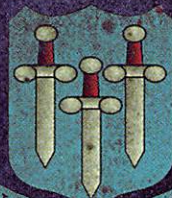


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Steadying the rollercoaster

In the days before motorways going to Oldham, or other far-flung outposts of Lancashire, was usually a horrendous journey, up hill and down dale, with nothing at the end of it except a stuffing for the visitors. The only consolation was it happened to them when they came "over the top" to Yorkshire.

With the M62 Oldham is not far off being a derby, and last years games between the two were humdingers, with all the passion of close rivals. That Oldham were even on the pitch was testimony to the effort of the current management, after the tumultuous experience of Superleague. The excitement of an elite place soon changed to the pressures of running a full-time operation, without the income to sustain. Oldham were on the rollercoaster that has affected other clubs suddenly finding themselves amongst the elite without the necessary preparation and resources. The result was financial collapse.

Fortunately the enthusiasm has been regenerated, and though the club is now playing home games out of the town prospects are looking bright, with the promise of a new council supported stadium in Oldham.

The news that the final years Murdoch monies are to be shared equally for the first time between all Premiership clubs must be welcome news to Oldham, who re-started as a new club with no financial support. Welcome too to Bramley, and the other former second division clubs, who have had to get by on much less than theirs rivals, and can now plan more longer term. A good sign that Premiership clubs accept that they all need each other.

Hopefully that same generosity of spirit will apply when Hemel Hempstead apply to join the Premiership for next season!

Those magnificent semi-finals will have re-inforced the image of the Challenge Cup as something very special, due to the principle of the open draw, and hopefully calls for more seeding for elite clubs will disappear.

Great too to see those vocal London fans creating a roar at Headingley, many of whom who had followed the team since the Fulham days. This underlies that the game is now owned just by people in the 3 northern counties, but can be enjoyed by everyone.

The season is moving on at breathtaking pace with positive news about the game just about everyday. The programme of internationals involving the 5 Nations in October, alongside the Lions visit "down under" is a great step forward for the image of the game, and also provides more opportunities for the players. It must be the first time for many years that we could see Bramley players considered for honours, and I don't mean Ton O'Reilly for Ireland as he's already spoken for by Papua New Guinea!

After several away games Bramley can look forward to more home appearances, the chance for fans to really get behind the most exciting team for years, and for Mike Ford to enjoy more wins, demonstrating the steady progress that the team has made under his leadership.

I would like to welcome Oldham Directors players and supporters to Headingley.

The previous games with Oldham have been enjoyable games. The Bramley club has enjoyed good publicity over the last few weeks with two appearances on Sky Rugby World.

Mike Ford and Garry Schofield have interested the media to the benefit of the Bramley club. Last Good Friday's win over Hunslet Hawks was just reward for the effort made over the last six weeks.

Garry was the guest of Leeds Rhinos before the London Bronco's game and received a warm reception from the Headingley crowd in particular the reputable South Stand. It is good to have Danny McAllister back from Australia to strengthen the forwards.

It has been difficult for the Bramley supporters with all the away fixtures but I can assure them of the run of home fixtures in June and July. May I once again appeal to the supporters to spread the word about our talented team and encourage a friend to come on board.



from Bill Clift

"love this game"

On behalf of the Bramley R.L.F.C. Supporters Club I would like to welcome the supporters of Oldham R.L.F.C. to today's Northern Ford Premiership game here at Headingley and wish them a safe journey home over the Pennines.

Wasn't it just great to be a Bramley supporter at Hunslet on Good Friday? After the narrow defeats in the previous two games it was brilliant to see the team at last get their just reward and what a place to do it, the team's first ever win at South Leeds Stadium proved beyond doubt that Bramley's position at the bottom of the Northern Ford Premiership was a false one, the whole team played superbly but the half back partnership of Garry Schofield and Mike Ford was a joy to watch and long may it last.

We are looking to have a re-launch of the Supporters Club shortly but if anyone wants details or has something to contribute please give me a call, the team needs more support and we have to do something to try and get more people coming to Headingley to watch them.

That's all for now - SUPPORT THE LADS!

SUPPORTERS CLUB NOTES
- STEVE HUNTER

MATCH REPORT - By Steve Hunter

BATLEY BULLDOGS 14 BRAMLEY 12

Bramley came very close to gaining their first away win of the season at Mount Pleasant, Batley played down the slope in the first half but Bramley started brightly with Ryan McDonald showing up well and centres Dan Potter and Anthony Gibbons running well. Bramley opened the scoring with a penalty goal from Anthony Gibbons and dominated the first thirty minutes of the game but the final ten minutes of the first period proved fatal for Bramley with Batley scoring 14 points with tries from Lee Bargate and Richard Price and three goals from Price. The half time score of 14-2 to Batley was no reflection of the game but it left Bramley with plenty to do in the second half. Bramley dominated the second half with Mike Ford probing the Batley defence regularly and eventually the pressure told and Bramley had three tries disallowed in the second period and came so close to snatching victory, this was another good performance from the team and particularly fine performance from player/coach Mike Ford.

Scorers: Batley Bulldogs Tries: Bargate, Price - Goals: Price (3)

Bramley Tries: Horner, Gibson - Goals: A. Gibbons (2)

HULL K R 12 BRAMLEY 0

Once again Bramley gave a very good account of themselves away from home without gaining any reward. The Bramley defence was magnificent and the team were beaten by two flashes of brilliance from Stanley Gene who scored two tries in the last ten minutes of the game.

Scorers:

Hull Kingston Rovers Tries: Gene (2) - Goals: Charles (2)

HUNSLET HAWKS 11 BRAMLEY 16

At last after coming so close in their previous two away games Bramley recorded a fine victory over neighbours Hunslet Hawks on Good Friday. With a full strength side and Garry Schofield making his debut at stand off Bramley started off positively and after five minutes Schofield threw out a superb long pass for Anthony Gibbons to score. Hunslet had long spells of possession in the first half but the Bramley defence was superb and the half time score was 4-0. Hunslet started the second half in style with tries from Fatnowna and Wilson and one conversion from Mike Fletcher in the first seven minutes, at 10-4 the Hunslet players and supporters thought they had broken Bramley's resistance, but no way. Bramley settled things down and hit back in the 58th minute when Andy Poynter chased a superb grubber kick from Garry Schofield to score, Anthony Gibbons converted to leave the scores level at 10-10. Hunslet attacked and Mike Fletcher kicked a drip goal to give the Hawks a one point advantage but Bramley hit back on 71 minutes when a fine pass from Mike Ford released Dan Potter who kicked ahead and won the race to the line. Anthony Gibbons converted and Bramley had done it. This was a superb all round performance from the team. Thanks to them for making my Easter!

Scorers: Hunslet Hawks Tries: Fatnowna, Wilson - Goal: Fletcher (+1 drop goal)

Bramley Tries: A. Gibbons, Poynter, Potter - Goals: A. Gibbons (2)

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SUN 21ST FEBRUARY	KEIGHLEY COUGARS	3.00	HOME
SUN 7TH MARCH	SWINTON LIONS	3.00	AWAY
SUN 14TH MARCH	WORKINGTON TOWN	3.00	AWAY
SUN 21ST MARCH	BATLEY BULLDOGS	3.00	AWAY
FRI 26TH MARCH	HULL KINGSTON ROVERS	8.00	HOME
FRI 2ND APRIL	HUNSLET HAWKS	7.30	AWAY
TUES 6TH APRIL	DONCASTER DRAGONS	7.30	HOME
SUN 11TH APRIL	OLDHAM	3.00	HOME
SUN 18TH APRIL	YORK	3.00	AWAY
MON 26TH APRIL	DEWSBURY	7.30	HOME
SUN 9TH MAY	WHITEHAVEN WARRIORS	3.30	AWAY
MON 17TH MAY	ROCHDALE HORNETS	7.30	HOME
SUN 23RD MAY	FEATHERSTONE ROVERS	3.30	AWAY
MON 31ST MAY	BARROW BORDER RAIDERS	7.30	HOME
SUN 6TH JUNE	WIDNES VIKINGS	3.00	AWAY
FRI 11TH JUNE	LEIGH CENTURIONS	7.30	HOME
SUN 20TH JUNE	LANCASHIRE LYNX	3.00	HOME
SUN 27TH JUNE	KEITHLEY COUGARS	3.00	AWAY
SUN 4TH JULY	SWINTON LIONS	3.00	HOME
SUN 11TH JULY	WORKINGTON TOWN	7.30	HOME
SUN 18TH JULY	BATLEY BULLDOGS	3.00	HOME
SUN 25TH JULY	HULL KINGSTON ROVERS	3.00	AWAY
SUN 1ST AUG	HUNSLET HAWKS	3.00	HOME
SUN 8TH AUG	DONCASTER DRAGONS	3.00	AWAY
FRI 13TH AUG	OLDHAM	7.45	AWAY
SUN 22ND AUG	YORK	3.00	HOME
FRI 27TH AUG	DEWSBURY RAMS	7.30	AWAY

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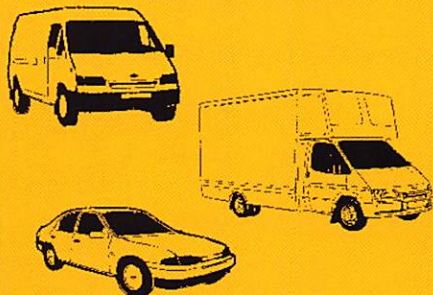
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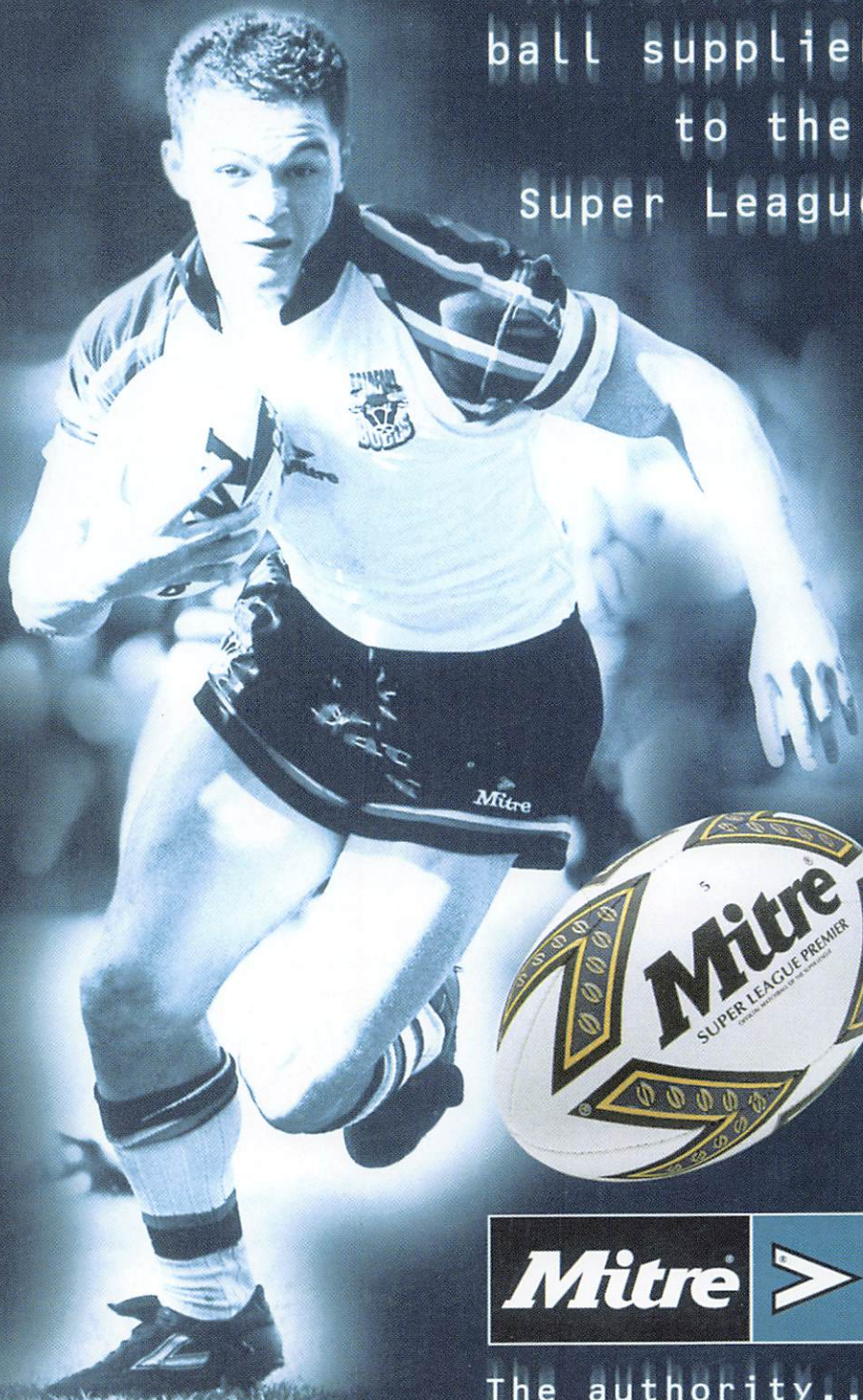
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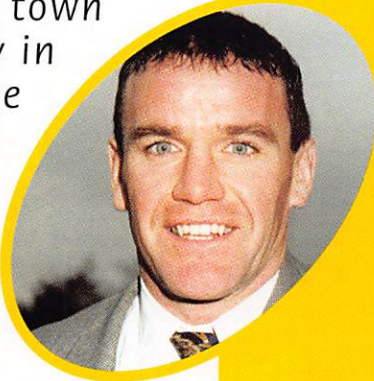
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A warm welcome to my home town club Oldham today. The way in which they have risen from the dead in recent times is a great credit to all cocerned but especially the Chairman Chris Hamilton who has been at the forefront of the revival.



COACHES COMMENTS

The Roughyeds are in the same situation as Bramley regarding Murdoch money, but so far they have belied that myth with some astute signings and sterling performances. The foundation is being laid by coach Mick Coates and next year when all the Northern Ford Premiership teams are on equal share of Murdoch money, Oldham will leapfrog quite a few teams in terms of financial stability and will be seen as a real force in this division.

This afternoons game is a real four pointer, a match we have identified as one we must win. If we perform as we did against Hunslet on Good Friday, then we won't be far away from picking up the two premiership points on offer today. All the Bramley staff realise that this will be one of our toughest games to date, which augues well for a great spectacle of Rugby League Football.

Enjoy the battle

Hope you enjoy the game

Mike Ford

MIKE FORD - PLAYER/COACH

From the Terraces

by Robert Hunter

I am putting this page together after our excellent away win over Hunslet Hawks on Good Friday. I really hope the team have followed it up with a home victory over the Doncaster Dragons.

It was a pleasure at South Leeds Stadium to see the team perform so well, the spirit they showed to turn around the game at vital stages was excellent and it gives the supporters and I am sure Mike Ford great hope for the rest of the season.

It was also a pleasure to see Garry Schofield make his Bramley debut in the same game. Garry's tactical kicking and ball distribution were crucial to our success and I am sure we all hope that Garry will settle with Bramley and stay with the club for some time to come.

Our opponents today are Oldham and if last year's game here at Headingley is anything to go by we are in for a cracking game. That night in torrential rain Bramley scraped through 12-10. Dan Potter and Marvin Golden scored tries for Bramley and Oldham scored right on the hooter and Richard Darkes had a shot at goal to equalise the scores but the kick sailed wide. The meeting at Boundary Park was much more free scoring with Bramley running up 50 points in a fine victory but all that counts for nothing today.

It was nice to see the supporters to wait and cheer the Bramley team off the field at Hunslet and rightly so, let's just hope support will now grow as the team seems to be improving week by week. The club seems to be as professional on the pitch as it is off it, and Chief Executive Bill Clift, Mike Ford and Eric Fitzsimmons deserve the credit for this.

Back to today, make plenty of noise for the lads and best of luck and hopefully two points for the lads.

ENJOY THE GAME.

PLAYER PROFILE

NICKY RENDER by Steve Hunter

Nicky was born in 1972 in Castleford and attended Temple Street Junior School and Castleford High School. At the age of 9 Nicky was playing Under-11's rugby for Half Acres as they did not have a younger age group. He went on to represent Yorkshire & Humberside at Under-16's level and won the Yorkshire Schools Cup with Castleford High School and played in the All England Schools Final when Castleford lost to St. John Patricks of Wigan 14-8.

At the age of 17 Nicky turned professional with the York club where he stayed for two seasons before joining Leeds in 1991, he also stayed with Leeds for two seasons before joining Halifax in 1993. Nicky suffered a badly dislocated shoulder which disrupted his professional career and for a couple of seasons he played as an amateur for Bradley Arms

Pirates before returning to the professional game by joining Bramley in 1997.

Nicky quotes the biggest influence on his career as his family, Gary Stephens and Bobbsie Price.

Nicky is a utility player who won't let the side down wherever he plays but when asked, said that he did not enjoy playing on the wing.

His most memorable time in the game was when he toured Russia with York and the worst time was his shoulder injury whilst with Halifax.

Nick's message to supporters is "if you see me in the bar, pint of lager please", but more seriously he says "stick with us and we will get there (quote borrowed from Mr Bill Clift esq.)".

Today we welcome to Headingley the Oldham Roughyeds, a club who much like ourselves have a long history in the game but have been going through a transitional period just lately. Oldham are now based at Spotland in Rochdale for a couple of seasons whilst their proposed new stadium is finalised but they have managed to keep a good supporter base and will no doubt have brought plenty of fans to today's game.

Oldham Roughyeds

Oldham's recent history must have been hard for the club and supporters, as members of Superleague under the guise of Oldham Bears they tried so hard to keep their heads above water but with limited finances and a crumbling stadium they succumbed and the club folded only to be reborn the following season in the Second Division and playing at Boundary Park, without the benefit of any money from the Rugby League they did a magnificent job and this season have consolidated and strengthened the side. I wish them all the luck in the world in their efforts to put the fine name of Oldham firmly on the rugby league map.

Coached this season by Mick Coates, Oldham started the season well with a great win over Dewsbury Rams in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup and at the time these notes were written were just one point better off than Bramley, their best result in the league so far must be the point they took from Hull Kingston Rovers, a very tough nut to crack on their own ground. Oldham have a good mixture of experienced players and youth in their squad, the more well know players are Mark Perrett, Alf Leuila, Leo Casey, John Hough and Jason Clegg, they also have two Frenchmen in the squad in full back, Laurent Minot and forward Emmanuel Paralta. The club have been very unlucky with the injury to their big signing from Wakefield Trinity, John Bostock, who will be missing for the rest of the season. Also in Oldham's squad is Brian Quinlan who had a spell here at Bramley a couple of seasons ago, so it will be good to have him back.

Bramley

Oldham Roughyeds

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