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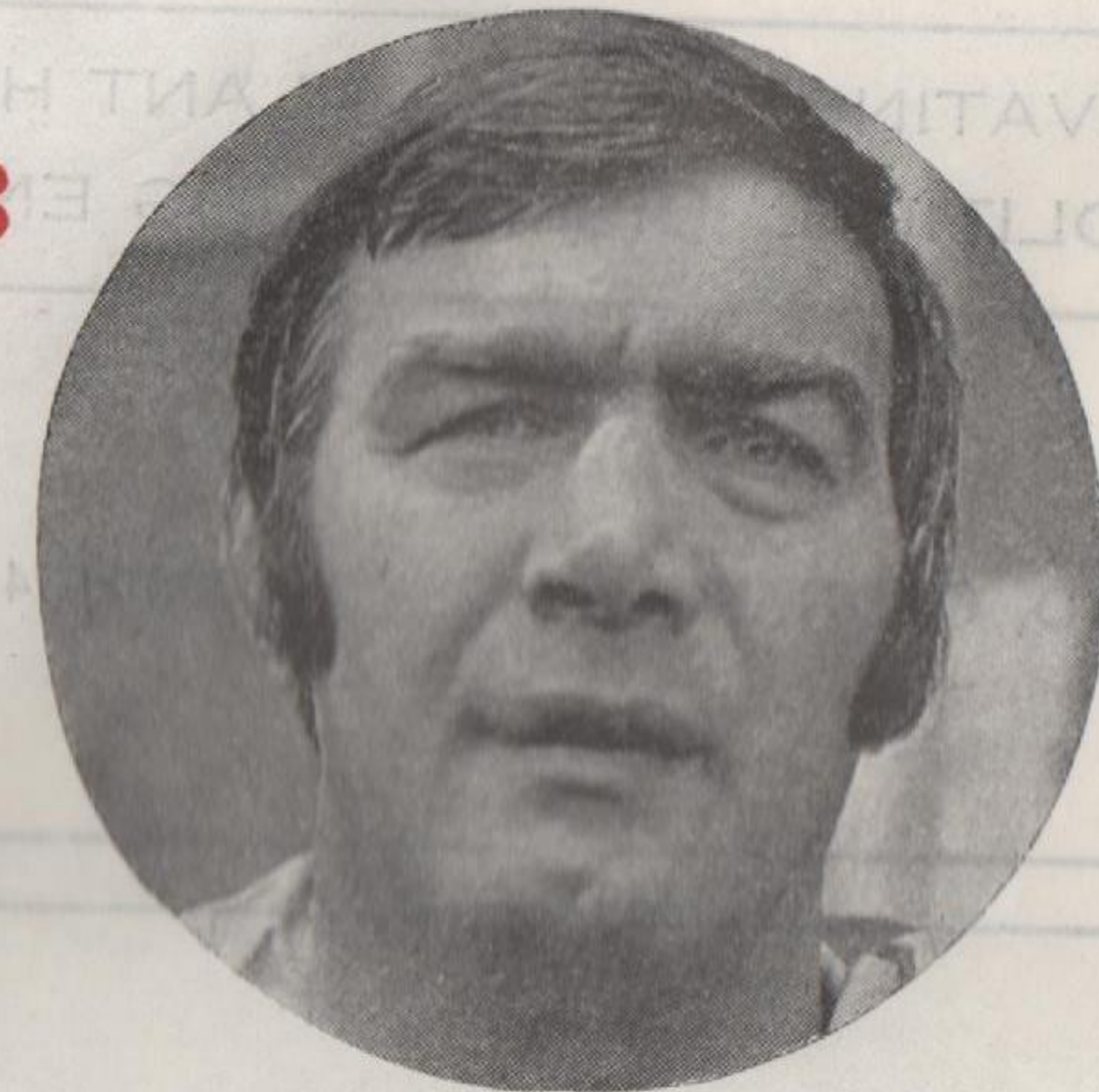
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# TUG WILSON

## SOUVENIR PROGRAMME

1963



1975

# OLDHAM v ENGLAND

April 22nd 1975 Kick off 7-30  
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## To TUG and ENGLAND . . .

### Thanks a Million

by ARTHUR WALKER  
Chairman, Oldham R.L.F.C.

WHEN I sat down to put a few words together to mark tonight's big occasion I wondered how to combine a tribute to our testimonial man Ken Wilson with a welcome, from the bottom of the heart, to England's World Championship squad.

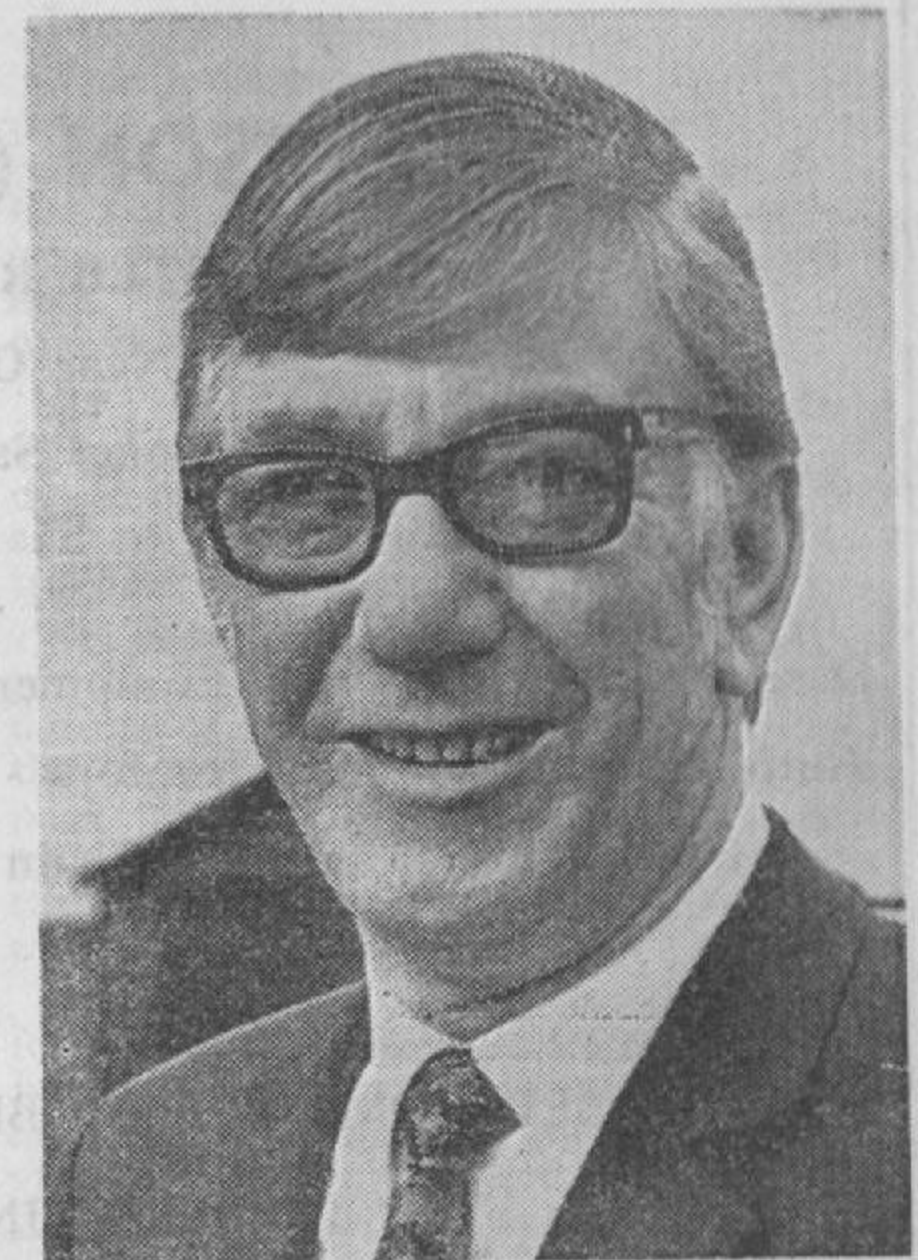
So often when the obvious stares you in the face it doesn't click immediately—namely, that the presence of Bill Oxley, Alex Murphy and the England players here tonight is indicative in itself of the esteem with which Ken is held in high circles of Rugby League football.

He was always a players' player and I can think of no more appropriate way, as his benefit year draws to a close, than to recognise all he has done for the club over a long number of years with a match featuring the best players our country has to offer.

To the England party and the officials of the Rugby Football League I would like, on behalf of the club, to extend a real Watersheddings welcome.

This evening's match represents the start of the squad's intensive preparations before it leaves for the World Championship matches on the other side of the world on May 27th.

It goes without saying that we wish the party bon voyage and all the best of luck in the new-style international tournament.



In 1972, you will remember, the Great Britain squad had a warm-up match at Oldham before the World Cup in France. They lost 18-15 here, but went on to lift the world trophy.

Dare we suggest that England might lose tonight—and go on to emerge as world champions?

If that happy double-up came to pass no one would derive greater satisfaction than tonight's man of the moment, Kenneth "Tug" Wilson.

For Ken has truly become, over the years, not only an adopted son of Oldham but a Rugby League man in the best sense of the word.

He has given a great deal to the club and the game in the manner of his sportsmanship, his dedication, his enthusiasm, his self-discipline and, perhaps above all else, his loyalty.

To Tug for his invaluable contribution to the Oldham club since 1963, and to the England team and officials for their willingness to help recognise that contribution I say, on behalf of you all . . .

THANKS A MILLION!



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## Ken Wilson Loyalty Personified

by ROGER HALSTEAD

(Oldham Evening Chronicle

R.L. writer)

RUGBY LEAGUE players are a cosmopolitan bunch. Coming from all walks of life, all types of backgrounds, equality is reached, it is often said, only when the moment of truth arrives and the shrill blast of the whistle signals the start of another 80 minutes of play.

In general terms one can appreciate that class and social barriers are broken down no more effectively than on the field of play at Rugby League football.

The pit lad from Pontefract, gifted with inborn rugby skills, can for 80 minutes each week-end be a king in the eyes of his appreciative audience.

There is, glad to say, more to our great sport than skill, strength and speed alone.

How often, when talking rugby, have you pointed somewhere in the direction of the heart and, with a shake of the head, bemoaned the fact that "the lad hasn't got it there?"

Loyalty can count as much as ability if that ability is applied only as and when it suits the individual's needs or whims.

Character, determination, self-discipline and loyalty provide the very foundation of success in Rugby League. And to that skill and temperament and you have the qualities of the truly great performer.

Ken Wilson, whose ten-year testimonial we celebrate tonight, was never a great player in the sense that he was able to scale the ladder to stardom as an international.

At Oldham alone there have been more skilful forwards in the last decade ... but few, if indeed any, have proved themselves equal to Tug in terms of overall contribution to the club's cause both on the field and off it.

One presumes that his early years as a police cadet, followed by the training he received as a physical fitness man in the R.A.F., had much to do with the fashioning of the character that has given Oldham wonderful service since the summer of 1963.

The record book shows that he made 332 first-team appearances, making his debut against Rochdale in August, 1963, and ending his career against the Australians in October, 1973.

It does not show the extent of the physical endurance he packed into that decade of service for Oldham or, indeed, the manner in which he always came back for more despite personal crises which, for lesser men, would have meant turning their back on Rugby League for ever.

He was never known to resort to any foul tactic. A great admirer of Dave Parker, his skipper on so many occasions, he had, and still has, a great belief in the virtues of fair play and sportsmanship that Parker used to preach.

Ken Wilson is best summed up in the words of two men who coached him—Frank Dyson, his team boss in the early days, and Graham Starkey, who was coach towards the end of his career.

Says Dyson: "Both on and off the field he was the ideal sort of player for a coach to handle. He would do anything that was asked of him and would go through a brick wall for his team, his colleagues, and his club."

Says Starkey: "To Ken Wilson, rugby was a very serious matter. Every match, every training session, was something important to him. He was a great believer in all that was best of the traditional attitudes of dedication and self-application. He was, in short, a first-rate club man and so deadly serious that on days when we had played badly or lost he had no time for jollification.

"We had to get him going on such occasions and when we did we saw another side to him: he could be really hilarious."

Through thick and thin Wilson has stuck with Oldham while packs have crumbled around him. Sadly, he never saw during his own playing days his dearest wish come true ... to see Oldham playing at Wembley.

His retirement from the playing side of the game was a body blow, but the club wisely offered him the position of "A" team coach last August. Predictably, Wilson accepted.

It is said that when asked about salary he replied: "I'll leave that to you."



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LES DYL (Leeds)

DEREK NOONAN (Warrington)

JOHN WALSH (St. Helens)

KEN GILL (Salford)

ROGER MILLWARD (Hull K.R.), Captain

PARRY GORDON (Warrington)

STEVE NASH (Featherstone Rovers)

DAVE CHISNALL (Warrington)

MIKE COULMAN (Salford)

KEITH BRIDGES (Featherstone Rovers)

ERIC CHISNALL (St. Helens)

TOMMY MARTYN (Warrington)

GEORGE NICHOLLS (St. Helens)

STEVE NORTON (Castleford)

BARRY PHILBIN (Warrington)

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## THANKS

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking most sincerely everyone who has helped to make my benefit a success, the Benefit Committee, players and officials of the club, local business people, but a special thanks to you the public of Oldham who have supported the various functions.

I would also like to thank the players and officials who have made tonight's match possible.

KEN WILSON.



# Fitness Fanatic That's Wright

by ROGER HALSTEAD  
(Oldham Evening Chronicle)

DENNIS Wright plods a lonely beat on his early morning runs across the hills and parkland near his home in fashionable Tandle Hill, just outside Oldham.

Up at 6 a.m. daily, the man who will tend to England's injuries during the five-nations international championship later this year rarely misses his morning jog, even in the height of winter.

At 45 and a leading authority on the treatment of sporting injuries, Dennis is as much a fitness fanatic now as he was in his own playing days ... as a soccer professional!

He was a left winger for Oldham Athletic and Glasgow Rangers, where he played alongside some of the all-time greats of soccer north of the border.

"But I was always interested in most sports and when my soccer duties allowed it I often watched the Oldham Rugby League team from the terraces in the days of Norman Pugh and Harry Ogden," says Dennis.

A serious knee injury while playing for the crack Scottish Command side, including the brilliant Bobby Johnstone, put Dennis in hospital for three weeks and formed the embryo of a physiotherapy career that has taken him to the top of the tree in the field of sports medicine.

"I was captivated by the care and dedication of the hospital staff. My soccer days were coming to an end and I made up my mind there and then, in the hospital bed, that I would put my heart and soul into studying physiotherapy."

Years later, when Oldham Rugby League Club advertised for a physiotherapist during Gus Risman's reign as manager in the early 1960s, Dennis had the opportunity to achieve his big ambition—a return to sport.

And he has never regretted his entry into Rugby League football.

Says Dennis: "I was told I would have lasted much longer in big-time soccer had I been less timid. In those days wingers and full-backs had some really physical clashes. One full-back whispered to me while I was with Athletic: 'Come near me just once, son, and I'll break your leg!' I was just a kid at the time.



"I wasn't timid, but it just wasn't my style to get stuck in, as they say. I would rather force an opposing player out to the touchline, as they do today, than knock him for six.

"But had I possessed as much guts in my body as Rugby League players pack into their little fingers I would have been all the better for it.

"Words cannot describe my admiration for the determination, the discipline and the character of Rugby League boys.

"I think it all stems from the top. The game itself is disciplined—administrators, club officials, referees and players.

"For instance, in all my years in the game at club and international level I have never once heard a coach try to tell his players how to beat the referee.

"The message is always the same—accept decisions, don't talk back, get on with the game. In this respect we can teach soccer such a lot.

"My one regret is that, unlike soccer, Rugby League has not generally modernised itself in its approach to training and coaching.

"As a general rule we still believe that what was good enough for the stars of yesterday is good enough for the lads of today."

Dennis Wright, golfer, Rugby League physio., ex-soccer player, and lecturer on sporting injuries, is a man of many parts. He is as much at home in the dressing room as he is in the lecture hall or the hospital ward ... and Rugby League football is all the better for him.

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# Meet the England Team

The 20-man squad to represent England in the first phase of the World Championship in June is:

**GEORGE FAIRBURN**—a Scot from Kelso, who qualifies because he had an English grandparent. An exciting full-back, he was being freely tipped as Andy Irvine's successor in the Scottish R.U. side before Wigan paid £5,000 for his signature early this season.

**JOHN ATKINSON**—joined Leeds in 1966 from Roundhay R.U. club and has been a regular member of the international side over the last few years. Played in three World Cups and toured Australia in 1970 and 1974.

**GED DUNN** — a newcomer to the international scene but a winger of tremendous speed. Leading League try-scorer this season with 39 and has set a new scoring record for the Hull K.R. club.

**KEITH FIELDING** — doubtless the fastest man in League. Second to Dunn in the try-scoring charts, this Salford flyer has played three times for Great Britain and twice for England—and he only turned pro. in June, 1973.

**LES DYLL**—A Leeds youngster with a great future ahead of him, he toured under Jim Challinor last year and played in five of the six Tests in Australia and New Zealand.

**DEREK NOONAN**—One of five Warrington players in the squad. A strong-running centre, he has rocketed to top honours under Alex Murphy and took his big chance with both hands when making his England debut a few weeks ago as fourth-choice centre.

**JOHN WALSH**—A gifted footballer who was out of the game last season while completing his studies. Played in the 1972 World Cup and picked against France in January this year.

**KEN GILL**—the tactical brains behind Salford's free-scoring style in recent seasons and a great success on tour last year until injury put him out of action. A running forward's delight: such is the precision and the timing of his distribution.

**PARRY GORDON** — first recognised when chosen for England under-24 side in France in 1966, Parry has had to wait nine years for full honours. A scrum-half from the old school—fast on the break and dangerous when breaking from the scrum base—he has many admirers.

**ROGER MILLWARD**—needs no introduction here. One of our most experienced international campaigners, he will skipper the party on his fourth trip to the other side of the world.

**STEVE NASH**—Making a rapid return to international football after injury, Nash has been our top No. 7 in recent seasons. Had a magnificent tour last year.

**DAVE CHISNALL** — rugged, experienced front-row man and a stalwart of the Warrington pack that laid the foundation for overwhelming success last season and a return trip to Wembley next month.

**MIKE COULMAN**—fast, strong and powerful. Successfully completed the switch from second-row to prop. A South African tourist with the British Lions, he was a police boxing champion in 1960 and later a Staffordshire police sprint title holder.

**KEITH BRIDGES**—Also coming back after injury. Lost his place to John Gray, now in Australia, but a proven performer at this level.

**ERIC CHISNALL** — brother of Dave and another tourist last summer. Can play either prop or second-row with equal ability.

**TOMMY MARTYN**—younger brother of that well-remembered Leigh scoring ace, Mick Martyn, Tommy played for Batley and Leigh before joining Warrington in January. At one time looked like turning pro. for Oldham when Gerry Helme was coach here.

**GEORGE NICHOLLS** — Made four appearances in the 1972 World Cup and played in two out of three Tests against Australia in 1973. Toured last year and played in all six Tests.

**STEVE NORTON**—a Castleford lad who appears to have fashioned his style on Mal Reilly. Known as "Knocker" around Cas. and district, he is a forward to be respected.

**BARRY PHILBIN**—Made his international debut against France a few weeks ago and did well. Though a loose-forward, he played hooker in his Swinton days and will be a handy lad to have around as Bridges' understudy.

**NOTE:** A replacement forward for Terry Clawson, who pulled out of the squad because he will be playing for Australian club, South Newcastle, had not been named when these pen pictures were compiled.

Tonight's game will be the first of three England warm-up matches. They play Warrington on May 14th and Bradford Northern on a date to be fixed.

The England programme is: June 1st, Western Australia at Perth; June 7th, Toowoomba; June 10th, Wales at Brisbane; June 15th, a Sydney Club; June 18th, Huntley (New Zealand); June 22nd, New Zealand at Auckland; June 28th, Australia at Sydney; June 29th, a Sydney Club; July 1st, a Sydney Club; July 6th, Papua at Port Moresby.

The party will fly out on May 27th and arrive back on July 10th.

Congratulations to David Treasure, our stand-off half, on his selection for the Welsh world championship squad.

For the pictures in this testimonial brochure we are indebted to the Oldham Evening Chronicle, chief photographer Edward Woolley and his staff.

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This space donated by John Hall, Vice-Chairman



# ALEX the GREAT

by DAVID J. HOWES  
Rugby League P.R.O.

ALEX Murphy became heir to the throne of King of Rugby League when as an 18-year-old he first toured Australia with Great Britain. Today, at 35, Murphy is still in no danger of being deposed.

After a devastating playing career, littered with caps, honours and premature retirements, he adapted to coaching, where once again his vociferous dedication brought success. His teams have swept the honours, including Wembley victories with Leigh and ace cup winners Warrington.

This season Murphy took the reins of the Lancashire side and steered the Red Rose to the county championship title. Late last year, the dapper Rugby League personality returned to the International scene with his appointment as England coach.

Murphy's biting tongue and hard hitting methods have made him a world wide sporting personality, the Anglo-American Sporting Club recently honouring him with a special dinner in Manchester attended by more than 700 top sportsmen.

Today, Murphy faces yet another challenge, a bid to gain England world status. In typical Murphy fashion, he says: "England has only one aim—to be number one in the world. I think that for the first time the Rugby League is giving International games the prestige they deserve."

"This squad training is really paying dividends. The lads are getting to know each other, behaving like a normal club side. We have developed moves and a general understanding, which is bound to pay dividends. They are linking together as though they have played for the same team for six or seven seasons."

"By staying in the same hotel for two or three days the lads are feeling like Internationals, unlike before when you were given a shirt and told to get out there."

Murphy's squad includes a nucleus of players who have experience of the demanding Australasian conditions—plus a number of new faces.

"We have obtained a blend of experience and youth. What's more they are all keen to do it. It is understandable that the Aussies are favourites, but that is only bookmakers' talk. It all comes down to what the teams do on the field, and we can turn it on as we proved against Wales at Salford, when we had five team changes within 24 hours."

"Overall, I still fancy the Welsh to cause a major upset in the Championship, even though they slipped up in Toulouse."

Murphy has been called a born winner. "This World Championship is the biggest thing to have happened in Rugby League for years. There must be only one winner—England."

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