through the play offs to do it.

Another aspect of the night that gave me great encouragement was the introduction of the reserve grade players on the pitch, yet another positive step forward for the club and another outlet for the fans to show their support. I look forward to seeing you at their games where we can have an informal chat about things, something that I am unable to do at 1st team games with all the press and sponsor commitments straight after the match, but I do like to talk to the fans and am sure that I will get plenty of chances to do so.

Hope you enjoy the game, all the best

Deaks

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EIGHT NEW MEN IN A 26-STRONG SQUAD

The arrival last month of Craig Littler and last week of Alex Wilkinson means that Roughyeds have now assembled a 26-man squad for the 2008 campaign, including their eight new men -- Simon Baldwin, Marcus St Hilaire, Danny Halliwell, Phil Joseph, Mick Nannyn, Daryl Cardiss, Tommy Grundy and Tommy Goulden.

CHRIS BAINES (back-row): Signed on a two-year deal for 2008 and 2009 following the good impression he made on Roughyeds in the previous two seasons. Aged 23, he joined the club originally on loan from Warrington. Toured New Zealand with Great Britain Young Lions in 2003 after representing his country at youth level against Australia and France. A product of Wigan St Pat's.

SIMON BALDWIN (prop): One of the most experienced forwards in the squad, formerly with Leigh, Halifax, Sheffield, Salford, Rochdale Hornets and Whitehaven. Having ended last season at Whitehaven and having had two spells with hometown Leigh, Simon has made his seventh move in a long career to sign a one-year Roughyeds deal. Made 127 Super League appearances, mainly in the second-row, but now widely regarded as a prop.

JASON BOULTS (prop): This 24-year-old former Bradford and Halifax workhorse was a real stalwart of the Oldham pack in 2007. He played in 25 games and for much of the season he was first-choice No 8 after producing an outstanding performance in the win at Celtic Crusaders in May. A wholehearted grafter with a huge engine, Jason never takes a backward step.

MATTY BROOKS (half-back/hooker): Joined Roughyeds last season on loan from Hull KR, scoring two tries in 17 appearances and ending the campaign with a terrific show as a substitute in the NL2 Grand Final against Featherstone at Headingley. Now a fully-fledged Oldham player on a one-year deal he will have to make the adjustment from full-time pro with Rovers to part-time footballer with Roughyeds. Turned pro for Bradford, then on to Hull KR. A native of East Hull.

DARYL CARDISS (utility back): Aged 30, this hugely experienced utility back has played for Wigan, Halifax, Warrington and Widnes. Joined Wigan from Hunslet Boys Club in 1994. Made a total of 142 Super League appearances and scored 46 tries in the elite competition. Enjoyed a fine stay at Halifax, for whom he scored 39 tries in 99 outings.

JAMES COYLE (scrum-half): Now contracted to Roughyeds until November, 2009, this talented 22-year-old joined the club from Wigan midway through last season and made an immediate impact. His 14 appearances yielded six tries, but it was the vast

number of tries he made for others that underlined his real potential. Another product of Wigan St Pat's, he was a shooting star in Wigan's academy system before spending the whole of the 2006 season on loan at Widnes.

TOMMY GOULDEN (back-row): Equally at home in the second-row or at loose, 26-year-old Tommy was a key member of the Rochdale Hornets pack in 2006 and 2007, having been signed from amateur rugby in Leigh by Bobbie Goulding in 2005. Leigh born, he picked up every possible honour as an amateur, including captaincy of BARLA Great Britain, before turning pro for Rochdale.

TOMMY GRUNDY (back-row): Aged 22, Leigh-lad Tommy is one of the younger members of the Roughyeds squad. Can play equally well in any of the back-row spots as well as centre. Turned pro for Warrington as an 18-year-old, then played for Leigh and Blackpool before returning to his hometown club, Leigh, for 2006 and 2007. Joined Roughyeds on a two-year deal.

DANNY HALLIWELL (centre): One of eight new signings, 26-year-old Leigh-born Danny was on loan at Leigh, from Salford, last season and he has also worn the colours of Halifax, Warrington and Wakefield. Can play anywhere across the back division and, like many of his Oldham colleagues, has considerable Super League experience. His 43 top-flight outings comprise three for Wakefield, 10 for Wigan, 25 for Halifax and five for Leigh.

SIMEON HOYLE (hooker): Edinburgh-born Simeon is half-way through a two-year contract with Roughyeds. Aged 28, and formerly with Keighley Cougars and Halifax, he is a hooker of the old school, tough in defence but with an ability to make things happen from dummy half. In 2003 he helped Keighley to win promotion to NL1 by beating Sheffield in the NL2 Grand Final.

PHIL JOSEPH (utility): Turned pro with Huddersfield Giants and, as a teenager, played 14 Super League games for the Giants in 2004. Moved to Swinton Lions in 2005, scored 11 tries in 29 games, and was named NL2 player of the year. Suitably impressed, Hull KR signed him on a two-year deal, but after one season at Craven Park he left the Super League-bound Robins to join Halifax, from whom Oldham signed him on a two-year contract.

GARETH LANGLEY (wing): Pacy, and a good finisher, 'Gaz' joined Roughyeds prior to the 2007 season after five seasons at St Helens. He was Saints academy player of the year in 2005 and runner-up in 2006. Played at Salford as a teenager before joining his hometown club at Knowsley Road. In 30 games for Oldham last season, he scored 13 tries and kicked 35 goals for a points haul of 122.

CRAIG LITTLER (centre): St Helens-born Craig scored six tries in 27 Oldham appearances in his first year with Roughyeds, 2007. Now back at the club after a close-season trip to Australia, Craig is on a two-year contract and will be hopeful of renewing his long-standing centre-wing partnership with Gareth Langley. They played alongside each other for several seasons in the St Helens academy sides.

RICHARD MERVILL (prop): Formerly with Halifax and Keighley, Richard had a superb season in his first for the

Roughyeds in 2007. Walked off with two major awards at the end-of-year Awards Night and was rewarded with a two-year contract for 2008 and 2009. Suffered a broken hand in one of his early games in 2007 and was similarly unlucky in the build-up to the 2008 campaign when he dislocated an elbow in training. There will be no complaints from the fans if he bounces back this year like he did last.

MICK NANNYN (centre): A points machine - one of the best goalkickers in the English game - Mick has starred for Swinton, Rochdale Hornets, Whitehaven and Widnes and has smashed club scoring records wherever he has been. He took the Widnes record off Jonathan Davies in 2006. He played 29 games for Widnes last season, scoring 28 tries and kicking 161 goals for a points haul of 434. Also has the distinction of having played in each of the last four NL1 Grand Finals, two for Whitehaven and two for Widnes.

PAUL O'CONNOR (full-back): A Great Britain Students International, Widnes-born Paul played briefly on loan for Oldham in 2006, then returned in 2007 on contract having let it be known to the club that, in the May, he would be leaving for a pre-arranged sabbatical in the southern hemisphere. He had a great first half of the season but he didn't play again for the club until he reappeared in the first pre-season friendly of 2008 at Leeds. Having signed a new two-year deal he is set fair for a long association with the Roughyeds.

LUCAS ONYANGO (wing): A real flier, aged 26, Lucas grew up in rugby union in his native Kenya. Has played for Sale Sharks, Manchester and Leigh in rugby union, and Widnes Vikings in League. He had a great season for Oldham in 2007 when he scored 18 tries in 23 outings only to damage a shoulder at the end of the year. He entered the 2008 season waiting for an operation on that shoulder and was expected to be sidelined at least until the start of the NL2 campaign at Easter.

ROB ROBERTS (back row): Joined Roughyeds in late July, 2007 and landed a match-winning drop goal at York in a 15-14 win on his debut. Played Super League with Hull, Halifax and Huddersfield and also represented several clubs in the National League. Known as 'Two Bobs' - for obvious reasons - he put his career back on track with Oldham after a difficult time at Leigh and revelled in his new responsibilities as captain.

ADAM ROBINSON (back row): A tough-as-teak young Yorkshireman, Adam played much of his early rugby at Wakefield. Aged 21 he turned down Featherstone in order to sign for the Roughyeds last year from Doncaster. A product of the Stanley Rangers amateur club in Wakefield, Adam thrives on his defensive duties but his first campaign in an Oldham shirt was cut short by a shoulder injury on which he had an operation. He is determined to bounce back, having signed a new two-year deal.

NEIL RODEN (stand-off): Neil rejoined Oldham from Leigh in 2007 after leaving the club initially to go to Batley in 2004. In his first stint here he scored 290 points (68 tries and 18 drop goals) in 142 games over four and a half seasons. He has overtaken Mark Sibson as the 'new' club's leading all-time try scorer. Last season, he was an influential midfield organiser,

playing in all 34 games and forming a more-than-useful half-back pairing in the second half of the season with his fellow Wiganer James Coyle.

LEE SANDERSON (half-back): One of the unluckiest players in the game, Lee is currently on extensive rehab after a major knee reconstruction -- and it wasn't the first time he had been under the knife. Extremely talented, and a gifted footballer and goalkicker, his father, Mark, played for Rochdale Hornets and his uncle, Ian, was a hooker at Oldham in Watersheddings days. Lee has previously played for Leigh, London, Rochdale and Barrow.

WARREN STEVENS (prop): Yet another vastly experienced performer with more than a century of Super League outings on his CV. This former Warrington and Leigh stalwart was playing with Blackpool last season on a match-to-match basis when Roughyeds boss Steve Deakin invited him to accept a more permanent arrangement with the Roughyeds. He played only a handful of games at the back end of last season, but Deaks has a load of faith in him as underlined by his new two-year contract.

MARCUS ST HILAIRE (wing/full-back): A star with Leeds Rhinos, Huddersfield Giants and Bradford Bulls, 30-year-old Marcus has joined Oldham on a two-year deal. He played 24 Super League games last season, 2007, representing Bradford 19 times on the wing, once as a substitute and four times as fullback when deputising for Michael Platt. His record speaks for itself -- 39 tries in 111 outings for Leeds; 37 tries in 74 games for Huddersfield; and 14 tries in 39 games for Bradford.

SAID TAMGHART (back row): A French international, Said has represented his country at every level, including full Test matches against Australia and New Zealand. Came under the influence of Oldham coach Steve Deakin when both were at UTC, better known now as Perpignan-based Catalans Dragons. Said was popular with fans in his first season at Oldham when he made 29 appearances, most of them coming off the bench as an impact forward.

ALEX WILKINSON (utility): anywhere Alex has re-signed to the end of November, 2008. After three seasons with his hometown club, the former Bradford, Huddersfield, London and Hull player was resigned to retiring from the sport when he joined the police. It looked as though his appearance in the NL2 Grand Final against Featherstone last October would be his last, but Alex has now established that he is able to play so long as his police commitments are not affected. He has scored 21 tries in 71 games for the Roughyeds -- 25 appearances in 2005, 16 in 2006 and 30 in 2007. Twelve of his 21 tries were also scored last year.

LEE WINGFIELD (utility): Played for Great Britain at amateur level in Russia, France and Australia, but desperately unlucky with injuries since he turned pro for Oldham on a two-year deal for 2006 and 2007. In top form early last year until he broke a hand and then suffered a serious knee injury against Swinton in his first game back. Currently on rehab after an operation, but hoping to be fit to make his comeback in the next few weeks.


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January

Sun 13th	LEEDS RHINOS A	3:00pm	4-50	6,340
Sun 20th	HULL KR	H 3:00pm	Postponed	
Sun 27th	ROCHDALE A	3:00pm	20-26	1,108

February

NRC Fri 1st	SWINTON	H 8:00pm	22-20	848
NRC Fri 8th	SALFORD A	8:00pm	12-40	4,224
NRC Sun 17th	ROCHDALE A	3:00pm	Postponed	
NRC Fri 22nd	SALFORD	H 8:00pm	18-14	1,350
NRC Fri 29th	ROCHDALE	H 8:00pm		

March

Sun 9th	CHALL CUP 3rd ROUND			
NRC Sun 16th	SWINTON A	3:00pm		
NL Fri 21st	ROCHDALE A	3:00pm		
NL Mon 24th	HUNSLET	H 3:00pm		
NL Sun 30th	YORK	H 3:00pm		

April

Sun 6th	NORTHERN RAIL CUP QR			
NL Sun 13th	KEIGHLEY A	3:00pm		
Sun 20th	CHALL CUP 4th ROUND			
NL Sun 27th	ROCHDALE	H 3:00pm		

May

NL Mon 5th	BLACKPOOL	H 3:00pm		
NL Sat 10th	LONDON A	3:00pm		
Sun 11th	CHALL CUP 5th ROUND			

NL Sun 18th	SWINTON	H 3:00pm
NL Sat 24th	GATESHEAD A	6:30pm
Sun 25th	NORTHERN RAIL CUP QF	
NL Fri 30th	DONCASTER A	8:00pm

June

Sun 1st	CHALL CUP QF	
NL Sun 8th	LONDON	H 3:00pm
NL Sun 15th	HUNSLET A	3:00pm
Sun 15th	NORTHERN RAIL CUP SF	
NL Sun 22nd	BLACKPOOL A	3:00pm
NL Sun 29th	GATESHEAD	H 3:00pm

July

NL Sun 6th	WORKINGTON A	3:00pm
Sun 6th	NORTH RAIL CUP FINAL	
NL Fri 11th	BARROW A	7:30pm
NL Thur 17th	DONCASTER	H 7:30pm
NL Sun 27th	KEIGHLEY	H 3:00pm
Sun 27th	CHALLENGE CUP SF	

August

NL Sun 3rd	YORK A	3:00pm
NL Sun 10th	BARROW	H 3:00pm
NL Sun 17th	SWINTON A	3:00pm
NL Sun 24th	WORKINGTON	H 3:00pm
Sat 30th	CHALLENGE CUP FINAL	

September

Sun 7th	ELIMINATION PLAY OFFS
Sun 14th	QUALIFYING/ ELIMINATION SEMI-FINALS
Sun 21st	FINAL ELIMINATOR
Sun 28th	N L GRAND FINAL

October

Sat 4th	S L GRAND FINAL
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'TWO BOBS' REVELS IN ROLE OF LEADER *Captain Courageous justifies the faith Deaks placed in him*

Player Profile: **ROBERT ROBERTS**

by **ROGER HALSTEAD**

Welsh international Robert Roberts -- 'Two Bobs' to anybody who knows rugby league -- will play a huge part in anything the Roughyeds achieve in what is sure to be an extremely important 2008 season for the club. As club captain, team captain and inspirational leader, Robert is revelling in the responsibilities thrust upon him by shrewd coach Steve Deakin.

The 29-year-old Yorkshireman, of Welsh descent, born on June 21, 1978, joined Roughyeds midway through last season and signed initially to the end of that 2007 campaign as Deaks moved for an old head to add vital experience to a young pack.

He had left Leigh earlier that year after what Deaks described as a clash of personalities and he was, in fact, without a club when Roughyeds brought him in from the cold --- and then quickly made him captain. It was to prove a masterstroke.



PICTURE COURTESY OF THE OLDHAM RUGBY CHRONICLE

'Two Bobs' crowned his debut at York with a last-minute drop goal that earned Roughyeds a draw and he went on to become significantly influential over the last dozen games of the season. He led the side from the second-row and used all the experience gained in a long career to guide Roughyeds to the NL2 Grand Final with play-off wins against Workington and Swinton at Boundary Park and Barrow up at Craven Park.

He did more than enough to earn a new one-year contract, fully justifying the faith Deaks had shown in him.

Not everyone in Robert's 13-year professional career has shown similar faith in the big fella. And the man himself would be the first to admit that the rugby league garden has not always been a bed of roses for this multi-talented and highly-skilled professional whose travels have seen him wear the colours of Keighley (two stints), Hull, Halifax, York, Hunslet, Huddersfield,

Leigh and Oldham.

He has also had experience playing Down Under in Australia, first in the Newcastle competition (which many years ago provided Mal Graham for the former Oldham club) and then in country football with Tumut.

Starting his pro career as a 16-year-old with Keighley, he quickly aroused the interest of the big clubs and in 1999, aged

21, he had a good season with Hull in Super League, making 26 appearances and coming up with 46 points from four tries, 13 goals and four drop goals. A short stint at Halifax followed (three Super League appearances in 2000), and then in 2001 he played for York, Hunslet and for Keighley a second time before signing for Huddersfield Giants, who were then battling to stay in the elite competition.

They failed to manage it, but despite their relegation to the Northern Ford Premiership he stuck with them to become one of their leading lights in a remarkable 2002 season in which Aussie boss Tony Smith piloted the Giants straight back to Super League with an unbeaten full season in the NFP and then victory over Leigh Centurions in the Grand Final.

Robert played in 34 of the Giants 39 matches in that sensational season, including a Grand Final second-row spot. Giants beat Leigh 38-16, with two tries from left-wing Marcus St Hilaire. And who was in the Centurions' second row? Simon Baldwin.

Phil Larder was coach at Lawkholme Lane, as it was then called, when Robert took his first tentative steps into the world of professional rugby league and when he returned some years later to Cougar Park his boss then was none other than a certain Steve Deakin.

Deaks remembers it well. "The club was having serious money problems," he recalled, "and we had released all our players. 'Two Bobs' came in to do a specific job and he joined us in similar circumstances to those which prevailed when we signed him for Roughyeds from Leigh only last year.

"Not everything has gone smoothly for him

throughout his career; but I always had, and always will have, a lot of faith in him and a lot of respect for him, both as a player and as a person. He is well respected by everyone at the club from management to the coaching staff and to his fellow players.

"He commands respect by his actions as well as his words -- and I can't speak more highly of him than to say that he is the epitome of a team and club captain in every sense of the word. His performances on the field have been outstanding as well.

"As a player, he is multi-skilled at a time in the sport's evolution when players are being developed to play in a variety of positions. But how many could play prop one match and stand-off the next? You could do that with 'Two Bobs' -- in fact, he played at stand-off for a while in the Law Cup match at Rochdale at the start of this season.

"He would be equally at home as well in the second-row, where he has played mainly for us, or at loose-forward. He is also very, very durable and you can always rely on him to do a first-rate 70 minutes, if not the full 80."

Away from rugby, Robert lives in Leeds with his parents and his Australian partner Sarah, whom he intends to marry later this year. They met while Robert was playing in Australia.

As well as playing for the Roughyeds, Robert has also been assisting the club's community development officer Sean Mellor in community-based work on development and coaching, centred mainly in local schools ... and, according to reports, he is pretty good at that, too!

Roger Halstead



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GuestWriter...

No 3: Brian Walker

Long time fan and official of The ORLFC Heritage Trust

THE GREEN, GREEN, PLAQUE OF HOME

I 'Googled' in the word 'Cheltenham' before I started to write these programme notes, looking for a bit of background to the town which a couple of weeks earlier I'd taken my hat off to. I'd done this as they had the initiative to raise a commemorative green plaque to mark the passing of exactly 100 years since the pioneering New Zealanders won the first ever 'rugby league' Test series on the beautiful Regency town's Athletic Grounds. In so doing they beat the Northern Union (Great Britain) in the decider.

It threw up three bits of interesting info. That those investors who'd stashed their cash in the Northern Rock would have been much wiser choosing the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society, that Turpin Green was a 50-1 outsider to win the town's famous Cheltenham Festival and that there was to be a brand new Rugby Festival to be played under league rules in this go-ahead town on the 2nd of May.

To stage a 'professional' rugby match in a town and county that was the heart and lungs of the English Rugby Union was a brave thing to do back in 1908 and a slap in the face to a sport that was still both policed and terrorised by the men with bell, book and candle exorcising the evil spirit of rugby professionalism. I don't know if Dick Turpin rode Black Bess through Cheltenham (I suspect not) but he'd have been hung on the town green for much less.

I've been party to unveiling two blue plaques, both of them here in Oldham, both of them commemorating rugby league, but

until Cheltenham I'd never heard of a green plaque. It's obviously green and it's larger – so you can engrave much more information on it.

One of those two blue plaques was to commemorate the work of Joseph Platt. With hindsight he deserved a green plaque too. He did a lot for rugby league did Joe. He steadied the good ship Oldham, led from the front the breakaway of the northern clubs from the clutches of the English Rugby Union and organised those early tours both to and from the Antipodes. It was through his Oldham letterbox that Baskerville's proposal of a tour of the Northern Union by a squad of New Zealand rugby union players dropped.

He was an entrepreneurial type of guy too, frantically fanning the embers of expansionism. By the time the third Test against the New Zealanders kicked-off in Cheltenham the second Test had already been played on Chelsea's Stamford Bridge ground and just a year later the three match Test series against the first ever touring Australian squad was staged at Park Royal in London, on St James Park, the home of Newcastle United and at Villa Park, Aston Villa's ground. Two other representative matches against the Aussies were played on Celtic Park, Glasgow and at Everton's Goodison Park.

A challenge to the RFL then. The fair town of Cheltenham has now set the precedent, so how about persuading the authorities of the cities mentioned above to each strike a plaque, to honour those early rugby pioneers?

Brian Walker



Bobbie Goulding is back as the head coach of Rochdale Hornets and to quote Hornets' director, Karen Reynolds, "Bobbie will bring enthusiasm, charisma and passion to Rochdale Hornets. The thing that he spoke about throughout our talks was having an unfinished job. He has a lot of affection

for Rochdale Hornets and has come back here to finish the task."

Goulding had two successful seasons in charge at Spotland in 2004 and 2005 when he was twice nominated as National League coach of the year.

In returning to Boundary Park tonight the Rochdale squad contains no less than 12 players who have worn the Roughyeds jersey in recent seasons.

Wayne Corcoran

joined Hornets from Oldham at the end of the 2006 season. He showed loyalty beyond the cause during the 2007 season when, despite requiring a shoulder

operation for the majority of the season he bravely played on showing immense courage in choosing to fight on and delay his operation. Wayne made a total of 23 appearances 12 from the bench scoring 3 tries.



Dave Newton, who was a regular member of the Roughyeds Alliance side, re joined Hornets after having a spell away from the club at Swinton and Hornets feel he returns to the Club a better player for it. He was very highly regarded at Swinton and they were

bitterly disappointed to lose him. Dave made a Grand Final appearance for Swinton in 2006. 10 full appearances with a further 10 from the bench was Dave's record last year scoring 2 tries.



David Best is another player who is in his second spell at the club, having had spells at Oldham and more recently Batley. He has really matured as a player and his power and toughness upfront will be a major asset to Hornets this

season. Dave is a layer who feels that he has got unfinished business at Hornets. David's appearances last term were limited to 9.

Ex Roughyed **Chris Campbell** returned to Hornets during the closing stages of last season and was delighted to extend his stay when Bobbie Goulding was appointed coach. In between spells at the Club Chris has been playing for the highly successful Warrington Wizards outfit. After an excellent pre season Chris will be hoping to recapture the form he showed during the 2004/ 05 seasons. Chris scored 1 try in 6 appearances on his return.



Ian Sinfield left Hornets in 2003 to join Keighley where he made the first of his two Grand Final appearances. Ian then had two more highly successful seasons at Keighley before moving onto Swinton and then



to his hometown team Oldham for a second time, where he was a Grand Finalist in 2007. His leadership qualities will be invaluable and his knowledge of National League two a great asset for Hornets in 2008. Ian played 24 times for Oldham last season scoring 2 tries.

Although only in his mid twenties **Chris Hough**

can be best described as a much travelled, seasoned pro. Along with a previous spell at Hornets Chris has played for Oldham, Swinton, Doncaster and Batley and also had a loan spell at Leigh last season. Hornets feel his organisational qualities and kicking game will give them a new dimension this season. Chris was mainly used off the bench last term for Swinton where he made a total of 17 appearances scoring 2 tries and 3 goals. At Leigh he made 7 full appearances scoring 1 try.

Phil Farrell returns to Hornets as Assistant Player Coach to Bobbie Goulding. After successful seasons at Oldham he joined Hornets for a season, before returning to Oldham for a brief spell & then joining Batley. Phil is extremely eager to get onto the coaching ladder and sees the position at Hornets as an excellent opportunity to do this. When called upon Phil's on field experience will be an added bonus and his input with the younger players will be typically positive. A mid season departure from Batley only allowed Phil to make 11 full appearances 1 more as substitute scoring 1 try.

Craig Farrimond played his junior rugby at Warrington Wolves where he captained their Senior Academy and gained a promising reputation earning himself a place in the Super League U 21s select squad. He has since played for Oldham and Swinton where he has been extremely unlucky with injuries over the past couple of seasons. Now fit and raring to go Bobbie will be hoping for big things from him in 2008. Craig was restricted to 4 full appearances



last term with 7 more from the bench.

Andy Gorey is an extremely quick outside back. Andy spent the early years of his career at Oldham where he became a first team regular after coming through the Academy where he was coached by current Hornets U21's coach Shaun Gartland. Andy, always a firm favourite with the Oldham fans, started 7 games last season for Oldham scoring two tries. He has been playing for Oldham Rugby Union Club during the closed season.

Mike Callan came through the ranks at Warrington Wolves where he made four Super League appearances for them off the bench in the 2002 season. He moved onto Leigh where he played in the promotion year of 2005. Mike's career then took him to Blackpool and on to Oldham. After taking a year out of the game Mike is now looking forward to making a big impact in 2008.



Mike Stout is another player renowned for having a quick turn of foot; he has played for Swinton, Blackpool and Oldham after coming through the academy at Widnes. Mike started last season with us at Oldham, where he scored one try in 4 appearances, before

moving on to Blackpool where he scored seven tries in 17 appearances in what was a struggling campaign for the Panthers. Mike is relishing the new challenge presented to him at Hornets.

Simon Svabic was always a favourite with the Roughyed fans and won Player of the Year awards at the end of the disastrous 2006 season. He moved on to Hornets where, I think it is fair to say, he didn't have a happy season and in fact decided to hang up his books as the season ended. Bobbie Goulding persuaded him to have a rethink and I am sure he will have a big influence on the Hornets side this season.

Nigel Marland

Oldham R.L.F.C.

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PRESSGANG...

...what the papers said about our 18-14 win against Salford City Reds at Boundary Park last Friday.

Oldham Evening Chronicle (Matthew Chambers): 'While some maintain there is little life in the game outside Super League this thrilling, action-packed clash conclusively proved otherwise. Rugby league doesn't get much better.'

A brutal, dominating pack; backs consistently gaining massive yardage coming out of defensive territory; a half-back combination with speed and deftness of pass; and wingers and centres who knew how to get over that whitewash -- Roughyeds were clearly the superior side and should, if anything, have won by a more convincing margin.

If this performance sets a standard for the season, Roughyeds fans have plenty to look forward to in the coming months.'

Oldham Advertiser (Gavin Browne): 'Mick Nany's 78th minute try saw the Roughyeds stun full-timers Salford to come away with victory from an absorbing Northern Rail Cup tie at Boundary Park.'

Jordan Turner's try put Salford two points ahead at 14-12 but with time running out Nany touched down wide out on the left-hand side before adding the touchline conversion for good measure.'

League Express (Ian Wilson): 'Some people have occasionally regarded the Northern Rail Cup as a Mickey Mouse competition, but don't tell the 34 players who gave everything in this rip-roaring clash, or the 1,350 spectators who enjoyed fantastic value for money and shouted themselves hoarse on a cold Oldham night which resembled nothing so much as one of those memorable old winter nights under the Watersheddings floodlights.'

The game had everything. The lead changed hands six times which was remarkable given

that only six tries were scored in total. There was a period of 35 minutes of intense end-to-end play without a point scored, and superbly committed defence on display by both sides. Add in a match-winning try two minutes from time, a refereeing display which had the home crowd in apoplexy and a mini-brawl. What else could anyone ask for?

League Weekly (Roy Craig): 'Friday's stay-aways (absent fans) missed an absolute treat, and if Oldham can play as consistently well as they did in seeing off the city slickers from the other side of Manchester it surely can't be long before the Boundary Park turnstiles start to go round a bit quicker.'

In a match which provided first-rate sporting entertainment, there was quality football; tough, uncompromising defence; well-worked tries, the odd moment of madness; end-to-end action which saw the lead change hands five times; and all the drama of a match-winning try by Oldham's big centre Mick Nany two minutes from the end.'

Roughyeds website (Roger Halstead):

'When Mick Nany crashed over in the corner for the winning try you would have thought there were 13,000 fans in the ground, not a disappointing 1,350. Most of them waited for the Oldham players to have their post-match debriefing on the pitch before giving them a standing ovation to shouts of 'Oldham, Oldham' as they left to disappear up the tunnel.'

It was that sort of night -- what I think of as an old-fashioned Oldham rugby league night under floodlights. We have had a few of those in the last 40-odd years up there on the hill on the other side of town. In many ways this ranked with the best.

It has taken Steve Deakin, his coaching staff and the players a few games to turn a mix of new, high-profile signings and selected members of last year's squad into a team, but that's exactly what they were last night -- a TEAM'

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☐	Jason BOULTS
☐	Matty BROOKS
☐	Daryl CARDISS
☐	James COYLE
☐	Tommy GOULDEN
☐	Tommy GRUNDY
☐	Danny HALLIWELL
☐	Simeon HOYLE
☐	Phil JOSEPH
☐	Gareth LANGLEY
☐	Craig LITTLER
☐	Richard MERVILL
☐	Mick NANYN
☐	Paul O'CONNOR
☐	Lucas ONYANGO
☐	Rob ROBERTS
☐	Adam ROBINSON
☐	Neil RODEN
☐	Lee SANDERSON
☐	Warren STEVENS
☐	Marcus ST HILAIRE
☐	Said TAMGHART
☐	Alex WILKINSON
☐	Lee WINGFIELD
☐	



Rochdale Hornets

☐	Martin AINSCOUGH	☐
☐	Paul ALCOCK	☐
☐	Eric ANDREWS	☐
☐	David BEST	☐
☐	Mark BROCKLEHURST	☐
☐	Alex BROWN	☐
☐	Sam BUTTERWORTH	☐
☐	Mike CALLAN	☐
☐	Chris CAMPBELL	☐
☐	Wayne CORCORAN	☐
☐	Jimmy ELSTON	☐
☐	Phil FARRELL	☐
☐	Craig FARRIMOND	☐
☐	Chris FOSTER	☐
☐	Andy GOREY	☐
☐	Mike GRADY	☐
☐	Chris HOUGH	☐
☐	Wes LAWTON	☐
☐	Benji LLOYD	☐
☐	Andrew MARSH	☐
☐	David NEWTON	☐
☐	Ian SINFIELD	☐
☐	Chris SPURR	☐
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