ROUGHYED REVIEW

2019 PROGRAMME No.4
Sunday, 24th March
KICK-OFF 3PM
£3.00

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Roary's Big Day

OLDHAM VS LONDON SKOLARS BETFRED LEAGUE 1

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PASSIONATE ABOUT RUGBY LEAGUE

NEWS

Direct from the Dug-Out
with SCOTT NAYLOR

Hello everyone and welcome to today's game against London Skolars at The Vestacare Stadium.

It's nice to be back after our break last Sunday. Looking forward, we have a tough month of rugby coming up, both home and away, starting with our opponents today, London Skolars.

Next Sunday we've got Widnes Vikings at Bower Fold in the fourth round of the Coral Challenge Cup and then on Sunday, April 7 we travel to Newcastle Thunder.

Back to today and the Skolars from North London.

They're athletic, mobile, skilful and very well coached -- descriptions that are used regularly by impartial observers as the Skolars improve year on year.

They always challenge you physically with their athleticism, size and speed so control of the ruck is very important from the first whistle.

Coached by a former stand-off means they love to play expansive rugby all over the field and they show no fear of taking chances in yardage or good-ball plays so our defensive structure and organisation have to be at a high level to stop them putting points on the board.

As always, we look to be better in all areas of our performance every time we play and our goal-line defence will be hugely important today and needs to improve steadily through the next month of games if we are to win and continue our season successfully.

Against Whitehaven we defended well. Against North Wales in Wrexham we showed great character to win in the last quarter. And against Haydock in the last round of the Challenge Cup we played with skill and freedom.

It's time to put all these different parts of our game together and show some consistency week after week.

We need to reach a top-team level -- and then have the consistency to play at that level every week.

Many thanks, as always, for your continued backing and support. Enjoy the game.

Scott Naylor

How the chairman sees it
with CHRIS HAMILTON

Roary's Pride logo

Engaging with the fans of tomorrow

Welcome back to the Vestacare Stadium for today's Betfred League 1 game against London Skolars.

Last week was a blank weekend for us which was a little bit strange, given that we are only three matches into the league season, but is a spin-off from the division having only 11 teams in it this year.

It's important, therefore, that we get straight back on to the horse, so to speak, and focus on the league points on offer. Skolars have often proved to be difficult opponents for us over the years and we need to make sure we are mentally right for this fixture.

Since I last wrote some notes we have, of course, been drawn at home in two cup competitions. Widnes will come to Bower Fold next week in the Coral Challenge Cup and then on May 5 we will play our first-ever 1895 Cup match against Whitehaven.

The Widnes match will be interesting, to say the least, as it is about 15 years since we last played them and they are currently on a roll since their recent troubles, having beaten Featherstone Rovers at home, Barrow Raiders away and Bradford Bulls at home in their last three outings.

Having to move the match to Bower Fold is a direct consequence of their large travelling support and the restricted capacity at Vestacare. I sincerely hope that, not only do you appreciate that, but will make the effort to get to Bower Fold to cheer on the team.

I was thinking only the other day, after seeing recent attendances at both Widnes and Keighley, that it is a sad reflection really that a lot of people only seem to appreciate their clubs when they come close to losing them.

We are all in the same boat, striving hard to put out competitive teams, to provide entertainment and ultimately hoping to be successful, but it is a hard balancing act when attendances don't always meet expectations.

It would be an entirely different picture if we could get more people to cherish their clubs before they hit the wall.

Widnes had nearly 6,000 for their Featherstone match and more than 5,300 for their Bulls game, while Keighley had more than 900 for their first home match since their takeover.

If they had been getting those crowds in the first place maybe they wouldn't have got into difficulties to start with?

Today is an important day for our club as we have two important events taking place.

Firstly, we have the launch of Roary's Pride, our new junior members club which is another step to engaging with the supporters of tomorrow and we will be hoping for a big take-up of membership which is great value and will help to grow our club.

That is being featured extensively in today's programme and has been in the build-up to the match.

Secondly, we also have a large number of schoolchildren, staff and parents here today from a number of schools in Oldham as part of the Oldham Pledge. The Pledge is a scheme aimed at giving every child of school age the same opportunities, regardless of where they live, or which school they go to.

There are 14 different themes, of which they can take advantage and to which they can pledge their allegiance; hence the name, The Oldham Pledge.

One of them is going to see a live sporting event and it is that pledge that we are involved with and have been since the idea was first thought up.

We are delighted to welcome everybody here today and representatives from the schools will be today's flag bearers and player mascots pre match.

All of the children will then take part in a lap of honour at half time so please cheer and encourage them as much as possible - they are our future season ticket holder !

I hope that, by now, you can all appreciate that the club is working hard on a number of fronts to promote itself; and together with the higher attendances we have seen so far this season came the recent news that the club's OuRLeague membership has risen by more than 61 per cent since September last year.

If we had enjoyed the membership level then that we have now, we would have been the fourth highest out of all Championship and League One clubs.

That is a great effort and one that doesn't cost anything so a big thankyou to everybody who has registered and please keep telling everybody else to do it.

There is no doubt that we have made a positive start to the season on and off the pitch. We all have the same goal which is to see this club be as successful as possible so let's please continue that today with our support throughout the game for the lads who are trying to secure another win.

Enjoy the game.

Christopher Hamilton
Chairman
Oldham Rugby League Football Club

Chris Hamilton

STATISTICS

BETFRED LEAGUE 1 TABLE 2019

	P	W	L	D	PF	PA	PD	PTS
Hunslet RLFC	3	3	0	0	100	34	66	6
Newcastle Thunder	4	2	2	0	158	82	76	4
Workington Town	3	2	1	0	90	66	24	4
Oldham RLFC	3	2	1	0	80	58	22	4
Whitehaven RLFC	3	2	1	0	66	60	6	4
Doncaster RLFC	4	2	2	0	78	82	-4	4
Coventry Bears	3	2	1	0	68	72	-4	4
London Skolars	3	1	1	1	58	84	-26	3
North Wales Crusaders	3	0	3	0	44	86	-42	0
West Wales Raiders	4	0	4	0	32	170	-138	0
Keighley Cougars	3	1	1	1	74	54	20	-9

OLDHAM RLFC PLAYER STATS 2019

Squad No.	Player	Total App.	Sub	Tries	Goals	DGs	Points
1	Kyran Johnson	1	0	2	0	0	8
2	Aaron Jones-Bishop	4	0	2	0	0	8
3	Zack McComb	4	0	6	0	0	24
4	Jack Holmes	2	0	0	0	0	0
5	Richie Hawkyard	3	0	3	0	0	12
6	Paul Crook	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	Dave Hewitt	3	0	2	14	0	36
8	Phil Joy	4	0	1	0	0	4
9	Gareth Owen	3	0	0	0	0	0
10	Scott Law	4	1	0	0	0	0
11	Ben Calland	2	0	0	0	0	0
12	Emmerson Whittel	4	0	1	0	0	4
13	Jack Spencer	4	2	0	0	0	0

Squad No.2	Player	Total App.	Sub	Tries	Goals	DGs	Points
15	Adam Brook	3	0	1	12	0	28
18	Ben Davies	3	3	0	0	0	0
19	Jamie Greenwood	2	2	0	0	0	0
20	Matty Wilkinson	3	2	3	0	0	12
21	Lee Kershaw	3	0	2	0	0	8
22	Danny Grimshaw	2	0	0	0	0	0
23	Luke Nelmes	1	1	0	0	0	0
24	Liam Bent	4	1	0	0	0	0
25	Danny Bridge	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	Anthony Bowman	4	0	1	0	0	4
27	Harry Maders	1	0	3	0	0	12
29	Titus Gwaze	4	4	0	0	0	0

NEWS

RUGBY OLDHAM BACK ROARY AND HIS PRIDE

Rygby Oldham Supporters' Trust has put up a four-figure fee to sponsor 'Roary's Pride', our new club for under-16s which will be built around our loveable lion and launched at today's game.

The Trust was inspired to help financially because it was an initiative that was designed to inspire future generations.

Julie Collins, a member of our management team, said: "On behalf of 'Roary's Pride' and the club, I thank Rugby Oldham for their generous backing. We are keen to retain and build on our good relationship with the Trust."

Chairman Chris Hamilton added: "The club is working hard to increase awareness and attendances. The younger generation has an important part to play so the launch of 'Roary's Pride', backed by Rugby Oldham as initial sponsors, is a huge step forward."

Ian Wilson, Trust secretary, said:

"Rugby Oldham is delighted to be engaging with the club in such a positive way."

"We recognise, as do Roughyeds, how important it is to get the next generation interested in the game and involved with the club."

We are also forging links with Co-op Academy Failsworth, whose pupils in Year 9A and 9C each designed a logo for Roary's Pride as part of IT assignments.

The winning entry, by Bailey Howell (14), will become the official logo and will feature on merchandise and membership packs.

The club will be run by father and son David and Nathan Murgatroyd with the help of 19-year-old Sophie Nixon and the proud lion himself.

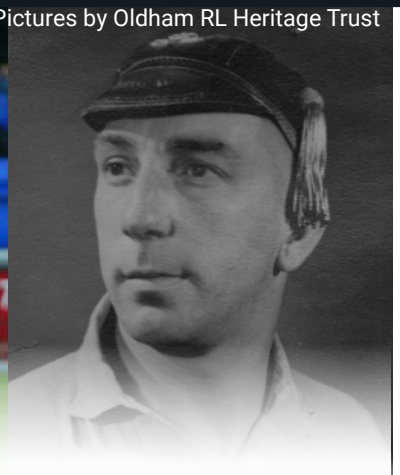
Membership fee will be £10 a year which will include a joining pack, regular events, a signed picture of Roary, a baseball cap, other goodies, recognition of birthdays and visits to meetings by Roughyeds players.

Roary congratulates Bailey Howell (14) on his winning design of a logo for 'Roary's Pride'. Four highly recommended designs were submitted by (left to right) Levi Harrison (13), Anthony Ibrahimi (14), Arran Ainsworth (13) and Oliwier Maleta (13), all from Co-op Academy Failsworth.

Pictures by Oldham RL Heritage Trust

Kevin Taylor

John Hough



Edgar Brooks

By George Cowburn...

THOSE WERE THE DAYS!

When did you last see a hooker actually strike for the ball in a scrum? Not these days when the ball is rolled to the back of the pack and away we go.

The specific role of a hooker didn't evolve until after the number of forwards was reduced from eight to six from the 1906/7 season onwards. Prior to that the forwards packed down in the order they arrived for the scrum.

In the early days the hooker's most important role ,with the help of his open-side prop forward, was to secure as much possession as possible from the scrum.

Nowadays the No.9's chief job is as a distributor from acting half back and with the speed of the modern-day game few hookers play 80 minutes.

Over the years Oldham have been blessed with many talented long-serving hookers, starting with Joe Wilkinson and Joe Ferguson who shared the job until Wilkinson retired in 1909, leaving the legendary Ferguson in charge until his retirement in 1923.

Wilkinson's career with Oldham started in 1898 and he accrued 275 appearances until his last game against Ebbw Vale on October 4,1909. Ferguson must have been hewn from the Cumbrian granite of the county of his birth.

He amassed an incredible 627 games for Oldham - 160 more than his nearest challenger Jack Read - from his debut in 1899 till the last game of the 1922/3 season agaInst St Helens when he featured at blind-side prop.

Joe was also an accomplished goal kicker; played in 46 County matches; captained England against the 1907 New Zealanders and turned down an invitation to go on the 1910 British Lions tour Down Under "for business reasons".

He won every domestic honour available apart from the Challenge Cup when he was twice on the losing Oldham side.

Jack Scaife, who hailed from North Yorkshire, signed for Oldham from Bradford Northern and played the first of his 325 games against Rochdale Hornets on October 16,1926, holding the position of hooker until his retirement in November,1934.

A Challenge Cup final winner in 1927 and Lancashire Cup winner (1933), Jack became a referee after he retired.

Edgar Brooks took over from Jack, settling in as the first choice hooker in his debut season of 1934. Like many at that time the Second World War put his career on hold.

Playing only a handful of games during the hostilities Edgar resumed after the war until he called it a day in February, 1951. The war also robbed him of the chance of going on the projected 1940 British Lions tour when he was one of the favourites to go.

Considering the war and periods out injured due to a dodgy knee to tot up 293 appearances for his hometown club was a great achievement.

Jack Keith followed Edgar and soon established himself in the first team during the club's glory years of the 1950s. Oldham signed him on for £175 from the Bush Electrics team in Hunslet, South Leeds and he played in 342 games before his transfer to Halifax in early 1960. A real character,unusually tall for a No.9 and one of the best uncapped hookers of his era.

Following on from Len McIntyre - who could forget his last minute drop goal in the 1964 Challenge Cup semi-final - local lad Kevin Taylor was to rule the roost for Oldham from May. 1963 to January 1977 in a 429 appearance career for the club.

Signed from Werneth, where he played in the same side as future Oldham players Dennis Maders and Phil Larder, this great servant of the club was surely another of the best uncapped hookers of his era (bar for an England under-24s game).

After a series of hookers and the demise of the Watersheddings club, John Hough was the first player to sign for the "new club" as coach Paddy Kirwan was hurriedly assembling a team to continue Oldham's unbroken existence in the Rugby League.

From his debut in the Law Cup match on New Year's Day, 1998 to his last game against Harlequins (one of London Broncos' many identities) on May 13, 2007 - a total of 228 official games - Houghy carried on the fine tradition of local players giving their all for their hometown team.

Happily, present day Oldham skipper Gareth Owen is continuing to follow in the footsteps of locals Edgar Brooks, Kevin Taylor and John Hough, playing with distinction for his hometown club.

Gareth played in the last eight games of the 2014 season, making his debut in a narrow 24-23 victory over Hunslet and to date he has played 109 times for the club.

A far cry then from the early days of incessant scrummaging to today's fast, fluid game with uncontested scrums. If you could tell the old boys that Oldham sometimes go into a game with three hookers these days there would no doubt be a lot of head scratching.

George Cowburn - lifelong fan with statistics at his fingertips

OUR PLEDGE TO THE OLDHAM PLEDGE: WE'LL BACK YOU ALL THE WAY

Lorna Philip (left) and Suzie Ashworth-Chapman, joint co-ordinators of The Oldham Pledge, with the Mayor of Oldham, Councillor Javid Iqbal, in the Mayor's Parlour.

Oldham RLFC is proud and privileged to support The Oldham Pledge and to welcome to the Vestacare Stadium today many young people and schools from across the borough.

We believe we were one of the first businesses locally to commit our support to The Pledge and that's because it's for the benefit of young people who are our citizens, and maybe sports lovers, of tomorrow.

We have been working for some time with the Pledge's joint co-ordinators Lorna Philip and Suzie Ashworth-Chapman to bring today's initiative to fruition, with the result that we may have more than a dozen schools, 150 young people and a lot of parents and teachers here to watch our home game against London Skolars.

Lorna, retired assistant principal and director of sport at Hathershaw College, is a good friend of our club and a supporter who is always happy to use her expertise to give us a lift.

Pupils and teachers will be our guests today and parents will gain admission for significantly-reduced prices in one of our many community projects and initiatives that are currently ongoing.

The Pledge provides and promotes opportunities for children and young people to develop key character traits, supporting them to be ready for secondary school (where appropriate), life and work.

It is a record of achievement which allows youngsters to reflect on the skills they are learning on their journey and to provide evidence of things they've done.

It highlights the importance of encouraging every young person to grow into well-rounded, confident citizens who can succeed as individuals and contribute to their community.

Pupils are here to fulfil pledge No 9 --- to attend sporting and creative events.

More than 6,500 children have access to The Oldham Pledge in 52 schools and colleges. More than 90 business and other organisations, including Oldham RLFC, support it.

SCHOOLS IN ATTENDANCE:

Hathershaw College and the following Primary schools:

- St Edward's RC
- Broadfield
- Lyndhurst
- St Joseph's RC
- Greenhill
- Medlock Valley
- St Anne's RC
- Freehold
- St Thomas's
- St Martin's
- St Matthew's
- Delph

Young people can sign up (pledge) to:

- Attend regular activities in school
- Attend regular activities outside school
- Take responsibility for their own health and well-being
- Look for and pursue reading activities
- Engage in work and be money-wise
- Take part in fund-raising activities
- Engage in a residential or outward bound activity
- Take part in a presentation or perform to an audience
- Attend sporting and creative events
- Be involved in a voluntary or leadership role
- Be involved in a cultural or international experience
- Contribute to environmental sustainability
- Be involved in a democratic process
- Use digital technology to enhance learning

Widnes Vikings next after 14-try romp takes us into Coral Challenge Cup fourth round

Jack Spencer

Anthony Bowman

Jamie Greenwood

Anthony Bowman

Aaron Jones Bishop

Emmerson Whittel

Jamie Greenwood

Matty Wilkinson

Emmerson Whittel

Ben Davies

Harry Maders

Scott Law

OLDHAM 80
HAYDOCK 10

OLDHAM RLFC

LONDON SKOLARS

Kyran **JOHNSON** 01	Mick Harrop	Alfie **LAWRENCE**
Aaron **JONES-BISHOP** 02	Les and Eileen Davison	Charlie **LAWRENCE**
Zack **MCCOMB** 03	David and Val Webster	Craig **MULLEN**
Jack **HOLMES** 04	David and Val Webster	Dan **HINDMARSH**
Richie **HAWKYARD** 05	Rita Walton	Edward **MBARAGA**
Paul **CROOK** 06	Rita Walton	Harrison **BROUGH**
Dave **HEWITT** 07	Chris Noble MBE	Iliess **MACANI**
Phil **JOY** 08	Past Players' Association	Isaac Ah **KUOI-ATMORE**
Gareth **OWEN** 09	Purpose Business and Marketing Ltd	Jacob **OGDEN**
Scott **LAW** 10	Les and Eileen Davison	James **BARRAN**
Ben **CALLAND** 11	Luke, Abbie and Jessica Davies	James **MEADOWS**
Emmerson **WHITTEL** 12	Sponsorship Available	Jerome **YATES**
Jack **SPENCER** 13	Graeme Lee	Joe **BROWN**
Adam **BROOK** 15	Sponsorship Available	Jordan **WILLIAMS**
Ben **DAVIES** 18	Sponsorship Available	Judd **GREENHALGH**
Jamie **GREENWOOD** 19	Sandra Bullock	Kayne **CHANI-KITCHENER**
Matty **WILKINSON** 20	John and Lynda McAndrew	Lameck **JUMA**
Lee **KERSHAW** 21	Rugby Oldham Supporters' Trust	Lamont **BRYAN**
Danny **GRIMSHAW** 22	Neil Gibbison	Leighton **BALL**
Luke **NELMES** 23	John and Lynda McAndrew	Liam **SCOTT**
Liam **BENT** 24	ORSA	Louis **ROBINSON**
Danny **BRIDGE** 25	Pam Taylor and LTS	Malikhi **LLOYD-JONES**
Anthony **BOWMAN** 26	Graeme Lee	Matthew **ROSS**
Harry **MADERS** 27	Sponsorship Available	Michael **BISHAY**
Titus **GWAZE** 29	Anne Kearns	Michael **GREENHALGH**
Scott Naylor | Head Coach	Sponsorship Available	Michael **SYKES**
Peter Carey | Assistant Coach	Sponsorship Available	Neil **THORMAN**
Adam Neal | Conditioner	Sponsorship Available	Omari **CARO**
		Richard **WILKINSON**
		Tommy **CHIPCHASE**
		William **MARTIN**
		Xavier **RICE**
		Jermaine Coleman | Head Coach
		Gareth Hatherley-Hurford | Assistant Coach

Referee: N. Bennett
Touch Judge 1: D. Sharpe
Touch Judge 2: R. Stansfield
Reserve Ref: P. Cromer

By Ian Wilson...
A RUGBY LEAGUE MISCELLANY ON MEN AND MATTERS...

Strange times indeed in the game, at all levels, at the moment. Who would have had Wigan and Leeds sharing bottom place, along with Huddersfield, after six weeks of Super League, for example?

And what about Toronto conceding 46 points at Toulouse, or Salford scoring 46 without reply at Perpignan against the Catalan Dragons?

We seem to be approaching the super competitive sport that Nigel Wood was striving for, somewhat ironically.

From the outside, it certainly seems that both Leeds and Wigan, interestingly both struggling with former players from Down Under as coaches, have real problems that will not be easy to solve.

Furner's comments coming out of Headingley sound like those of a somewhat hapless bystander who is just about coming to realise that the club has nowhere near replaced icons like Sinfield, McGuire and Burrow with anything like the same quality, and who additionally seem to have lost the togetherness that was such a part of Leeds' success for so long under Brian McDermott.

Wigan, however, may have even bigger issues. Salary cap infringement, disappointing [by their standard] crowds, World Club Challenge defeat, and even overlooked as a venue for the 2021 World Cup - not the greatest few weeks in their history!

There is even talk of George Williams following the path out of town recently signposted by messrs Bateman, McIlorum and Tomkins.

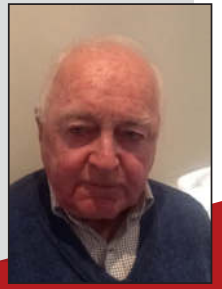
And if Bradford's Andrew Chalmers' comments a few weeks ago are anything like an accurate reflection of the views held around the sport about the Super League/RFL contretemps last year, Wigan cannot expect a lot of sympathy to be flowing their way.

In his column in the Bradford Telegraph and Argus, repeated in League Express, the Bulls chief had some hard-hitting comments to make about what he called "divisive activities" of the last 12 months. Not much love there then!

Turning to our own concerns, the March 12 cup draws must have had Chris Hamilton positively salivating.

With the issues around only 10 home league fixtures understandably well to the fore of his mind, we couldn't have asked for much more than two home cup matches in the Coral Challenge Cup and the new 1895 Cup, one against one of the top crowd-pullers in the Championship (Widnes Vikings), and one against a League One side we have already defeated in the league (Whitehaven).

Scott and the players just have to play their parts now !



Ian Wilson - our man with something to say

NEWSROUND: THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

As you will hopefully know by now, our home fourth-round Coral Challenge Cup tie against Widnes Vikings will be at Bower Fold, Stalybridge next Sunday, March 31, kick-off 3pm.

Normal Betfred League 1 admission prices will apply; namely £14 adults, £12 concessions, £2 under-16s (standing), £16 adults, £14 concessions, £5 under-16s (sitting).

As with all shared-gate cup-ties, season tickets are invalid with the exception of junior season-ticket holders who will again get in free on production of their season-ticket book on the day.

Said Oldham RLFC chairman Chris Hamilton: "In consultation with Widnes it became apparent that the Vestacare Stadium capacity would be insufficient for the anticipated attendance.

"Widnes fans are expected to travel in large numbers following their club's recent battle against liquidation and, subsequently, a successful takeover.

"We had to find an alternative venue so we will return to Bower Fold, home of Stalybridge Celtic, which is very familiar to Oldham fans.

"I would again like to thank Celtic chairman Rob Gorski and the Stalybridge club for accommodating us.

"We are hoping for a big turn-out, given that it's a long time since we last played Widnes at home.

"We have kept admission prices the same as a Betfred League 1 match to reward our loyal fans for their continuing and totally committed backing.

"We hope to see as many Roughyeds supporters as possible at Bower Fold for a tie that promises to be a cracker."

Potentially, we are looking at a record crowd for an Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd home game.

We were also drawn at home, to Whitehaven, in the first round of the new 1895 Cup and that will be played on Sunday, May 5.

Aaron Jones-Bishop and Anthony Bowman were each suspended for two games by the RFL disciplinary committee for making dangerous lifts on North Wales winger Rob Massam in our 16-14 win in awful conditions at Wrexham.

They will miss today's game against London Skolars and next Sunday's cup-tie against Widnes Vikings at Bower Fold.

There are two changes to our Betfred League 1 fixtures later in the season. Our game at Keighley, originally scheduled for May 26, will now be played on Saturday, May 25, kick-off 6.30pm.

We go to Doncaster on Sunday, June 9, as scheduled, but the kick-off is now 5.30pm.

Requests for change came from the home clubs, Keighley's new regime wants to play as many matches as possible on Saturdays, while Doncaster asked for the later start to meet Keepmoat Stadium requirements.

We are happy to report that young prop Titus Gwaze's loan spell from Wakefield Trinity has been extended from one month to the end of the season.

Jamie Dallimore scores against Skolars at Whitebank, 2012

HERITAGE

Staying in Touch with Our Heritage with MICHAEL TURNER

A warm welcome to players, officials and supporters of London Skolars.

Roughyeds completed a comfortable double last season but there have been keenly-fought encounters too, none more so than in 2012 when, after a 20-20 draw in London, we scraped through 25-24 at Whitebank.

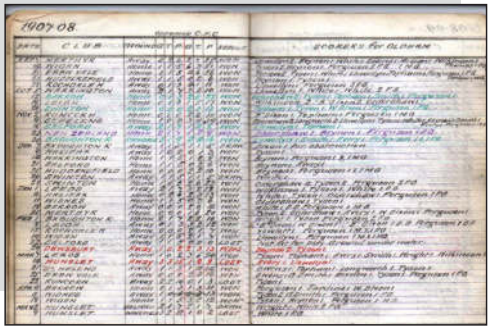
Long-time fan Andrew Wood has brought to our attention a hand-written set of records going back to the Victorian era. The small notebook, compiled by Mr H D Rodgers of Werneth Hall Road, starts in 1893 and runs to 1916.

Early entries are before the 1895 breakaway to form the Northern Union (Rugby League) and is reflected in a fixture list that includes Swansea, Kendal and Hartlepool as well as Leeds, Warrington, Barrow etc.

Details are neat, legible and colour-coded so you can tell at a glance if a match is a friendly, a cup-tie or a league game.

I have seen similar items before and I believe a lot of supporters back then would keep their own records.

Mr Rodgers went to great lengths to keep accurate records. Rarely have I seen anything so meticulously presented from that era.



A page from the historic notebook

Michael Turner

LONDON SKOLARS

London Skolars arrive at the Vestacare Stadium today hoping to claim early-season points at the expense of Scott Naylor's Oldham.

Last season, Skolars suffered home and away defeats against the Roughyeds. A 44-12 loss here in Oldham during the summer heatwave was followed by a 46-18 defeat in a double-header at Trailfinders in Ealing, the home of Super League bound London Broncos.

Six wins and a draw in 2018 led to a twelfth place League 1 finish and Coach Jermaine Coleman must be hoping for an improved placing at the conclusion of this 2019 season.

The renewal of a dual registration deal with Wigan Warriors will provide a significant squad boost for the Skolars giving the younger talent at Wigan an opportunity experience London and the challenge of League 1 rugby.

Coleman had this to say about the deal:

"We are really excited with our relationship with Wigan Warriors. In the time I have been at the club it has gone from strength to strength.The partnership is fantastic for all. We not only get the opportunity to spend time at a great club and learn from good people, we also benefit from having some great players joining us and helping the first team perform on the pitch."

Last time out Skolars drew 18-18 with Keighley Cougars in the capital. Leading 18-6 at the break with tries from Mullen, Brown and Williams, a win for the home side must have seemed likely but a resurgent Keighley had other ideas. Two converted tries from the Yorkshiremen brought the scores level on 75 minutes. A drop-goal attempt from each side failed to cross between the posts and the game finished with honours shared.

Coach Coleman stated that his side showed some inexperience at controlling a game when in a winning position. That observation echoes that of Scott Naylor from last year and Coleman will be urging his side to manage the game better in the closing stages should they manage to steal a march on Oldham today.

Skolars have managed to put a 1 in each of the win/loss/draw columns so far this season. A win away at an improved West Wales Raiders in Round 2 was followed by the visit of an ambitious Newcastle Thunder. The North Eastern team had suffered two unexpected early-season defeats and having consequently lost their coach Jason Payne, the Tynesiders proved too powerful for Skolars and recorded a 48-12 victory.

Our visitors can boast some significant names in their squad. Omari Caro scored 31 tries in 40 appearances for Bradford Bulls including five against Oldham in 2016. Iliess Macani is another former Bradford Bulls player and he scored a length of the field try for Skolars in this fixture in 2019. The Skolars other try that day came from the powerful Eddie Mbaraga who proves a real handful with his blockbusting runs near to the line.

Oldham will be keen to record a home win today to continue their promotion drive. London Skolars, a club with ambitions to improve their standing, will be going all out to push-on up the table. A win against a heartland side would provide a great fillip for the remainder of their season.

Let battle commence.

Writes Dave Naylor.

THREE TO WATCH

Omari Caro

A 28yr old Jamaican international born in Hammersmith, London. Former winner of Super League's fastest man competition in 2012 when at London Broncos.

Scored 31 tries whilst at Bradford Bulls for three seasons, including five against Oldham in 2016.

Iliess Macani

Tottenham born Macani is a 25yr old three-quarter who began his career at London Broncos in 2012.

Moved on to Bradford Bulls and then Sheffield before heading back to London to team up with Skolars.

Scored a length of the field try here at the Vestacare Stadium last season.

Eddie Mbaraga

A Big, blockbusting 31yr old forward who is not to be treated lightly near to the line.

Made 21 appearances for Skolars in 2018 and has scored 27 times for the club in total.

A dangerous impact player.

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Six days after giving birth by 'C section' to her first baby in the Royal Oldham Hospital, Jenny McGrane and her little one were behind the posts at the Vestacare Stadium watching Oldham beat Haydock in the Coral Challenge Cup.

It was a bitterly cold day and Jenny (30) ignored her parents' advice, braving the elements with her baby so that she could support her favourite team in the Cup and introduce little Edward to the Roughyeds experience at the first available opportunity.

"In years to come I'll be able to tell him that he was born at 4.31am on March 4, 2019 and at 3pm on March 10 he was at the Vestacare in his pram as the boys went down the tunnel," said proud Mum Jenny, who has been a home-and-away fan since she was aged seven.

Our fan of the week will be better known to fellow fans by her maiden name, Jenny Travis.

Her Mum and Dad, Viv and Mike, are also keen supporters, Mike serving the club as official time-keeper.

Edward, who weighed in at 9lb 15oz, will be the youngest member of 'Roary's Pride' when Jenny registers him for our new under-16s supporters club today.

She said: "Unlike me, he was born in Oldham so he's a proper Roughyed.

"When he was weighed at birth we thought he would be a prop one day and that was confirmed with how quickly he put on weight after his birth. He's 10lb 5 oz now but my Dad is convinced he'll be a centre like Danny Grimshaw."

Her first game was Oldham v Adelaide Rams at Boundary Park in July, 1997 -- and she's been hooked ever since.

"I was born and raised in Rochdale, where I still live, but my Dad and Grandad were Oldham-born."

"They used to go to Watersheddings together and when Grandad died I took over his season ticket."

In the last couple of seasons she's been attending games with her husband Danny's four-year-old daughter Tamara, another potential member of 'Roary's Pride'.

Jack Holmes is Tamara's favourite player because he wears No 4 -- her age.

Jenny's all-time favourite player is Adam Neal and, of the current squad, Lee Kershaw.

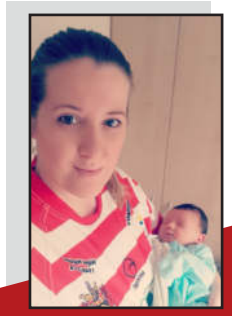
Her best-ever game was the 2015 promotion final against Keighley Cougars, closely followed by "a few games where we've finished on the winning side against Rochdale."

She works as a letting agent for a Rochdale-based estate agency and likes nothing better than to see Roughyeds put one over on their derby rivals.

And her predictions for this year?

"I think we'll go up. We've got a good squad and all the new lads are gelling and looking as though they've been with us for years," she said.

So, from everyone at the club, heartiest congratulations to Jenny and Danny on the birth of Edward and belated birthday best to the 'big' little fella who, if his parents and grandparents have their way, will play for us one day.



FIXTURES

Date	Time	Opponents	Venue	Score	Results	Attn.
February						
Sunday 17	3:00pm	Workington Town	Home	28-32	Lost	765
Sunday 24	3:00pm	Whitehaven RLFC	Home	36-12	Won	546
March						
Sunday 3	2:30pm	North Wales Crusaders	Away	16-14	Won	426
Sunday 10	3:00pm	Challenge Cup 3 - Haydock	Home	80 - 10	Won	508
Sunday 24	3:00pm	London Skolars	Home			
Sunday 31	3:00pm	Challenge Cup 4 - Widnes Vikings	Bower Fold			
April						
Sunday 7	3:00pm	Newcastle Thunder	Away			
Sunday 14	3:00pm	Challenge Cup 5				
Friday 19	3:00pm	Hunslet RLFC	Home			
Saturday 27	3:00pm	West Wales Raiders	Away			
May						
Sunday 5	3:00pm	1895 Cup 1 - Whitehaven	Home			
Sunday 12	3:00pm	Challenge Cup 6				
Sunday 19	3:00pm	Coventry Bears	Home			
Saturday 25	6:30pm	Keighley Cougars	Away			
June						
Sunday 2	3:00pm	Challenge Cup QF				
Wednesday 5	7:30 pm	1895 Cup 2				
Sunday 9	5:30pm	Doncaster RLFC	Away			
Sunday 16	3:00pm	Keighley Cougars	Home			
Sunday 23	3:00pm	Workington Town	Away			
Wednesday 26	7:30pm	1895 Cup QF				
Sunday 30	3:00pm	West Wales Raiders	Home			
July						
Sunday 7	3:00pm	Whitehaven RLFC	Away			
Sunday 14	3:00pm	North Wales Crusaders	Home			
Sunday 28	3:00pm	1895 Cup SF				
August						
Saturday 3	3:00pm	London Skolars	Away			
Sunday 11	3:00pm	Newcastle Thunder	Home			
Sunday 18	3:00pm	Doncaster RLFC	Home			
Saturday 24	4:00pm	Challenge Cup/1895 Cup Final				
September						
Sunday 1	3:00pm	Coventry Bears	Away			
Sunday 8	3:00pm	Hunslet RLFC	Away			
Sunday 15	3:00pm	Play-offs				
Sunday 22	3:00pm	Play-offs				
Sunday 29	3:00pm	Play-offs				
October						
Sunday 6	3:00pm	Promotional Final				

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