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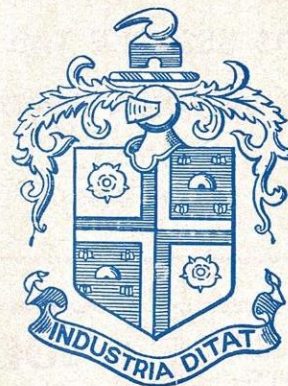


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PROGRAMME



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Rugby Football
Club**
NAUGHTON PARK
LOWERHOUSE LANE

Sunday,
March 21st,
1976
Kick-off 3.0 p.m.

WIDNES

v.

OLDHAM

7p

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19 ALBERT ROAD, WIDNES
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Welcome to Oldham

Today we have the pleasure of entertaining our friends from Oldham who have beaten some of the top clubs since promotion to the First Division this season, and at present the league positions are Widnes 5th, Oldham 10th. Today they will be hoping to repeat their BBC-2 Floodlit Trophy win last September at Watersheddings.

In their line-up today Martin Murphy, full-back and captain, has been with the club 8½ years. Signed from Leigh Miners, Martin has gained County and International honours, and guested successfully in Australia. Martin is in the mould of attacking full-backs, and has an eye for exploiting any gaps in defence.

Mike Elliot, in his twelfth season, is top try scorer with 12 tries to his credit. He had a joint benefit two seasons ago with Kevin Taylor. Phil Larder, equally at home on the wing or in the centre, was signed from Sale. He has been the club's leading points scorer for the last three seasons, and is a most reliable goalkicker. Eddie Barton, centre or wing, has been with the club three years, and is a schoolteacher colleague of Phil Larder. Stuart Bottom, a local junior product, is another possible back, along with Johnny Blair, an Oldham 'B' team product. Steve Lund is a wingman signed from a Castleford junior side after playing school-boy International at Crystal Palace. Keith Jackson is another threequarter who graduated from Oldham 'B' team and is knocking on the first team door after two games.

At half-back, signed from Bradford Northern two years ago, stand-off David Treasure played for Wales in Australia, scoring the decisive try against England. David is the costliest signing in the side at £4,000. At scrum-half is Mick McCone, signed from Doncaster four seasons ago at a bargain price of £750. Mick is of the tough terrier type scrum-halves loved by all rugby enthusiasts.

In a strong pack Terry Ramshaw is a useful buy from Hull at £500. Terry hopes to guest in Australia during the close season, providing he can take his wife and family along. At hooker is Kevin Taylor, signed from a local junior club twelve years ago. Renowned for his hooking and his play in the loose, Kevin has played at Under-24 International level and for his county. Barry Kear, who was signed recently from Hull K.R. for £2,500, so impressed the spectators in his trials at Watersheddings that they contributed £2,000 towards his fee.

Fred Hall, an Oldham junior, was signed for £750 from Blackpool Borough. Fred is a powerful second-row. Kevin Flanagan, who left Oldham for Rochdale, was re-signed after Rochdale let him go. Tony Peters is another snip Oldham acquired after Leigh crossed him off their books. Brian Hughes is another candidate in the forwards, signed from Leeds for £1,000.

Here's anticipating The Chemics avenging that Floodlit Trophy defeat and an entertaining afternoon's rugby!

TODAY'S REFEREE

Today's referee, Mr. T. J. Court, comes from Bradford. He passed the referees' exam in 1972, was promoted to Grade 2 in 1974, and upgraded to Grade 1 in July 1975. He enjoys reading science fiction, and his hobbies include badminton, table tennis and schools rugby league. Married with one baby son, he is a schoolteacher.

CUP-TIE SCENE

At Wilderspool Stadium in the third-round tie of the Challenge Cup trail The Chemics met their old rivals The Wire in a repeat of last season's final. Never a classic, but then few cup-ties produce the brand of rugby that graced Wembley Stadium last May. This was typical, no-nonsense rugby with the close result flattering Warrington, who hardly



"Ray The Boot"
—well on target

seemed capable of scoring tries. All credit to The Wire defence, but the missed chances of The Chemics could have produced a much bigger winning margin. Dropped passes with the line at our mercy; Mick George recalled for an alleged forward pass. Incidentally, remember Mick fielding that high kick through with tremendous courage as the opposition stormed in at him. Well done, Mick!

Reg Bowden, John Foran and John Wood were always prominent in attack and defence, while Eric Hughes, Mal Aspey and David Eckersley were always probing the defences.

No, we are not forgetting Ray "The Boot" Dutton. This was Ray's game—immaculate goals, pin-point accuracy with his touch-finding kicks, sound in defence, and always ready to run the ball to his backs.

Altogether a sound all-round performance, and a promise of better things when we turn it on as we are capable of doing against better opposition.

Stand tickets for the cup semi-final at Swinton have been on sale this week-end to vice-presidents and stand season ticket holders. They will also be on sale after today's match, and tomorrow from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., to all holders of ground season tickets (two tickets allowed to each holder). Any tickets remaining will be sold to any applicants during the week between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. each day (Wednesday 5 p.m.).

The game is not all ticket, and no ground tickets are being issued.

* * *

Because of the cup semi-final at Swinton on Saturday, March 27th, the home game against Dewsbury due to be played next Wednesday (March 24th) and the away fixture with Keighley (March 31st) have both been cancelled and will be played on dates to be arranged. This pile-up of fixtures, though regrettable, is now unavoidable in the circumstances.

* * *

An attractive 'A' team match will be played on Tuesday, 30th March kick-off 7.30 p.m., when the 'A' team play the English Universities side in a warm-up match for this year's France v. England University Match.

The 'A' team game against the local Amateur League has been arranged for Friday, April 2nd (7.30 p.m.).

* * *

The Supporters' Club have once again organised one of their very popular Royal Iris dance cruises from Liverpool (with coach transport) to take place on Friday, April 9th. Tickets are now on sale at usual sources, or from Mr. Alan Rae at Naughton Park today.

* * *

A letter of thanks has been received from the Widnes Ladies Lifeboat Guild for the generous donations made by supporters at the Widnes v. Wigan match. A total of £107 was collected, and this has given a much-needed boost to branch funds.

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Does the BBC really care about Rugby League?

With the Challenge Cup once again well into its exciting stride, the general talk in League centres on the Wembley final on May 8th.

asks BRIAN BATTY
of the Daily Mail

The speculation as to the finalists and the type of game to be expected is growing, and this is certainly one competition that never fails to keep its appeal.

I appreciate that attendances tend to be influenced by whichever tie the BBC takes for live televising, but there is no doubt about the success of Sunday matches.

Featherstone have been fortunate in having three home ties which have swelled their season's receipts more than they dared have hoped.

It was encouraging to see that on the same afternoon that Widnes were pulling in 14,000 fans, there was only a slightly smaller crowd to watch the Salford-St. Helens tie.

The importance of winning trophies has been proved by Widnes in recent seasons, for their gates have shown a steady increase, and the Wigan tie brought their biggest crowd for ten years.

Had the BBC been persuaded to take the Keighley-Leigh tie instead of Warirngton-Widnes, we could have had another excellent average for the third round.

But the weakness of the contract is that the BBC and not the League have the say, which is a pity, for Keighley are among the clubs who have not exactly suffered from over-exposure on television.

Only recently I read an article in a rugby league paper which informed us that the game would be nowhere without television. It was stated that television is doing its part by keeping everyones talking about League at work and in the clubs and pubs.

But the main topic in these areas always seems to concern the poor deal League enjoys in comparison to Union on television.

It seems to be overlooked that however thick the cloth is on the fan's cap he is still sensitive and serious about the game. He cares about the presentation and the image the game is given. And he does not seem happy with progress—or lack if it—made in this direction.

It is a point that has been made for so many years that surely the BBC are aware of the criticism. Or do they prefer that League should continue with an image that sets it so far apart from Union?

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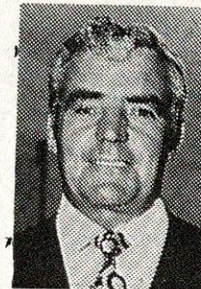
Admission 65p

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IN AID OF THE JOHN FORAN TESTIMONIAL FUND

MICK NAUGHTON COLUMN

A TRIP TO REMEMBER



Continuing my memories of humorous moments during my career, one that is particularly outstanding is of a trip to France with the Widnes 'B' Team. I was invited along as referee by coaches Bob Carson and John Stapleton, and I readily accepted the invitation. What a great time we had! The fun started as soon as we boarded the London train at Runcorn station. What with Mick George ("The Lip"), Terry Briers ("The Flying Pig"), Alan Dearden, Nicky Kelly, Mick Adams and Nick Nelson, you couldn't go wrong.

Terry Briers kicked off with his funny remarks about scrap yards, and every time we saw one he would let out a roar, "Look lads, a 'chat' yard, it's worth a few bob," and this would immediately raise roars of laughter from the lads.

During the train ride through France Mick ("The Lip") George began telling the lads all about his "war experiences" against the Germans. As we approached Dunkirk, Mick started pointing out places and landmark which supposedly brought back memories for him, and he had the lads in stitches.

When we reached Paris we made our way to the other railway station only to find all the seats had been double booked. Such a commotion followed, with the English lads trying to explain to Arabs, Greeks, Italians and Frenchmen that they had already booked the seats on the train, and vice versa. Finally we all got settled down for a long trip to Avignon, travelling through the night.

Arriving there the following morning, Mick Donnelly, a real character, got off the train thoroughly disappointed because there wasn't a band to meet us. This barracking continued throughout our visit to Avignon; everywhere we went Mick kept asking "Where's the band?" One day in Salon, after playing the local side, we were all seated outside a cafe, attending a reception laid on by the host club. Suddenly from the distance came the sound of music. Yes, you've guessed it. It was a band. Mick Donnelly jumped up from the reception, ran off in the direction of the music, and a few minutes later came marching up the main street in front of the band, acting as drum major. The French officials and both teams were by this time rolling over with laughter.

When we arrived back at our sleeping quarters, it was the officials' job to check that all the lads were bedded down for the night. Not surprisingly, one had to be missing. Yes—Mick George. He had dressed up in black and white striped pyjamas and a stetson, and sporting a huge cigar had gone out for a walk! We finally caught up with him on his way to the city centre, singing cowboy songs, and we escorted him back to the billets.

I also remember Mick Adams at another reception saying to one of the lads, "Don't try that soot on toast, it's awful." When we found out what he was talking about, it happened to be caviar.

Of course, a tour wouldn't be complete without a few pranks, and sure enough, we had them. One of the officials, who is to be nameless, had

[continued on page 17]

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- Left Wing
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- Scrum Half
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- Prop Forward
- Hooker
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- Second Row
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-
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COLTS IN ACTION

by JOHN HUXLEY, Huddersfield Daily Examiner

It was good to see that the Rugby League Colts final trial went down so well at the Fartown ground in Huddersfield.

Anybody who had any doubts about the future of rugby league football should have seen those young men in action.

The Fartown fans were certainly impressed. One said: "If there are going to be more games like that you can put me down for a place on the terraces. I'll be watching rugby league for years to come if lads like that go on to play professionally."

Certainly coaches Graham Starkey and Garth Bridge have done some tremendous work with the youngsters.

The fascinating thing was that, despite their inexperience and youth, the players showed a tremendous number of skills.

From various parts of the rugby league world there are glad tidings that the schools and junior game is on the way back, and this can only be good news for the game in general.

At Oldham, for example, the schools game is booming after some magnificent ground work in the junior schools, while in Cumbria youth rugby—which was virtually extinct 12 months ago—is well on the way back.

Attention to the grass roots of the game is essential if our game is going to survive. The Rugby League has recognised this fact, and produced a coaching wall chart for youth clubs and schools.

Officials of the British Amateur Rugby League Association (BARLA) have already said that one of the most important part of their "five year plan" is the encouragement of young players.

The plan is about half-way to completion, and the youth game has increased by about 500 per cent. What about the price of rugby league's future now!

As in Cumbria, the youth game in Lancashire was heading the same way as the dodo . . . but not any more. Things are definitely looking up on the Red Rose horizon.

Back at Fartown a schoolboy coaching course proved that the game can still attract interested youngsters. At the first meeting of the six-part course there were 80 young hopefuls. That figure has now topped the 100 mark.

This kind of activity is a "must" if rugby league is to survive against the onslaught of soccer and rugby union.

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PROCEEDS TO JOHN FORAN TESTIMONIAL FUND

A TRIP TO REMEMBER—cont.

retired to bed, and his last job before going to sleep was to remove his spectacles (he was as blind as a bat without them). Another of the lads, Nicky Kelly, slipped in during the night and put black boot polish on his lenses. You can imagine the reaction when this official woke in the morning and put on his specs! His remarks were, "Blimey, I thought I'd gone blind"—or words to that effect.

This type of thing went on throughout the tour, but what a great time we had although the general behaviour of the lads when it mattered was excellent, and they were good ambassadors for Widnes.

LANCASHIRE RUGBY LEAGUE COMBINATION TABLE

Up to and including Saturday, 13th March, 1976

	P	W	D	L	For	Agt	Pts
ST. HELENS	15	13	1	1	299	125	27
WIGAN	17	13	0	4	313	235	26
ROCHDALE HORNETS	16	10	1	5	206	150	21
OLDHAM	15	10	0	5	219	156	20
WARRINGTON	17	9	1	7	274	196	19
WIDNES	13	6	2	5	154	164	14
SWINTON	15	5	0	10	183	253	10
BARROW	16	4	1	11	149	252	9
LEIGH	16	3	2	11	221	296	8
SALFORD	15	4	0	11	122	228	8
HUYTON	11	2	0	9	120	205	4

SWINTON

Follow signs St. Helens A568. At Black Horse public house keep left then turn right along Norlands Lane (A569). One mile farther at roundabout follow signs Manchester to join Motorway M62 eastbound. Leave motorway at Junction 13 and at roundabouts follow signs Swinton to join A572. In two miles at traffic signals forward then take first turning left, Partington Lane B5231 (SP town centre). In half-mile at traffic signals forward; Station Road, Swinton ground on right. (24½ miles)

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KEY RINGS	16p, 25p	CAR STICKERS	15p
PENNANTS	30p, 40p	SEW-ON BADGES	30p
BRACELETS	45p	PENDANTS	45p
BROOCHES	28p	PENS	10p
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FIRST TEAM APPEARANCES AND SCORERS

Up to and including Saturday, March 13th, 1976

	Season 1975/76				All games			
	App	G	T	Pts	App.	G	T	Pts
Adams, M.	25	1	8	25	94	10	19	75
Allen, D.	2	—	—	—	7	—	—	—
Aspey, M.	28	3	12	42	401	135	173	789
Ashton, A.	1	—	—	—	82	10	19	76
Bolan, R.	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Bowden, R.	32	2	1	5	195	4	28	90
Dearden, A.	4	—	1	3	7	—	2	6
Doherty, J.	2	—	—	—	24	1	3	11
Dutton, R.	33	123	1	245	346	977	13	1985
Elwell, K.	27	1	8	25	209	18	26	112
Eckersley, D.	7	—	2	6	7	—	2	6
Fitzpatrick, J.	10	—	—	—	22	—	1	3
Foran, J.	29	—	4	12	249	—	35	105
George, D.	31	—	14	42	84	—	34	102
Hammond, D.	8	—	—	—	13	—	—	—
Hughes, E.	24	—	16	48	219	1	100	301
Jenkins, D.	26	—	11	33	28	—	14	42
Kelly, N.	7	—	—	—	10	—	—	—
Laughton, D.	4	—	—	—	71	—	13	39
Middlehurst, C.	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Mills, J.	10	—	1	3	94	—	14	42
Nelson, N.	23	—	2	6	54	—	4	12
O'Neill, D.	8	—	2	6	237	3	114	348
O'Neill, J.	8	—	5	15	24	5	7	31
Prescott, A.	31	—	10	30	181	—	60	180
Shaw, P.	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Sheridan, B.	24	—	3	9	129	—	21	63
Stephens, J.	1	—	—	—	19	—	1	3
Tilly, S.	7	—	—	—	21	—	2	6
Walsh, A.	4	—	—	—	264	—	16	48
Wood, E.	1	—	—	—	34	—	3	9
Wood, J.	22	—	—	—	32	—	2	6
Wooden, D.	1	—	—	—	9	1	1	5

FIXTURES 1975/76

FIRST TEAM			'A' TEAM		
	F. A.			F. A.	
1975			1975		
Aug 10	Leigh (A&B Cup)	A 25-19	Aug 8	Leigh (Farrell Cup)	H 12-8
" 16	Wigan	A 14-13	Sept 5	Salford	H 31-8
" 22	Castleford	H 11-9	" 17	Wigan	H 10-11
" 25	Warrington	H 37-5	" 20	Huyton (LCCS)	A 5-9
" 31	Whitehaven (Lancs Cup)	H 19-7	" 26	Huyton (LCCS)	H 11-9
Sept 5	Salford	A 10-30	Oct 10	Rochdale H.	H 5-5
" 16	Workington (Lancs Cup)	A 16-2	" 17	Huyton	H 16-5
" 21	Huddersfield	H 21-9	" 25	Barrow	A 21-17
" 28	Dewsbury (Player's rd 1)	H 27-12	" 31	St. Helens	H 0-52
" 30	Oldham (BBC-2)	A 10-16	Nov 15	Swinton	A 29-18
Oct 4	Salford (Lancs Cup Final)	16-7	Dec 6	Huyton	A P
" 12	Featherstone R.	A 16-21	" 12	Warrington	H 5-14
" 18	Huddersfield	A 15-14	1976		
" 26	Hull K.R.	H 33-11	Jan 16	Swinton	H 7-6
Nov 2	Bradford Northern	A 13-8	" 23	Oldham	H 5-11
" 8	Wigan (Player's, rd 2)	A 18-5	Feb 5	Salford	A 7-4
" 16	Swinton	H 17-5	" 21	Leigh	A 5-22
" 23	Hull K.R. (Player's, rd 3)	A 18-14	" 27	Leigh	H 13-13
" 29	Castleford (Player's S.F.)	A 17-9	Mar 10	Rochdale Hornets	A 7-30
Dec 7	Keighley	H 21-13	" 13	Barrow	H 3-00
" 14	Dewsbury	A 19-1	" 20	Oldham	A 3-00
" 26	Salford	H 19-14	" 26	Warrington	A 7-30
" 28	Featherstone	H 17-22	" 30	Universities XIII	H 7-30
1976			April 2	Amateur eLague	H 7-30
Jan 1	St. Helens	A 4-12	" 7	St. Helens	A 7-30
" 4	Hull K.R.	A 6-14	" 10	Barrow	H 3-00
" 11	Wakefield Trinity	H 9-12	" 14	Wigan	A 7-30
" 18	Swinton	A 7-3			
" 24	Hull (Player's No. 6 final)	19-13			
Feb 1	Oldham	A P			
" 8	Bradford Northern	H 23-5			
" 15	Batley (R.L. Cup, 1st rd)	R 26-4			
" 22	Wakefield Trinity	A 12-8			
" 29	Wigan (R.L. Cup, 2nd rd)	H 7-5			
Mar 7	Leeds	H 10-13			
" 13	Warrington (Cup, 3rd rd)	A 6-0			
" 21	Oldham	H 3-00			
" 27	Featherstone R. (Cup S/F)	3-00			
April 4	Wigan	H 3-00			
" 7	Castleford	A 7-30			
" 10	Leeds	A 3-00			
" 16	Warrington, (GF)	A 7-30			
" 19	St. Helens (EM)	H 7-30			
" 24	Oldham	A 3-30			

TO BE RE-ARRANGED

Dewsbury _____ H
Keighley _____ A

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NAUGHTON PARK**

Sunday, April 4th

**WIDNES
v.
WIGAN**

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