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OLDHAM RLFC

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

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**RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIV TWO
v LANCASHIRE LYNX
FRIDAY 10TH APRIL 1998 K.O. 4.00 PM**

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Chairman's CHATTER

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

WELCOME to our first ever League game. This is the official start of what we hope will be an exciting adventure for the new Club.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the players, officials and supporters of our opponents today, Lancashire Lynx. Kevin Tamati and his colleagues are trying to establish the Lynx in what can be deemed to be a 'new area' and we wish them well. There is no doubt that Lynx will provide a strong test but we hope to take the two points to set us on our way.

The crazy world of rugby league then takes over and we travel to Workington on Monday for our second game in three days, after waiting months for our season to start. There is no doubt that the second division will be very competitive and with only twenty games to play the season will be something of a sprint.

Whatever happens we must all be mindful that not so long ago we had no club and we have done remarkably well to even reach the starting gate – that is in no small part due to the help of Stewart Hardacre, Melvyn Lord and Sean Whitehead and I would like to place on record my

thanks to them. In addition to this, and equally important, you the spectators have backed everything we have done and the support we have had in the games we have played so far has been absolutely incredible. The players have appreciated this and on their behalf I thank you.

We are also working hard to put our infrastructure into place and with this in mind we welcome Scott Claber, our Lottery Manager, and wish him success in promoting what in most clubs is a vital source of income.

We have also appointed Michele Fitzpatrick as our first Club Secretary and although I tried to tell her just how much there was to do, I don't think she believed me until her first day. In fact I'm not too sure if she has even been home yet since that day! Seriously though we wish Michele every success.

Last but by no means least, we hope the players pulling on the Oldham jerseys this season can give us what we all want.

Best Wishes.

Chris Hamilton
Chairman



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"THE ROUGHYEDS"

Oldham Evening Chronicle's Roger HALSTEAD



ARE WE in danger of creating a nation of armchair Rugby League fans?

I pose the question following those dreadful Silk Cut Challenge semi-final attendances...only 11,000 at the McAlpine Stadium for Wigan Warriors v London Broncos and, worse still, fewer than 7,000 at Headingley for Sheffield v Salford.

Now you know, I know, we all know that interest in the sport in these parts is far greater than that reflected by those attendances.

You've only to examine the hundreds of young people, from the age of 7 upwards, who play the game, watch the game and enthuse about the game in and around Oldham to recognise that more League fans stay away from professional matches than turn up to watch.

Why?

Cost could be a major factor...TV overkill another. Let me, for a moment, retrace my steps over that semi-final weekend.

On the Saturday I was at the National Conference premier division battle between Saddleworth and Walney Central. Plenty of evidence here to indicate that the game at grass roots is thriving.

Into the clubhouse at the final whistle and there, on the TV screen, are the empty seats and wide open spaces of Headingley, while the players of Salford and Sheffield serve up a thriller: not the first TV epic by any means in a superbly-entertaining Challenge Cup campaign.

So to Sunday - and for the first time in a long time I opted to join the crowds and go as a paying fan to watch London and Wigan.

A perk of the job is the press box pass issued by the RFL. It is one pass for one person. I make that point in passing because it has been put to me in the past that the Halsteads don't know the meaning of a paying customer.

Not true. Only ONE Halstead gets his rugby

league free of charge. Me. And that's no secret. My position is no different to any of the other working media men who report on our great game from Wigan to Wollongong or from Bradford to Brisbane.

The world over, we journos (sorry for the Aussie slang) chronicle the sports events on the cheap...so it comes as something of a culture shock to this particular Halstead when he turns up at the McAlpine and is asked to fork out £14 for a seat on the popular side.

A pre-match coffee was 90p. My meat and potato pie...correction, potato and meat...set me back a cool £1.40, almost as much as the bargain £2 I paid to park the car under supervision in a mill yard not far from the ground.

Another drink at half - time and for four adults, sitting on the popular side, mark you, there was little change out of £70.

And could I see as much as I would have seen on the box? no way - not when the whole of the row in front of me stood up in unison whenever Wigan made a strike for the London line.

Never mind. Super League was to be launched at Old Trafford the following day and I was to go along as the Chronicle representative to discover what was in store in the coming months.

The BBC had previously stepped up its Silk Cut coverage to take in two ties each round and now we were told in the joint Super League - Sky Sports press pack that "the new Super League season on Sky Sports sees the introduction of new broadcast technology, a new touchline reporter and more live games than ever before."

I am not knocking Sky. They present League in a polished and professional manner. I love it. And if I do, I have to wonder if thousands more like me also relish the prospect of settling down in the armchair to watch the action in close - up.

Watching sport is a habit...and it would be dead easy to drop into the habit of watching League in comfort, either at home or in the pub if funds on the household budget don't run to Sky.

The cameras are taking League all around the country, but I wonder if those of us who live in the sports heartland are in danger of becoming softies in house slippers without denying ourselves the game's thrills and skills.



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Introducing The Roughyeds

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

The men battling for the Roughyeds

KEITH ATKINSON

The Stalwart. This is Keith's 8th comeback! Signed for Oldham in 1985 and hung up his boots for what everyone thought was the final time in 1992. Little did we know! Back come forward who has probably played in every position with the possible exception of scrum half. Broke more bones than a butcher (his own that is!). Superb attitude.

CRAIG BARKER

Young stand-off half and a product of the Waterhead amateur RL club. Signed as a pro for the former Bears club and joined the Roughyeds as a free agent. Captained the Bears Academy side and graduated to the Alliance side, which he also led on occasions.

JASON CLEGG

Big Prop. Started in Union with Littleborough, moved into League with Littleborough based North West Pioneers and turned pro with Bradford Northern, (as they were then called), after being spotted by a Northern scout playing in a BARLA cup tie at Redhill (Castleford). Played several senior games with Bradford and later had a spell on loan with Batley.

SEAN COOPER

Former Saddleworth Rangers star, who was taken to Bradford in the Peter Fox era. Captained the Alliance side at Odsal, won numerous Alliance player of the year awards and joined Oldham as a free agent when the Bulls decided to scrap their reserve team. Impressive so far in the Roughyeds early games.

RICHARD DARKES

Former Huddersfield, Bradford and Dewsbury utility back. Ex-paratrooper. Signed after impressing in a pre season match at Castleford. Played wing in his early days with Huddersfield and Bradford, but has since acquired considerable experience in the centre and in the back row of the pack.

CRAIG DIGGLE

A Rochdalian, Craig played with Rochdale Hornets when Roughyeds boss Paddy Kirwan was Alliance team coach at Spotland. Best position, wing. Scored two tries in Oldham's first competitive match against Heworth in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup.

CHRIS ECKERSLEY

Former schoolboy sprint champion, who signed for the old Oldham club as a 15 year old on a club record contract for a teenager. A long

running contract dispute ended with his move to Warrington before he returned to his new home town club as a free agent after a major shake up of personnel at Wilderspool.

MICHAEL EDWARDS

St Helens born, Michael first joined the old club as a 15 year old scrum half. Was a regular in Alliance rugby for two or three seasons before Oldham coach Tony Barrow took him to Swinton. Now playing in the pack, he had a spell on loan with Salford last season and was delighted to return to Oldham when the opportunity arose.

NEIL FLANAGAN



Club skipper and an influential leader. A product of St Anne's, Neil turned pro for his home town club and became its youngest captain at the age of 19. Eventually moved on to Huddersfield, where he also had leadership responsibilities before joining Rochdale Hornets. Proud to be back in his home town and even prouder to be the skipper.

ANDY FLEMING

A Cockney who used to play soccer in the Tottenham and Chelsea youth sides, Andy took up League with London Crusaders in the days of Aussie boss Ross Strudwick. Had a spell in Australia and has played, on his return to England, with Bradford and Lancashire Lynx. Preferred position: wing.

JOHN HOUGH

Made his name as the first player to be signed by the Roughyeds shortly after the new club was formed. A product of the Oldham schoolboy and youth game, John is a determined little hooker, who gained considerable experience from his 30 senior games for Warrington. Expected to have a big season in division two.

continued on centre pages



Comments from THE COACH

TODAY'S game starts a new era for professional Rugby League in Oldham. It has been a privilege to have been part of the team who have, in just over three months assembled a strong squad of players and backroom staff.

The initial euphoria of the supporters at seeing the club resurrected has not waned, and we have had terrific travelling support at Widnes and Castleford.

In the Challenge Cup at Widnes the support was tremendous and I was really pleased with the performance of the team in the first 30 minutes. At that time though the squad was fairly threadbare and the unavailability through injury of Ian Sinfield and Mike Prescott left us weak. When injury occurred in quick succession to Sean Cooper and Martin Maders at a time when I had planned to spell Paul Round, the team quickly lost it's shape. A try disallowed for us was quickly followed by an opening score for Widnes who then showed their professionalism by scoring three tries before half time whilst we still seemed to be in a state of shock. Although we were heavily defeated I was particularly pleased with the performance of Jason Clegg and Michael Martindale who was playing his first game for over six months.

The seven weeks period between the Widnes game and the friendly at Castleford has given us the opportunity to strengthen and mould the squad. However at the same time it has been frustrating not being able to play. We played three games in five weeks at the



start of the year, and then because of the decision to have all three professional divisions starting their seasons on different dates it has been very difficult to arrange friendly games.

After the disappointment of the cancelled games against London Broncos and then, for different reasons the Navy, I was grateful to Castleford and Dewsbury for agreeing to provide us with suitable opposition.

Since the Widnes game we have made several signings to create more competition for places. In the forwards Nathan Varley and Michael Edwards both had impressive debuts at Castleford. We have also signed another three quarter in Richard Darkes who also had a fine game at Castleford and who has the ability to play in the back row. At the time of going to press we are in negotiations with Joe Nadiola and a half back/full back who can kick goals. With these signings in place I believe we have a strong balanced squad capable of doing very well in the Second Division.

Today, we welcome Lancashire Lynx who are led by well known Rugby League personalities Kevin Tamati, Steve Hampson and ex Oldham favourite Andy Ruane. Lancashire went close to promotion last year and will probably start as favourites for the title this year. It will be a tough challenge for our first match, but I am confident that the new Oldham players have the ability and the commitment to cause an upset.

Paddy Kirwan



Oldham RLFC

The Roughyeds

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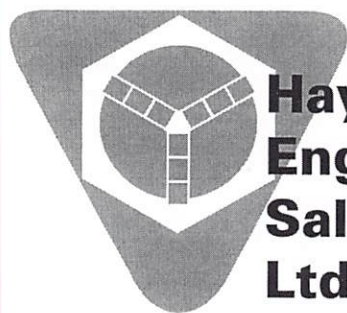
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Best Wishes to Oldham Roughyeds

Today's VISITORS

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

NEIL PARSLEY (Wing)

Neil picked up a couple of niggling injuries in '97. He unfortunately wasn't able to recapture the form from '96. Looking at the way he has been training he should have a big season in '98.

DARREN ABRAM (Centre)

Darren joins the 'Lynx' from Super League club Oldham Bears. He has been involved in Rugby League most of his adult life. He is an experienced centre who has proved in training that he will be a good asset to the club and team. Darren can score tries and hits hard in defence he will be very influential for the 'Lynx' in '98.

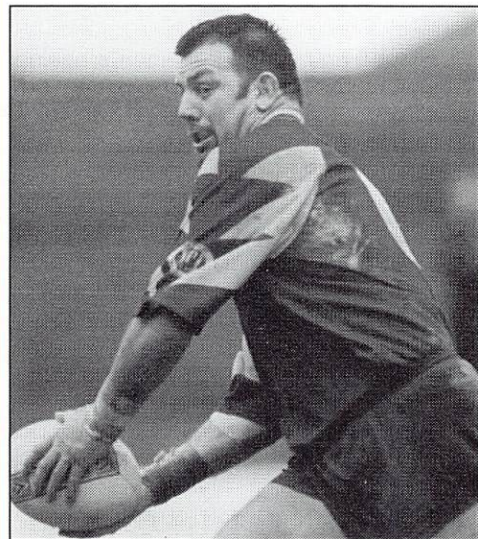
MILTON FINNEY (Centre)

Up until his groin strain became unbearable Milton was having a great season in '97. Wife Janet giving birth to a baby girl in '97 helped ease the pain a little. With '98 being Milton's last season with the 'Lynx' we are all expecting him to have an even better season than '97 with Darren beside him this will be a combination to watch.

PHILIP JONES (Stand Off)

Philip gets the nod ahead of a number of others chasing the number 6 jumper. A young man who joined the club in '97 to play academy Rugby League but played so well towards the end of the season he became a permanent name on the team sheet.

ANDY RUANE (Hooker)



Photograph courtesy Lee Stanley

LANCASHIRE LYNX

Andy had a superb season in '97, he led the team from the front. One of the more experienced players in the club he has trained hard in the off season and is looking forward to the new challenge.

STEVE TAYLOR

(Open Side Prop)

Late in the '97 season Steve was affected with some minor injury problems. Broken ribs proved to be the straw that broke the camels back and he missed the last few matches of the season. Steve has also worked hard in the off season and is fighting fit and can't wait for the new season to start.

PAUL NORTON (Blindside Prop)

Paul is another who can't wait for the new season to commence. A few injury problems last year saw his season cut short. We are expecting big things from him this year.

CARL BRISCOE (Prop)

The elder statesman in the squad Carl had a great season in '97 one of 3 pushing for the '97 player of the year award.

ROB MCLOUGHLIN (Wing)

Rob started the season well with some great performances at the beginning of the season. With the return of Ray Waring and Simon Smith he was relegated to the Alliance. With a point or two to prove Rob is expecting to have a great season in '98.

P J SOLOMON (Loose Forward)

PJ had a reasonable season last year but greater things are expected from him this season. His pace aggression and skill will endear PJ to the hearts of all spectators.

CRAIG FAIRHURST (Fullback)

Craig missed most of last season after breaking his arm in the first game. A very courageous player, good under a high ball and a very strong defender. Craig is in his third season as a professional.

RAY WARING (Wing)

Ray was the club's try scoring machine last season with 29 tries. He is very quick and for a small man very strong. Ray is in his third season as a professional.

SIMON SMITH (Second Row)

Hopefully Simon should be fit for the new campaign. He is big and strong, coming in from the wing to make a name for himself in the back row of the pack.



Do Yates On This Day

Don Yates recalls this day in history



EARLIER today Boundary Park staged the 94th Standard Cup Final when St. Annes met Higginshaw. Sixty-two years ago, on Good Friday 10th April 1936, Higginshaw made a little bit of Standard Cup

history despite the fact that on that occasion they were beaten 9-5 by Greenacres. It was Higginshaw's eighth consecutive final, a record which stands to this day. Should Higginshaw have pulled off a surprise victory over St. Annes this morning, and anything can happen in a final, then they would have equalled the Saddleworth Rangers' record of 14 cup final victories. Another cup final took place on this day in 1920, Saturday 10th April. It was the Northern Union Cup Final, forerunner of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup, in which Huddersfield defeated Wigan 21-10 at Headingley, Leeds. Wigan led 10-8 early in the second-half of a disappointing final before Huddersfield pulled away to win comfortably. Refereeing that match was Mr. F. Mills of Oldham.

Wigan suffered another defeat on this day in 1954, Saturday 10th April, when Oldham won a league match at Central Park by seven points to two. Winger Terry O 'Grady scored the only try of that match with full-back Bernard Ganley adding a couple of goals for the Roughyeds whilst prop Ken Gee landed the Wigan goal. That Oldham victory was one of 14 consecutive victories which the Roughyeds registered over Wigan between 1952 and 1958.

It was on this day in 1935, Wednesday 10th April, that a crowd of 7,100 were attracted to the Stanley

Greyhound Stadium, Liverpool for the England v. Wales international. England led 18-5 at half-time after taking advantage of the gale force wind and they hung on in



Bernard Ganley.

the second half with the elements against them to win 24-11. There were two Roughyed forwards in the Welsh pack, prop Lewis Rees and second-rower Norman Pugh.

Twenty-two years later, on Wednesday 10th April 1957, another two Roughyed forwards were on international duty. Prop Sid Little and loose-forward Derek Turner were in the Great Britain pack as the Lions defeated France 29-14 at St. Helens.

Down in Australia, on Saturday 10th April 1954, South Sydney and Newtown fought out a 20-20 draw in the top Australian Premiership match of the weekend which was staged at Sydney Cricket Ground. Five months later these two clubs met in the Grand Final when Souths lifted the title by winning 23 - 15.



Don Yates . . . Statistically SPEAKING

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

Oldham begin their 1998 league campaign with a visit from Lancashire Lynx, one of the younger clubs in the league who were formed in 1989 as Chorley. They must not be mistaken as the Chorley Borough club who succeeded Blackpool Borough alias Springfield Borough and then moved to Altrincham when they changed their name to Trafford Borough, before disbanding in 1992 after playing their final three home games in Huddersfield.

Lynx, in fact, in their inaugural season when playing under the name Chorley, actually met Trafford Borough. They knocked Trafford out of the Lancashire Cup but then conceded a league double to the Altrincham based club during that 1989/90 campaign. Two years later Chorley added Borough to their name but they were then relegated to the National Conference League.

Whilst in that competition, Chorley twice visited these parts to play Saddleworth Rangers. In season 1993/94 they beat Rangers 24-19 up at Shaw Hall Bank Road in a game of high quality but the following season Rangers reversed the result by beating Chorley 12-9.

In the 1995/96 Centenary season Chorley returned to professional competition when they changed their name to the Chorley Chieftains. Last summer they changed their name yet again, this time to Lancashire Lynx which is the identity they carry to Boundary Park today when they will be aiming to pull off their first ever victory over Oldham.

RESULTS OF PREVIOUS MATCHES BETWEEN THE ROUGHYEDS AND LANCASHIRE LYNX

1989-90 Division Two			
Chorley	6	Oldham	44
Oldham	66	Chorley	16

DETAILS OF LYNX'S LAST VISIT TO OLDHAM

Sunday, 18th February 1990
Division Two At Watersheddings
OLDHAM 66 CHORLEY 16

Oldham tries

Brett Clark (3), Richard Russell (2), Tommy Martyn, Charlie McAlister, Leo Casey, Johnny Cogger, Richard Irving, Paul Round Des Foy.

goals Duncan Platt (9)

Chorley tries

Stuart Williams (2) & Kurt Burnette

goals Mike Smith (2)



Des Foy.

Oldham: Duncan Platt; Richard Irving, Des Foy, Charlie McAlister, Paul Lord; Tommy Martyn, Brett Clark; Leo Casey, Richard Russell, Keith Newton, Keith Atkinson, Shaun Allen Johnny Cogger. Substitutes, Paul Round John Fieldhouse.

Chorley: Mike Smith; Kurt Burnette, Brian Torpy, Stuart Williams, David Bacon; Aaron Whittaker, Jeff Bimson; John Duffy, Tommy Gittins, Carl Briscoe, Mark Edwards, Mark Knight & David Wood. Substitues, Ken Marshall Billy Price.

Join the Players and Club Officials at **TONIGHT'S** opening of the brand new
'Penny Rush' Bar

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This is a designated town centre Roughyeds bar decorated RL style
and will regularly be used for meetings and fund-raising.

Official Opening by Chris Hamilton 7.30 pm



David Burke Freelance RL Journalist

GUEST WRITER

RUGBY LEAGUE has been justifiably proud of its image as the family sport.

It's a deserved reputation which had been built up over the years by its loyal, if vociferous, well behaved supporters.

There's been no need for "Berlin Wall-style" segregation separating our home supporters from the away fans.

Indeed we've been in the fortunate and privileged position of receiving an annual pat on the back from the Metropolitan Police who reckon their job at Wembley on Challenge Cup Final Day is virtually a sinecure.

We've been the envy of most sports, especially soccer, in recent years.

That's why Saturday March 28th, 1998 will go down in Rugby League annals as a black day in Rugby League.

The hooligan who invaded the Headingley pitch at the end of Sheffield Eagles Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final win over Salford Reds did more than just shake referee Stuart Cummings.

The reverberations were felt immediately throughout Rugby League and, to compound the crime, the incident was captured on BBC Grandstand by millions of viewers who had been enthralled by 80 minutes of superb entertainment.

Sadly, but inevitably, those 15 seconds of madness captured the headlines on BBC and the newspapers.

Fortunately that was an isolated case and there's no need to worry unduly about the future.

Soccer, of course, has a bigger problem and it was perhaps as well for RL, that the referee at the Barnsley v Liverpool clash on the same day was also a victim of a mindless moron.

It's the one time RL fans were glad soccer was the more popular sport!

I remember being at Station Road - sadly now like Watersheddings just a fading memory - when an irate old lady ran onto the pitch and hit St. Helens forward John Mantle over the head with an umbrella.

That's the nearest we've been to major crowd violence in the last 30 years!

But if one lesson has to be learned from the Headingley horror it's that we do need better stewarding especially at big games.

The final hooter was accompanied by scenes not out of place in the Charge of the Light Brigade.

Most of the invaders were just over enthusiastic fans wanting to congratulate their heroes.

But even that should not be encouraged and now it's up to the clubs and the League to take heed of the warning.

We can't afford any more incidents like Headingley if we are to continue to pump out our chests and keep boasting about our near unblemished record and family appeal.

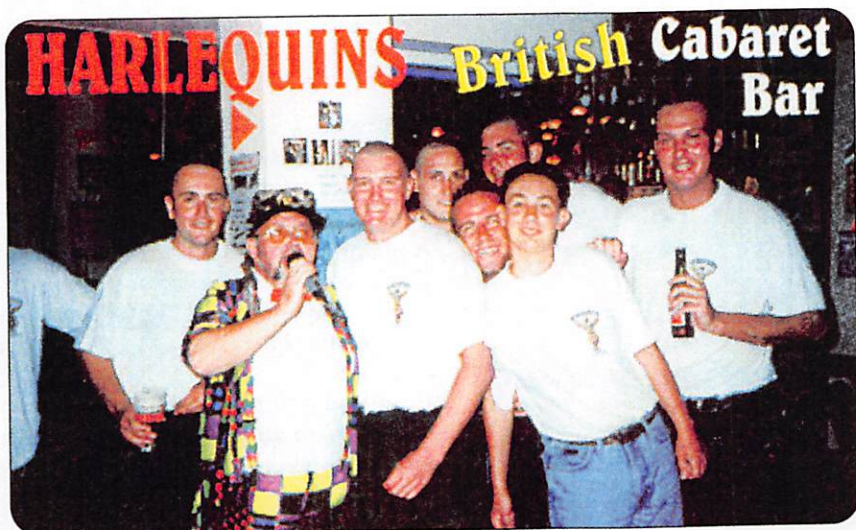


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MATCH BY MATCH 1998



APRIL 1998	Alt	Result
10 Fri LANCASHIRE LYNX		H4.00
13 Mon WORKINGTON TOWN		A3.00
22 Wed BRAMLEY		A7.45
26 Sun DONCASTER DRAGONS		A3.00
MAY		
4 Mon BRAMLEY		H3.00
10 Sun BATLEY BULLDOGS		H3.00
17 Sun BARROW BRAVES		H3.00
24 Sun YORK		A3.00
31 Sun RR LANCASHIRE LYNX		A3.00
JUNE		
7 Sun RR WORKINGTON		A3.00
14 Sun RR BARROW (at Rochdale)		H3.00
19 Fri RR LANCASHIRE L (at Rochdale)		H7.30
28 Sun RR BARROW BRAVES		A3.00
JULY		
5 Sun RR WORKINGTON		H3.00
19 Sun RR FINAL		
26 Sun LANCASHIRE LYNX		A3.00
AUGUST		
2 Sun WORKINGTON		H3.00
16 Sun DONCASTER		H3.00
23 Sun BATLEY		A3.15
30 Sun BARROW		A3.00
SEPTEMBER		
6 Sun YORK		H3.00

continued from page 7.

AFI LEUILA



Played 22 Super League games for the Bears last season after coming close to representing Tonga in the 1995 World Cup. First played for St Helens. This strong, tough South Sea Islander, born in Tonga, raised in Auckland, will probably figure in the centre this season, although he is equally at home on the flank.

MARTIN MADERS

Young prop, who joined Huddersfield from Saddleworth Rangers as a club record buy for a teenager. Had a spell in Australia and later played with local amateurs Waterhead before joining Oldham for an undisclosed fee. His father Dennis played for Oldham in the sixties and seventies.

MICK MARTINDALE

Clever ball handler. Represented Oldham schoolboys on tour in Australia with Iain MacCorquodale, Eric Fitzsimons and Fred Laughton in 1988. Turned pro with Halifax, moved to Wakefield as part of a swap deal and joined his home-town club in January. Made his debut in the cup defeat at Widnes. Loose-forward or stand-off.

JOE McNICHOLAS

Out and out winger. Fast, elusive and good on his feet. Still only 18, signed for the Bears as a boy, but played only one senior game, at Leeds in the Premiership play-off last season. Rejected Bradford Bulls in a bid to make his name with the Roughyeds.

AIDIAN MEAD

A Wiganer, Aidie first played in the Bears Academy side as a winger, but he switched to centre last season and impressed as a strong and pacy runner who could score tries. Keen to improve further and build on the success he enjoyed in the Bears 'A' team in 1997.

MIKE PRESCOTT

Back-row forward, also from Wigan. Made a big name for himself as a strong-running forward in the early days of Academy rugby. Since served his apprenticeship in the Alliance side and capable of doing well for the new Oldham club at prop or in the back-row.

BRIAN QUINLAN

Raised at St Anne's, Brian was one of the three Oldham amateurs taken to Bramley by Maurice Bamford. The others were Jon Perks and Roy Jewitt. A strong prop or second-row, Brian is a useful goalkicker. He also plays, during the winter, for Oldham RU but he is the first to admit that RL is his real sporting love

PAUL ROUND



Veteran of the squad at 34. Joined Oldham from St Helens in 1987. The fee, £65,000 set by tribunal. Enjoyed the best days of his career at Watersheddings. Since had further experience with Wakefield, Halifax and Castleford. One of the 'old heads' in a young pack.

DARREN ROBINSON

'Baby' of the squad at 18. Scrum-half, who can also operate at stand-off. A Leeds lad, Darren played for the Bears Academy and Alliance teams, but never signed on. Signed for the Roughyeds as a free agent and has since caught the eye in warm-up matches, particularly in the 27-26 defeat at Castleford.

GRAEME SHAW

Son of former Oldham Athletic and West Brom soccer star David Shaw. Graeme played Union as a boy at Rakewood (Littleborough), but turned to amateur RL with Moldgreen when his family moved to Huddersfield. Represented the Young Lions against the Junior Kiwis and then signed for Bradford. Made a try-scoring Super League debut at Leeds. Second-row forward.

IAN SINFIELD

Made a big impression so far. Another Oldhamer, a product of Waterhead. Turned pro with Salford, who got an undisclosed fee when he signed for Oldham at Christmas. A natural back-rower, he is the elder brother of England schoolboys star and now Leeds youngster, Kevin Sinfield.

NATHAN VARLEY

A go-go forward, who excelled with his all-round performance on attack and defence in the friendly at Wheldon Road. Not the biggest of forwards, Nathan has a big heart. He won Yorkshire youth honours before rejecting Keighley to sign for Bradford. One of several ex-Bradford men in the Oldham camp.

STEVE WILDE

Utility back. Strong and pacy. Started with Saddleworth Rangers. Signed by Brian Gartland for the Bears. Prominent member of the Bears Alliance side last season. Played with Waterhead when the Bears folded, but was keen to sign for the new club when opportunity knocked.

Best Wishes for the Season  Seton Healthcare Group plc

All photographs by kind permission of the Oldham Evening Chronicle whose co-operation we gratefully acknowledge.



OLDHAM 1998 The Roughyeds

Back Row: Michael Edwards, Chris Eckersley, Brian Quinlan, Nathan Varley, Paul Round, Graeme Shaw, Keith Atkinson, Craig Diggle, Sean Cooper.

Middle Row: Paddy Kirwan (Coach), Darren Robinson, Graig Barker, Richard Darkes, Jason Clegg, Martin Maders, Andy Fleming, Afi Leuila, Steve Wanless (Physio), Mick Coates (Asst. Coach),

Front Row: Michael Prescott, Steven Wilde, Neil Flanagan, John Hough, Ian Sinfield, Aidrian Mead, Joe McNicholas.


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From the Supporters Club

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

MAIN BRANCH

This year has seen the formation of 2 new branches of The Supporters Club who along with the main branch are committed to assisting Oldham RLFC in any way possible by either raising funds or saving costs by providing assistance.

Race Night 23rd April 1998

We are holding a Race Night on Thursday 23rd April 1998 at St Annes ARLFC. These evenings are very enjoyable so if you fancy an night out and a little flutter on the horses come along and enjoy yourself. Tickets for the evening are priced at £1.00 and can be purchased from the club shop, or by contacting Alice (0161 663 6780) or Trevor (0161 628 8006). We are still looking for a few race sponsors at £25.00 and race horse owners at £3.00, so if you would like to have a race named after you or become an owner for the evening please contact either Alice or Trevor for details.

Grand National Draw

Unfortunately these notes had to be with the printer before the Grand National Draw was made, however we would like to express our thanks to all our members who sold tickets, and we congratulate the winners. Lists of winning tickets are available from the club shop or by contacting Alice.

Away Travel

We will be organising coach travel to all away matches this season, with coaches departing from the Black Horse on Ripponden Road, Watersheddings. Seats can be reserved by contacting Joyce (0161 665 1832) prior to match day. Details of the coach to Workington are as follows:

Depart Black Horse 10.00 a.m.

Adult Price £9.50

Junior Price £6.50

Members of the main branch of the Supporters club receive a discount on the above prices.

Please contact Joyce (0161 665 1832) for details of the departure time and prices for the coaches to Bramley and Doncaster.

These coaches are scheduled to arrive at the match within a reasonable time prior to kick off and depart for home immediately after the match.

Roughyeds Reward

This year the half-time draw will be known as the Roughyed Reward and will again be sold by the main branch of the Supporters Club. As in previous years the winner will receive 50% of the total ticket sales at each match. The winning number will be drawn at half-time and the holder of the winning ticket will be presented with their prize ON the pitch.

Please look out for the Roughyed Reward team at today's match and future fixtures (including

those taking place at Rochdale) and please buy a ticket or two. Remember the more you purchase, the bigger the prize, the more it helps Oldham RLFC.

Future events

We are always looking at different ideas for fund raising so watch this space for details of future events. If you have any fund raising ideas please contact either Alice (0161 633 6780), Sue (0161 681 3397), Trevor (0161 628 8006) or any other Supporters club official.

Members Draw

Please remember that a free draw will be held for members of the main branch of the Supporters Club attending at any function we organise, so come along and enjoy yourself, you may be the lucky member.

ORLFC SUPPORTERS CLUB-CHADDERTON BRANCH Fund Raising!

Please support our car boot sales to be held on the first Sunday of each month at "The Little Cot" Whitley St. Chadderton. For further details please ring Sylvia Patterson on 0161 284 5127.

WATERSHEDDINGS 107 BRANCH

Firstly, let me say a big thank you to Chris Hamilton and the rest of the board on the magnificent job they have done in resurrecting our famous club. Despite what certain people think about expansion, you cannot destroy a games heartland and hope to move further afield. "If the roots are destroyed the tree will die".

The Watersheddings 107 branch IS a member of the O.R.L.F.C. Supporters Club and is a testament of Chris's ability to be able to pull us together and get us all working in the same direction. Its now time for all the people in Oldham to show solidarity and make our club great again.

On that note the 107 branch will be holding various fund raising events throughout the season, details to follow in forthcoming programmes.

However, we will be running coaches to ALL away games. These will be run in conjunction with the Supporters Club and not against them. As they are aimed at a different type of person, the coaches will be leaving early to arrive at the venue in plenty of time for people to partake in any activities they wish. They will also be staying behind after the game for the same reasons. Details can be obtained from Debbie on 0161 633 0849.

Finally, good luck to ORLFC and everyone connected with the club for the coming season.

Mark Coope
Chairman Watersheddings 107 Branch



From The EDITOR

ALTHOUGH it's been a long wait Easter is a particularly appropriate time to launch the new Second Division season being associated as it is with the theme of resurrection. In many respects nearly all the clubs in this year's Second Division have had to be reborn, though none more so than Oldham. The start of a season is always a time for optimism and looking ahead, but the crystal ball is especially cloudy at this particular time.

Will the right to Murdoch money give the other clubs a built in advantage over Oldham?

Will linking up with Super League sides provide other clubs with greater playing strengths?

Or will the likelihood of better support give Oldham an advantage?

Only time will tell.

But rest assured we are in for a competitive season and it would be foolish to underestimate any of Oldham's opponents. Here's hoping for some exciting rugby and let's get behind our team and the officials who have resurrected a once great club.

R. L. TOPICS

CONGRATULATIONS must go to Sheffield Eagles on reaching Wembley. After just fourteen years in existence the rise to prominence of Sheffield as a force to be reckoned with is testimony to the successful management and marketing of a club which in the early days led a nomadic existence. I well remember watching the Eagles take on Oldham at Owlerton Stadium in the Challenge Cup and going to see them play Swinton at Millmoor, the home of Rotherham United. What a contrast with the facilities at the Don Valley Stadium. Despite the success of Stuart Raper and Castleford, which is equally deserving of congratulations, it is especially pleasing to see an English coach take his team to Wembley. Here's hoping that John Kear and some outstanding English players like Paul Broadbent, Dale Loughton, Mark Aston, Matt Crowther and others can make Wembley 1998 an occasion to remember. Unfortunately one suspects that a Wigan side revitalised under John Monie might just carry too many big guns and too much experience of the big occasion for the Eagles to pull off a surprise.

Talking of surprises, with the First Division campaign well under way, it's nice to see Hunslet Hawks performing so well. The lesson the Hawks dished out to Oldham in the Pre-Challenge Cup friendly doesn't look quite so bad now. Keighley Cougars, another club brought back from the dead, are finding it hard going and surprisingly so too are Widnes Vikings who looked such a formidable and polished side in defeating Oldham in the Challenge Cup. So competitive is the First

Division that it is rumoured that after only four fixtures at least one club was thinking seriously of sacking it's coach! Will we never learn?

OLDHAM v THE BUGGERS

A COMPOSITION BY M. LEICESTER, CLASS II

IT WAS Monday morning in our classroom at Beever St. Junior School and Miss Winterbottom had called me up to her desk. "I have just been reading your composition about what you did at the weekend Marjorie. Did your Mother give you permission for you to attend the, er, game on Saturday afternoon?"

"Yes Miss, Mum said I had to go."

"Very well, sit down." Apparently, my dad and my uncle had a few laughs about my composition over a pint in the White Horse, so here is what I remember about my first game at Watersheddings...

Back to Saturday morning and Mum was harassed, "Look Harry," I heard, "it's either that, or you stay at home and I'll go to the match". What words, I'd be scared stiff at the suggestion, but to go on, "Our Ronald's going swimming, our Laura's going up town with a friend, the little one has a chest this week and can't go out at all. I've got this washing to finish, ironing to do, tidying up to do, tea to make and missing a pint on the way to the match, once in a while, won't do you any harm. I just want to get myself organised, she'll be alright, I'll wrap her up well". The tone said it all and Dad really had no choice did he? So there I was, kitted out in boots, tights, bonnet, gloves, scarf, layer upon layer of clothing, going to my first game; WOWEE! I remember sitting on the wall in front of the old 'E' stand on Herbert Street and when I complained about it being cold Dad lowered me onto the straw at the side of the wall. This straw was all around the pitch, it was prickly and a bit smelly but it surrounded me like a cocoon, it warmed and accepted me. Oh, what giants these men seemed to be. They ran about, pulled each other down, shouted to each other and grinned a lot. Some of them had no teeth and I was boggle eyed. I remember how they steamed and sweated when they went down in a huddle, it reminded me of my Gran's rag puddings when she lifted them out of the set boiler, all big, fat, hot, steamy and full of goodness. I smiled imagining one of these puddings with legs and arms, running about carrying a rugby ball. As we walked home with 'millions' of people, there was a lot of banter, chat and much laughter. I stumbled and Dad lifted me onto his back for a piggy ride. Teatime came and went and at my allotted bedtime a tired little fan went upstairs. Dad came up to tuck me in and say 'God Bless' and I sleepily asked him, "did we win Dad?"

"Aye lass, we did that, we beat the buggers".

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Junior Roughyeds

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"THE ROUGHYEDS"

HI THERE all you Junior Roughyeds,

A big Roughyeds welcome back to Boundary Park and to the new 2nd Division season.

We wish to send a very warm welcome to all players, officials and supporters of Lancashire Lynx.

Our first Junior Roughyeds meeting is on **Monday 6th April.**

At the meeting we will be holding our **Mascot Draw** for the following matches:

Lancashire Lynx	H
Workington Town	A
Bramley	A
Doncaster Dragons	A
Bramley	H

We were hoping to see our new Roughyed Mascot at the Junior meeting but unfortunately it won't be

ready on time. But, I'm sure tonight we will give our new mascot a great big Junior Cheer.

Over the coming season we look forward to welcoming all our players at the monthly Junior meetings.

Ball Boys/Girls

We have had over 20 Boys and Girls volunteer to be the Ball Boys on match days.

I would like to thank all the children who were Ball Boys and Girls for the Heworth match they did a tremendous job in the pouring rain. (They all said they loved it and wanted to do it again).

All the Junior supporters and their parents wish O.R.L.F.C. (97), the Board and players a very successful season. First Division here we come!

"Come on Oldham, come on Oldham"

Debbie Rafferty

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From the Pen of . . . Michael Turner

Time to "get on with it"

IT WOULD seem that over the last two years, those who support professional Rugby League in Oldham have been subjected to a barrage of "first and lasts"....

First Super League match.

Oldham v Wigan - March 30th, 1996.

Last senior match at Watersheddings.

Oldham v Sheffield E - August 25th, 1996.

Last first team match at Watersheddings.

Oldham V Swinton - January 10th, 1997.

First match in the World Club Challenge.

Nth Queensland C v Oldham - June 14th, 1997.

Last match for the Oldham Bears.

Leeds R v Oldham - September 8th, 1997

First match for the "new" Oldham club.

Rochdale H v Oldham - January 1st, 1998.

First senior match for the "new" club.

Oldham V Heworth - January 18th, 1998.

. . . and now more firsts. Today is, of course, the first League match for the resurrected "Roughyeds" in what we hope will be a successful re-entry to the "bread and butter" environment of Rugby League action, against Lancashire Lynx on their first visit to Oldham.

Surely now is the time to look forward as those who run the club set about the massive task of elevating the club back to the highest level of competition. I do not think I would be out of line in assuming that, twelve months ago, the prospect of fixtures with Batley, Doncaster, Bramley and Barrow etc, would not have filled the Oldham support with eager anticipation, and this is in no way meant to be a slight on our opponents. It is just a fact of human nature that one becomes acclimatised to the prevailing standard and since the 1993-94 season Oldham have played Rugby League at the highest domestic and international level.

Now, after the dramatic and sad events of October 1997, the fact that we are in

competition at all is a major tonic for the Rugby minded people of the town and those who are committed to OLDHAM as an institution and not just the game in general will indeed relish matches against the aforementioned clubs.

The one positive aspect to emerge from recent events is the apparent desire of the Oldham public to rally round the new club and the level of support at the matches so far, against Rochdale, Heworth and Widnes, has raised eyebrows amongst the general RL fraternity. It would be a safe bet the Oldham attendances will top the second division average and, if a successful League campaign results, it is possible that our crowds will be as good as any in the first division.

So, we are at the bottom rung of the ladder and those at the top would seem to be miles above. Indeed one could say that the Super League clubs have their "heads in the clouds".

However, ambition in itself costs nothing, and when the necessary graft and toil is applied who knows what can happen?

It would be good to think that the next first could be that elusive Wembley appearance.

FACT:

On March 27th **1988**, Oldham paid their first visit to the dilapidated, Owlerton Stadium and completed a league double over Sheffield with a 28 - 15 victory.

FACT:

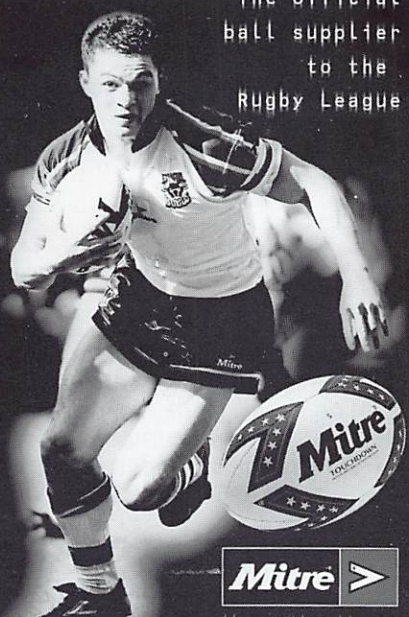
On March 28th, **1998**, Sheffield defeated Salford in the Challenge Cup semi final at Headingley to win their way through to Wembley . . . now who would have thought that!

**Congratulations to the "Eagles . . .
Come on the "Roughyeds".**



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Oldham RLFC

The Roughyeds

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Steve Brady of the Rugby Leaguer

GUEST WRITER

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

"WIGAN Couldn't Oldham!".... I remember the headline in the local paper when the Roughyeds put the mighty Riversiders out of the Challenge Cup in 1987. What a night that was. Lousy weather, terrible pitch, but a cracking match.

Wigan led 8-4 with just a minute on the clock, and from a scrum in front of Wigan's posts, Paddy Kirwan scrambled over the line - Mick Burke raising the loudest cheer in years at Watersheddings by kicking the winning goal. And while Oldham didn't go on to win the cup, who needs Wembley when you've just beaten the best team in the world - official! Wigan went on the beat Aussie champs Manly later that year - so the Roughyeds can look back forever on a glorious and historic result.

What has happened to the Oldham club in the ten years since that unforgettable night may not go down as a glorious section of the Oldham history book.

There are a number of reasons for the club's gradual decline, some of them self inflicted, but most of them the result of outside influences. And without wishing to drag up the painful past, I can honestly say that the sight of Oldham fans wandering the streets of Paris in floods of tears is something I will never forget. The game owed Oldham much more than that.

Indeed, the game of Rugby League has much to thank the club and the people of Oldham for. I have a picture on my office wall of the Oldham side 1898-99, proudly displaying a brand new silver trophy. No scratches, dints or bent wings - pristine, immaculate and with Oldham's name inscribed upon it, winners of the Northern Union Challenge Cup. Of course, the famous old trophy now bears the scars of

many after match parties and much celebratory throwing around. But in 1898, it was brand new, and it belonged to Oldham. the cup returned to Oldham only twice in the 100 years since that photograph was taken, but the club has been one of the game's most loyal servants, and in the early part of the 20th century, huge attendances could be expected at Watersheddings to see the Roughyeds tackle their championship rivals. 28,000 (and more, according to reports at the time) crammed into Watersheddings on February 24, 1912 for a league match with Huddersfield.

The passion is there, the latent support in Oldham is everywhere. All it needs is the catalyst for success.

Harking back to that team of 1898-99. Take away the handlebar moustaches and the players could be any one of the current Oldham set up. Who's to say that with the right guidance, steady management and stable environment that the Roughyeds will not rise again to become one of the leading lights of the game.

Certainly in Chris Hamilton and the new management team at the club there is the expertise and ambition necessary for any successful future. and with the right kind of results on and off the pitch, surely it can't be long before a club of Oldham's stature in the game returns to the top, where it belongs.

So, welcome back to Rugby League you Roughyeds, and good luck this season. All true supporters of "the great game" want to see a strong Oldham club, and with the right kind of support from local people, there is every reason to expect this can be achieved.

After all, if "Wigan couldn't Oldham" - who can?



Don Yates Down Memory Lane

Don Yates looks back to a match from yesteryear

LANCASHIRE Lynx have known many ups and downs in their short history. More downs than ups it must be said but they embark upon this third season of summer rugby with genuine hopes of promotion and with the strongest squad of players that they have ever possessed.

The club began life as Chorley in 1989, adding the suffix Borough to their name two years later. Their first season ended with Chorley in 15th position in Division Two, higher than such established clubs as Workington Town, Whitehaven and Keighley. Alas this was to be the highest placing Chorley have ever achieved. Twelve months later they slipped down to 8th and so were placed in Division Three when the three division set up was announced for the 1991-92 campaign. That inaugural Third Division season ended with Borough down in 12th position but things took a turn for the worse the following season when, within weeks of the season's finish, it was announced that the bottom three clubs would be relegated into the National Conference League. Favourites for the drop were Nottingham City, Blackpool Gladiators and Highfield. However, Highfield won four of their closing five matches and so avoided the drop. Despite winning their closing two matches, Chorley slipped out of the league on scoring difference after ending the season with the same number of points as Barrow.

The relegation to Conference League rugby resulted in a vast exodus of players from Blackpool Gladiators and Nottingham City, both of whom were relegated with Chorley. Borough, however, managed to hang on to enough players to enable them to launch a determined quest for the Conference League Championship. In season 1993-94 they were runners-up to Woolston Rovers and the following season they were third as Woolston retained the title.

In 1995 the Super League revolution hit Britain and Chorley were re-admitted into Division Three. Although this time it was called Division Two and Chorley were called the Chieftains. In the weeks leading up to the short centenary season, Chorley recruited industriously and, amongst others, signed

former Oldham players Martin Holden and Andy Ruane. They began the season with two away matches, at Leigh and Highfield, which brought defeat and then victory. Chorley's first home match in the Super League era was against Barrow, the club who maintained league status two years previously on scoring difference at Chorley's expense. Sadly there were only 550 spectators present at Victory Park for that match against Barrow. They saw the following two teams in opposition:

Chorley: Mike Smith; Damian Fletcher, Nigel Borowski, Sean Melling, Martin Holden; Steve Melling, Jeff Bimson; Gary Robinson, Joe Walsh, Brendan Barr, Carl Briscoe, Chris Bretherton and Andy Ruane.

Substitutes, Denis Ruane and Dave Barnes.

Barrow: Pat Trainor; Jamie Smith, Roy Robinson, Darren Wilson, Phil Everett; Steve Ashcroft, Neil Shaw; Stewart Quayle, Stuart Howarth, Gary Spencely, Gareth Kerr, Shaun Morrow and Phil Atkinson.

Substitutes, Glen Barber & Andy Whalley.

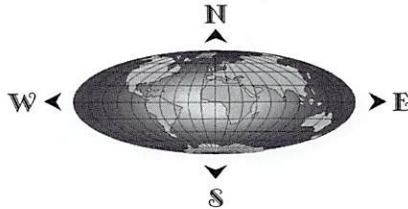
Chorley got off to a good start with a try from Martin Holden after 12 minutes and a couple of goals from Mike Smith. The experience of Andy Ruane was vital throughout the match. He kicked superbly and marshalled his troops magnificently during a nerve-wracking second half. Barrow got right back in the game on the half hour when Pat Trainor scored a try which was converted by Phil Atkinson. Just before half-time Jeff Bimson scored a vital try which, with the conversion, gave Chorley a 14-6 interval lead. It also gave Chorley confidence and they were able to extend their lead with a Mike Smith dropped goal. Andy Walley replied with a try for Barrow which was converted by Atkinson and took the score to 15-12. The closing minutes were tense but Chorley held out for a memorable victory.

That victory brought optimistic hopes for Chorley and they have continued to strengthen their squad with the result that last season the newly named Lancashire Lynx, now based at Preston, ended the campaign in mid-table. Will they go one better this year and achieve that elusive promotion spot?



Oldham RLFC

The Roughyeds



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Don Yates' Here & There

"THE ROUGHYEDS"

EARLIER today the Standard Cup Final was staged here at Boundary Park. Although that match is regarded as the highlight of the local amateur scene, there are still several high profile matches involving our local amateurs to be played during the closing weeks of the winter season. The two Conference League teams, St. Annes and Saddleworth Rangers meet tomorrow at Higginshaw Road (2.30pm) in a vital Premier Division match. Rangers have had a difficult season and are engaged in a desperate battle against relegation. Saints have enjoyed a much better campaign and, until recently, were heavily involved in the Championship chase. Recent results mean that only a dramatic loss of form by Woolston Rovers could enable Saints to claim the title. With match points being so vital to both clubs, it should be a terrific game.

Next Saturday, 18th April, Saints are at home again in another local derby when Mayfield of Rochdale visit Higginshaw Road. On the same day, Rangers travel up to Askam (Barrow) and then they complete their league programme with a couple of home matches. On Wednesday 22nd April, Leigh Miners visit Shaw Hall Bank Road (7.30pm) and three days later, Saturday 25th April, Champions elect Woolston Rovers travel up to Greenfield. It will be a tough finish for Rangers.

St. Annes also wind up their season with a tough match, a trip to Lock Lane (Castleford) on Saturday, 9th May.

But that is not the end of the season for four of Oldham's top amateurs who travel 'down under' to Australia with the BARLA squad for six matches against aboriginal teams during June and July. Centre Paul Brassington (Waterhead) and the Saddleworth Rangers trio of hooker Jason Wilkes, utility player Emmerson Jackman and coach Mick Swift will be making the trip. The matches are against North Queensland at Townsville on Saturday 20th June, v. Northern Territory at Ayers Rock on Wednesday 24th June, v. NSW Country at Armadale on Sunday 28th June, another match v. NSW Country at Coffs Harbour on Thursday 2nd July, v. Australian Capital Territory at Canberra on Monday 6th July and then the test match against the Australian Aboriginals in Sydney on Sunday 12th July. It will certainly be a tremendous experience for all four boys and so we wish them well on their travels.

Another important date for your diary is Thursday 16th April when a Sportsman's Dinner is being staged at Waterhead RLFC. The proceeds from the event will go to help John Power who suffered serious spinal injuries whilst playing for the Oldham academy team at Dewsbury three years ago. Malcolm Lord and Kevin Ashcroft are the speakers and there is a comedian in what should be a great night. Tickets, priced £20, for this most worthy cause are available from Mick Hough who can be contacted on 665-2709.

On Thursday, 9th July, the Club will be holding a

Fund-Raising Golf Tournament

at Oldham Golf Club.

It will be a 4-Ball Betterball - Stableford competition with a 2.30pm Shotgun Start.

Entry will be £200 for a team of 4 or £110 for a team of 2.

Included will be Lunch on arrival, a 5-course Evening Dinner and obviously prizes galore!

For tickets or enquiries please ring

any Club Official on 0161 628 3677

Brian Walker on 0145787 5084 or

Chris Roberts (Oldham Golf Club Captain) on 0161 633 5399



Roughyeds Notice Board

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OTHER SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE:

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Details from the Club Offices:

0161 628 3677

Join the Players and Club Officials at **TONIGHT'S** opening of the brand new **'Penny Rush' Bar**

within Mr Wrigleys, Union Street, Oldham.

This is a designated town centre Roughyeds bar decorated RL style and will regularly be used for meetings and fund-raising.

Official Opening by Chris Hamilton 7.30 pm

PROGRAMMES BY MAIL ORDER

Collect Programmes?

Relative/friends/living out of the area?

Why not book a full season's League match programmes for despatch to your nominated address? Cost £18 for the season inclusive of P&P.

For details call: **01457 872515**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have any comments on any aspect of OLDHAM RLFC (1997) please contact the Editor at:-

93, Chew Valley Road, Greenfield,
Oldham OL3 7JJ

Phone/Fax: 01457 872515

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Away Travel . . Away Travel . . Away Travel

DIRECTIONS TO BELLE VUE, DONCASTER ROVERS FC: From M62 Eastbound, Exit onto A1 South at Junction 33, signposted to Doncaster. Continue on A1 to Junction 35, M18 turn-off. Follow signs to Hull, Doncaster. Exit at Junction 3, signposted Doncaster Race Course etc. Continue on this road to second roundabout (Yorkshire Outlet shops diagonally to left) turn left. Continue on dual carriageway to second roundabout, turn right. Continue on dual carriageway to roundabout, turn right, ground on right, race course on left.

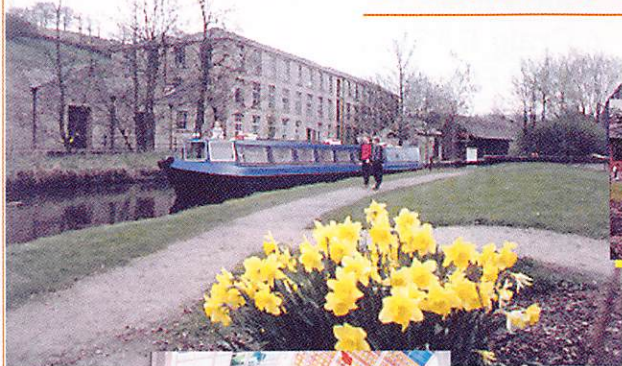
If at any time you get lost follow signs to Doncaster Race Course. If you take any other exits to Doncaster always follow signs to town centre then the race course.

DIRECTIONS TO DERWENT PARK: Leave M6 at junction 40, follow A66 to Keswick/Cockermouth/Workington. On entering Workington down a steep hill (Ramsey Brow) to a T. Junction. Henry Curwen pub on right hand corner, turn left at first set of traffic lights. Approx 300 yds turn right and continue through to next set of traffic lights until you come to the Railway Station. At this point cross the junction and drive in front of the Station, keeping in the Left Hand lane, ignore the first turning on your left and at about 100 yds turn Sharp Left into a narrow road leading to the Stadium.

BRAMLEY: (Now play at Headingley, Leeds)



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