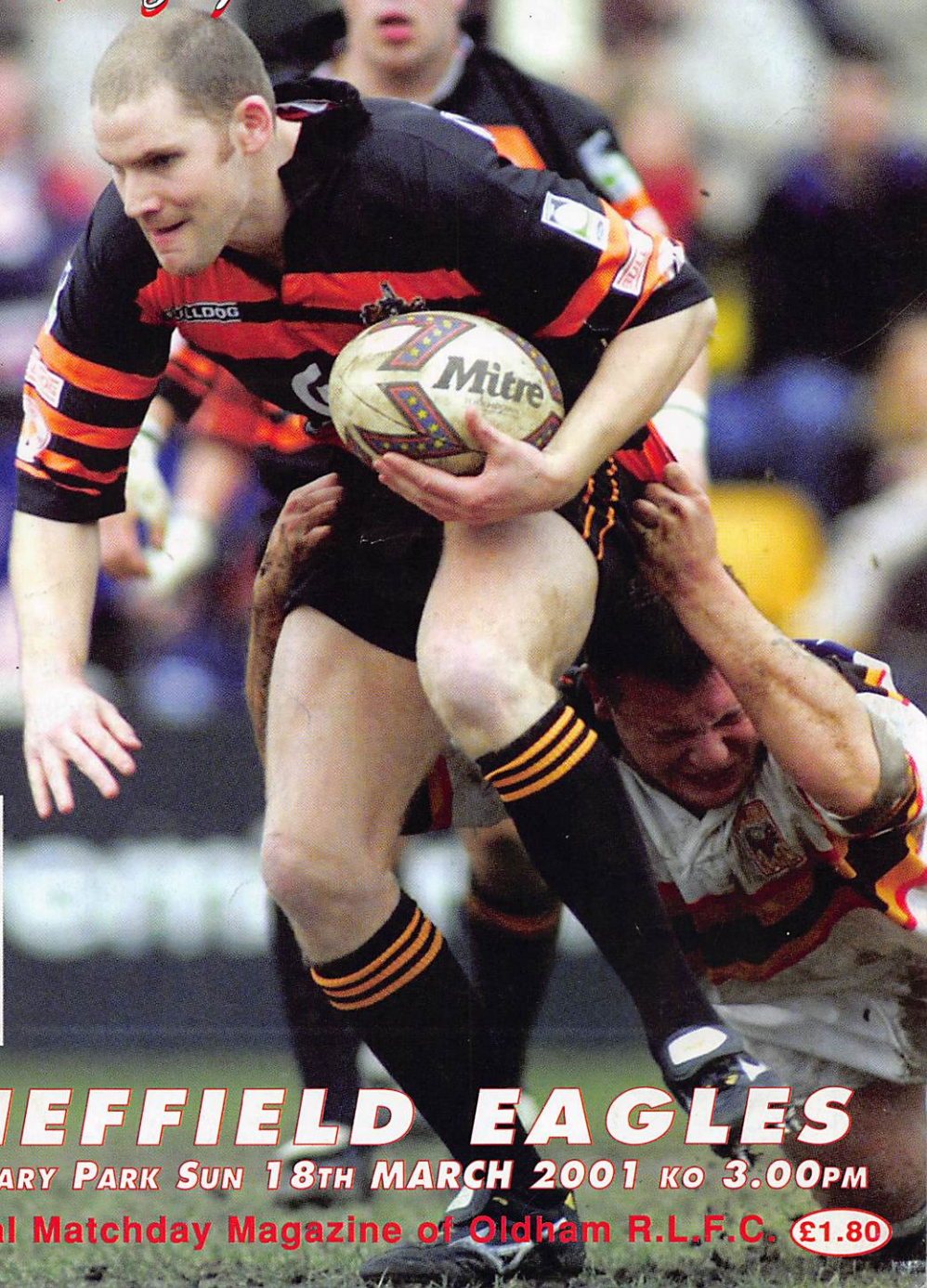


OLDHAM RLFC

The Roughyeds

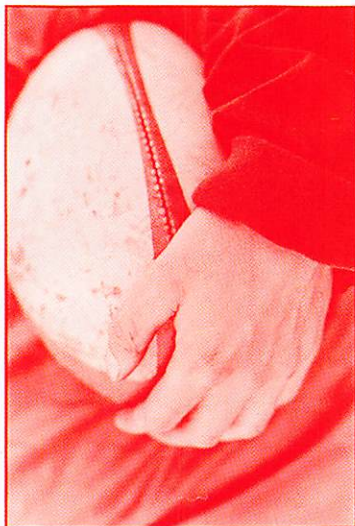


SHEFFIELD EAGLES

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Up Front

... with Christopher Hamilton



TODAY we face a Sheffield team who from the outside appear to be making great strides as a club. People should not forget that Ian Swire, the Chairman and his colleagues do not receive any News Corporation funding and that is a major disadvantage. Despite that after a struggle in their first season last year the Eagles have shown that they will be no pushover this time around with some

convincing victories, not least of which was last weekend against Widnes. Mike will have prepared the team accordingly and we should therefore be in for a good, competitive game.

On a wider front the Division will be hoping that we have turned the corner weather wise so that we don't end up with more postponed games. Our season feels like it is only just beginning and it will be good to get into the routine of playing every week.

There has been an announcement this week that Boundary Park is to get a new pitch. For obvious reasons people have immediately put two and two together and presumed that we will again be having to play matches away from Boundary Park at the most important part of the season.

Let me say that so far only one meeting has been held of the 'Stadium Company' Board and at that meeting I asked that serious consideration be given to avoiding any disturbance of our home matches as we hope to be challenging for honours even if that means Latics re-scheduling the early part of their 2001-2002 season. Rest assured, to the best of my knowledge, no date has been set for the work to begin and nobody will fight harder and longer for ORLFC on this matter than me.

Enjoy the game.

Chris



The Roughyeds

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Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94.

FRONT COVER

*Danny Arnold breaks through the
Rams defence.*

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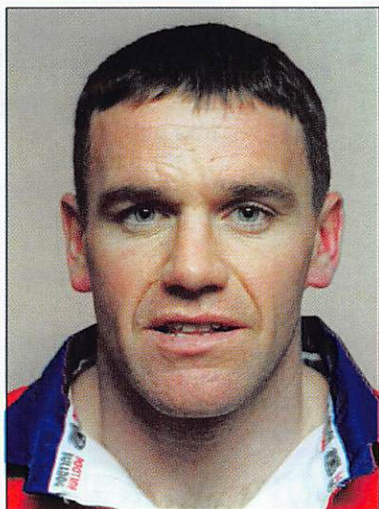
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FORD FOCUS . . . with Mike Ford



WE WERE obviously disappointed with last Sundays 18-13 defeat at Dewsbury, when there was little if anything to pick between the sides. If we had received a reasonable share of possession and perhaps not have been a little ring rusty we would certainly have won. The Rams had the edge when most of the 50/50 decisions were handed out, but I would add that our extensive defensive stints were amongst the best I have seen during my three seasons in the NFP. The injury to Daryl Lacey just seven minutes into the second half meant reorganising the back line at a time when

Dewsbury had moved up a gear.

Anyway it was an encouraging performance despite not picking up the points and our players have had an early chance to bounce back when Whitehaven were the visitors last Wednesday and again this afternoon against Sheffield Eagles.

I would like to welcome Mark Aston and his team who have won six of their twelve NFP matches and at the time of writing these notes are just two league places below ourselves. Knowing Mark we will be in for a tremendous competitive match.

Enjoy the game.

Mike



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Michael's Match

... from the pen of Michael Turner



SHEFFIELD EAGLES were destined to be the team to provide the opposition for the last ever senior match at Watersheddings. This was at the end of the first "Super League" season on August 25th 1996. Both clubs were safe from relegation, but victory for Oldham could clinch a respectable eighth spot in the table.

There was an early scare for Oldham when Carr touched down an Aston kick only to be ruled off side. This stung Oldham into action and after six minutes a strong break by Mike Neal followed by some slick handling by the Oldham backs led to Paul Atcheson scoring near the posts for Francis Maloney to add on the conversion. Sheffield responded with a tenth minute Aston penalty goal and a minute later hooker Lawless capitalised on some slack defending to score a try which Aston converted. Worse was to follow when after 20 minutes a break by Carr put Senior over, the score again converted. The Eagles were now in total control and extended their lead with a try by McAlister. Aston failed to add the goal but slotted over a penalty and a drop goal to leave Oldham trailing by 21 points to 6 at the interval.

Now playing towards the Hutchins stand, Oldham started off the second half in great style. Martin Crompton released Maloney for the stand off to race half the length of the field and, although he was tackled just short of the line, a quick play the ball led to Gary Burns plunging over for the try, with only 55 seconds on the clock. Seven minutes later Oldham were in again. Atcheson scoring his second try after good work by Crompton and David Bradbury. The pattern of the first half was now completely reversed. The home team was now mounting attack after attack, with skipper Crompton masterminding the fight back and it was he who, after a clever switch of the play by Maloney, gave a gem of a pass to Bradbury, for the loose forward to charge through the gap for another unconverted try. Oldham had now scored three tries without reply but with no conversions they still trailed 18-21.

Enter Scott Ranson! After a typical gutsy run by Aidie Belle across the field, there was the unusual sight of one winger passing to another. Ranson collected the ball deep in his own half and straight away headed back to his left wing where his pace took him clear of the cover. He then feinted to cut inside before deciding to take on the Sheffield full back, Lawford on the flank. The Eagle literally flew through the air to tap the Oldham man's ankle, but Ranson kept his composure and managed to scramble over the line for the try. The goal kick was missed again, but Oldham now held a one point lead. The advantage, however, was short lived, for five minutes later Garcia evaded Belle's tackle to score in the scoreboard corner and with just ten minutes to go Oldham were behind again.

With both sides tiring Oldham coach Andy Goodway made two telling substitutions, when Paul Davidson and Paul Crook replaced Burns and Maloney. Davidson immediately tested the Sheffield defence with his strong running and looked to have recaptured the lead for his side, but lost the ball over the try line. Still the "Bears" refused to submit and with just two minutes remaining prop Ian Gildart looped a pass over the Sheffield defence for Ranson to run in unopposed. This time Crook converted and Oldham had a three point lead. The plan now would surely be to play safe? Not a bit of it! Crompton put Davidson through a gap in the tired Sheffield defence and Ranson was on hand to complete his hat-trick as the game moved into injury time. Crook again added the goal before the hooter sounded with Oldham victorious by 34 points to 25.

OLDHAM: R. Myler; A. Belle, P. Atcheson, M. Neal, S. Ranson; F. Maloney, M. Crompton; I. Gildart, G. Burns, R. Guy, J. Faimalo, M. Munro, D. Bradbury.

Subs: (all used) P. Topping, P. Crook, G. Lord, P. Davidson
SHEFFIELD: D. Lawford; L. Stott, D. Mycoe, K. Senior, J. M. Garcia; M. Aston, R. Sheridan; P. Broadbent, J. Lawless, P. Dixon, D. McAlister, P. Carr, M. Cook.

Subs: L. Taylor, I. Hughes, D. Turner, D. Laughton.

Attendance: 2,515



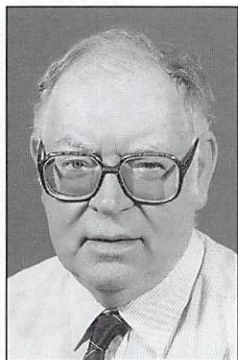
Oldham Team picture taken before the last senior match at Watersheddings, against Sheffield Eagles on August 25th 1996.

Back row: Mike Neal, Ian Gildart, Joe Faimalo, Paul Crook, Reece Guy, Gary Lord, Matt Munro, Gary Burns, Paul Davidson.

Front row: Paul Atcheson, Scott Ranson, Francis Maloney, Martin Crompton (Capt) Rob Myler, Paul Topping, Adrian Belle, David Bradbury.

ROGER

ROGER



SEVERAL clubs in the Northern Ford Premiership have been sending up distress signals in the past few weeks, Doncaster, York and Hunslet among them.

These are critical times for many clubs outside Super League, especially those which toil

along on home crowds of less than a thousand (and there are a few of those) and those which have already swallowed up, in advance, their Murdoch money for the whole of 2001, plus the £27,000 or thereabouts, they should have received in 2002.

We were led to believe that next year's final allocation would be £50,000, plus some interest that had accrued, but it now appears that a chunk of the News Corporation funding went to Wakefield to ease their transition into Super League and a bit more was swallowed up by the Barrow-Carlisle merger, producing a significantly reduced final pay-out for the rest.

Only time will tell whether those clubs currently on the brink can pull round and live to fight another day. Here in Oldham we have witnessed all too painfully the demise of a club which represented a way of life for many hundreds of people, but finally limped into liquidation and then oblivion as a stark reminder that clubs CAN and DO die.

In the months leading up to the passing of the Bears I held the view that lots of fans felt it would never happen to Oldham. "We've seen it all before", they seemed to think whenever there was a headline drawing attention to the Club's critical situation.

When the end finally came an entire community was stunned, but three and a half years down the track there is a greater understanding of the financial crisis that many clubs face and a realisation that some are, indeed, on the very brink.

Happily, just as we have lived through the dreadful experience of watching a club go under, we have also witnessed the successful birth and development of a new club, the Roughyeds, under the command of Christopher Hamilton.

Those clubs now struggling to keep their head above water can take great encouragement from what has been achieved by the Roughyeds in the past three years, or a little more.

They were not burdened by inherited debt. They started with a clean sheet of paper, but they started from scratch, without Murdoch money in the first year and without so much as a ball or a bootlace.

Nothing, but nothing, can dilute the enormity of

what the new club has achieved and it is reflected in the rise and rise of Chris Hamilton from RL new boy in 1997 to APC chairman and that body's representative on the RFL board of directors in 2001.

Chris has been working hard recently, in his capacity as APC Chairman, in offering assistance to clubs in trouble and giving them moral and professional support.

In a recent issue of the Rugby Leaguer, Greg McCallum was quoted as saying: "Clubs should look at what Featherstone Rovers and Oldham have done and use them as role models."

"We will try to help them all we can, but they also have to help themselves as to their future."

By implication, Featherstone are fighting back from recent financial problems at the Lionheart Stadium and that will also inspire troubled rivals, as will the achievements of clubs like Leigh Centurions, Keighley Cougars, Hull KR, where they have now come out of administration, and Sheffield Eagles.

It isn't too many years ago that Leigh almost crashed, and who will ever forget the agony suffered by Keighley three or four years ago when they committed the club to going up to Super League only to be told there was no automatic gangway and certainly no place for the Cougars.

Like Hunslet a couple of years later, the club was mortified to be told there was no way forward to Super League, but the Cougars have regrouped, re-established themselves as a force in the NFP and are apparently not in such a hurry now to leave the NFP behind.

Sheffield, too, have done exceptionally well since the new Eagles club was formed two years ago with Mark Aston hell-bent on doing a similar job in South Yorkshire to that which Mike Ford has done in Oldham.

Today's visitors to Boundary Park won nine and drew one of their 28 games last season – their first – to finish fourteenth in an 18-club division, above Hunslet, Batley, York and Lancashire Lynx (now known as Chorley Lynx).

At the time of writing, Aston's men had just whipped Barrow 40-16 at the Don Valley Stadium to move into tenth place with five wins from their 11 games played.

That represents real progress and provides another example of a club that has rolled up its sleeves to make something of an impact.

With firm management policies, a tight budget, hard work, patience and an acceptance that you have to walk before you can run, it can be done . . . as I'm sure Chris Hamilton will have stressed to the clubs currently fighting for survival.

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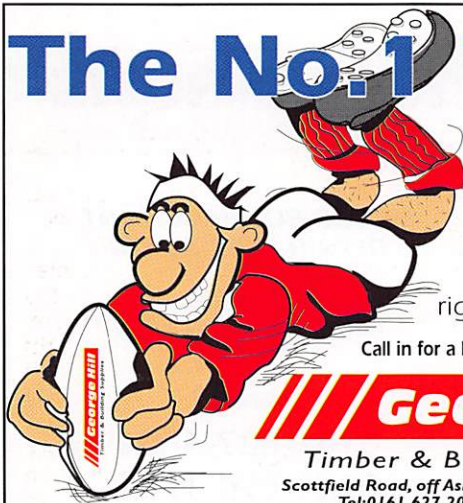
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Eagles will be Eagles

... with Steve Fox

WHERE were you when Sheffield won the Challenge Cup? I realise that this question doesn't carry quite the same weight as the famous query concerning the assassination of John F Kennedy - partly because a cup final victory, no matter how unexpected, doesn't equate with the loss of a human life and partly because everyone reading this will be a Rugby League fan and so their answer will be "At Wembley" or else "Sat in front of the TV watching the match."

But my response wouldn't be either of the above because I had rather foolishly chosen that day to ask friends and relatives to help me clear out my house in Widnes as a prelude to looking for a buyer. But I did at least stay abreast of events in the capital - while others bloodied themselves outside by trying to hack down the jungle where once there had been a back garden, I potted about indoors keeping an occasional eye on the progress of the game on an ancient black and white portable telly. I have to admit that as the match progressed and the Eagles closed in on their historic success, I spent more time watching and less time pottering. Incidentally, and by a strange twist of fate, it transpired that I hadn't exactly been looking FOR a buyer that day, I had literally been looking AT a buyer because the person who eventually bought my house was a member of the defeated Wigan squad.

Now I realise that this is the Oldham matchday magazine and not Home And Garden so let me make clear that I relate this tale as a prelude to my main theme which is that, in my opinion, the club visiting Boundary Park today is the same one which triumphed at Wembley in 1998. The purists and pedants might argue that the old Eagles died the day the so-called 'merger' with Huddersfield went through and that this outfit is a totally new entity. This is the same logic which prevails in East Hull where the Robins fans taunt their black and white neighbours with the name 'Gateshull', suggesting that the old Airlie Birds are no more. But such arguments confuse the idea of a club's identity with that of the business which controls it. The Eagles play in the

same stadium as before, wear similar colours, have Mark Aston in their ranks and - most importantly of all - draw on much the same pool of supporters as did the Eagles Mk. 1. When all is said and done it is the supporters who are the club, not the players, administrators and directors who might happen to be involved at any one time. Very occasionally, coaches and Chairmen hit the nail on the head when they acknowledge

that they are merely the custodians of a club - the true owners are those people who pay their money at the gate every week, in many cases following a family tradition which stretches back half a century or more. In comparison with this, the records held at Companies House of shareholders and directors are a mere irrelevance.



Mark Aston

So to my mind the current Sheffield are the true heirs of the heroes of 1998 just as Shaun McRae's team are genuine successors to the great Hull sides of the past. To see an extreme demonstration of this principle you only have to look at recent events in Doncaster where the company running the club, St Ledger Sports Limited, ceased trading only to be replaced immediately by Doncaster Dragons 2001 Limited. The 'new' club have inherited everything (apart from the debts and some of the players) of the previous one, including all the league points won so far this season. But I suspect I'm preaching to the converted here. Will there be a single Oldham fan reading these words who doesn't believe that the contemporary Roughyeds represent the self same club that once won just about every honour the game had to offer. No? I thought not!

Steve Fox

Probing The NFP

LEADING SCORERS NFP AND CHALLENGE CUP

(as at 12th March)

TRIES

Neil Turley (Leigh)	24
Jason Lee (Keighley)	17
Phil Cantillon (Widnes)	16
Adrian Flynn (Dewsbury)	13
Danny Seal (Keighley)	13
David Gibbons (Oldham)	12
Paul Anderson (Leigh)	12
Mark Sibson (Oldham)	11

GOALS

Martin Wood (Keighley)	66
Simon Svabic (Leigh)	64
Richard Goddard (Sheffield)	54
Jamie Rooney (Featherstone)	49
Pat Rich (Oldham)	46
Barry Eaton (Dewsbury)	43
Ian Watson (Widnes)	42

CONGRATULATIONS TO:-

- Hornets for ending Keighley's unbeaten run of 13 league matches (their last league defeat was at home to Doncaster on the 4th of June last year).
- Leighs' Neil Turley for scoring tries in each of 9 successive league games which came to an end when he failed to score against Batley last Sunday.
- Cougars' Martin Wood for scoring in each of 36 successive matches.
- To Whitehaven for picking up the pieces after a disappointing start to the season and giving Saints a fright in the cup topping title hopefuls Featherstone and winning at Gateshead (notes written before their away fixture with the Roughyeds!).
- To Sheffield Eagles for punishing Widnes Vikings 26-17. This was the Eagles third win on the trot a record for the reformed club.
- **And commiserations** to Lynx for 36 consecutive cup and league defeats (they last won against Walney in the Challenge Cup 30th Jan 2000).



GREG MCCALLUM, RFL Director of Rugby, has commented that after consulting a number of Super League coaches they are in favour of a move to a 12 replacements from 4 substitutes but to include bloodbins (currently the rule is 6 from 4 and does not include bloodbins), bringing us in line with the Aussies (although international rule is still unlimited interchange). In fact reading between the lines the change could be effective immediately after this seasons Challenge Cup. But first what about consulting NFP clubs and coaches? There may well be advantages to the proposal for instance on rare hot days players genuinely affected by the heat can be given a breather (almost a health and safety issue) and also it does allow for the bleeding of young players by perhaps allowing them into the match for short introductory periods. On the other hand it will certainly incentivise most coaches to use players for short periods of aggressive driving in of the ball. Do

we want that here in the NFP? As tiredness sets in defences are easier to break down resulting in more open and entertaining football. More tries are scored late in games than early. I would ask Mr McCallum to consider every aspect before reaching a decision.



- Supporters need to be aware of two new rule changes introduced last weekend the first being that a match now ends at the very moment the final hooter sounds and secondly that referees have been instructed NOT to delay a 20 metre tap until the defending players get back on side.
- The Trans Pennine Cup final scheduled for last Wednesday night was cancelled. At the time of going to press both the Centurions and Cougars are like minded, preferring to put the game back towards the end of the season perhaps playing on a warm summer Sunday afternoon. Seems sensible and by then the RLF and the NFP between them may come up with a tournament sponsor and might even rustle up some TV coverage.
- According to the Red Hall media man the attendance of 16,572 at Valley Parade for the opening match of this seasons Super League campaign was the biggest for an opening fixture since 17,873 were reputed to have 'paid' to watch Paris beat Sheffield Eagles in the opening match of the inaugural Super League season. I think most of today's Sheffield supporters will be uttering 'who cares'.



NOT being a betting man I rarely get a glimpse of the rugby coupons handicaps, but last week being handed a copy for the weekends NFP games thought it would be interesting to see how accurate their forecasting would turn out to be. The Barrow v Doncaster game went 18-16 to Barrow, and the bookies offered the match at scratch so they were almost bang on, and off to a good start. Oldham took a 10 point bonus to Dewsbury so with the final score of 18-13 anyone putting money on the Roughyeds would have been quids in. Chorley received a 46 start at Featherstone and lost 64-6, and Gateshead receiving 32 points at home to Whitehaven would have won 36-23, so on those two the bookies were way out. Next Swinton Lions took a 12 point start to Hull Kingston and were well beaten, 32-6, so again not too accurate. Hunslet Hawks were offered a 6 point start to beat Hornets, and if the handicap was added Hornets would have still won 42-26, and Batleys 34 start at Leigh would have made them 42-34 winners. Widnes Vikings who were asked to give Sheffield Eagles 8 but lost 26-17 without the handicap. And finally Workington who were awarded a 20 start to level up the match against Keighley lost 32-4. The verdict must be that the bookies might be better consulting Mystic Meg than the handicappers!



SHEFFIELD EAGLES

AS WITH any newly formed club the new Sheffield Eagles have struggled to make an impact - so far! But player-coach Mark Aston is a determined and shrewd character and is already recruiting well to strengthen a side which was formed to keep Rugby League alive in Sheffield when the former club was 'merged' with Huddersfield (although that seems subsequently to have gone by the board). The Eagles have recently started to climb the table and will undoubtedly give Oldham a tough workout today.

The Eagles squad as supplied to us is as follows:-

STEVE WALKER (Fullback)

A centre who spent 7 years at Batley before joining the Eagles. Played at fullback many times last season scoring 4 tries.

RICHARD GODDARD (Loose forward)

Joined Eagles from Castleford after 4 years at Wheldon Road. A powerful runner who can stand in as kicker when needed. Vice captain for the 2000/2001 season.

ANDY BRENT (Second row/prop/centre/winger)

A hard running, fearless player who impressed last season despite injury problems. Gives impact from the bench.

NEIL KITE (Centre)

Barrow born former member of Leeds Rhinos Academy. Top try scorer last season. A hard running centre with representative experience with Cumbria, England schoolboys and GB under-18s. Well known to several Oldham players as he is an ex-Bramley wingman.

GAVIN BROWN (Half back)

Signed from Leeds Rhinos. A skilful player with a good kicking game. Recovered well after a broken jaw early last season.

MARK ASTON (Half back)

One of the Eagles all time greats. Winner of the Lance Todd Trophy in the Eagles Wembley win over Wigan in 1998. Gained GB cap against France in 1992. Inspired rebirth of the Eagles after an outcry from league fans against the merger with Huddersfield. One of the best field kickers in the game.

CHRIS ROBINSON (Scrum half/hooker)

Club captain for the second year. Was on the brink of retirement before joining the new Eagles after starring for Keighley and Halifax. Winner of last season's Player of the Year award.

RICKY WRIGHT (Prop/second row)

Former Super League player with the Eagles & Leeds Rhinos who has the potential to be one of the most skilful props in the game.

DARREN SUMMERILL (Second row)

Played for Eagles pre Super League before joining Keighley & Doncaster. Sidelined by a shoulder injury for most of last season and will be hoping to make up for lost time this year.

JON BRUCE (Prop)

Experienced forward with Doncaster & Batley before joining the Eagles. A strong old fashioned style prop who never gives in and takes some stopping. Scorer of Eagles 1st try in the NFP. Winner of the Supporters Player of the Year award last season.

IAN BROWN (Centre)

Joined Eagles from amateurs Lock Lane although he has played with Castleford & York. Very quick scoring 8 tries last season. Great impact player.

HEATH CRUCKSHANK (Front row/centre/second row)

Eagles big close season signing from Leigh Centurions and overseas player. Played with Gold Coast, South Queensland and Canterbury Bulldogs. One of the biggest tacklers in the NFP.

ANDY POYNTER (Full back)

A new signing from Leeds Rhinos Alliance side. An outstanding player and try scorer who should add class to the Eagles squad.

SIMON TILLYER (Loose forward/second row)

Spotted by Mark Aston in last year's Varsity match and invited to join the Eagles after his performance for GB Students on the Australia/New Zealand tour earlier this year. Played some games for Oldham last season.

CHRIS CHAPMAN (Centre/second row)

Another signing from Leeds Rhinos Academy also with GB Academy experience. A hard working, strong tackling, quality player. A future star.

PAUL WELLS (Winger/centre/second row)

Signed from Castleford as a prolific try scorer with the Alliance side. Brother of Castleford's John Wells. A big, strong athlete who will add both pace and power to an exciting back line.

CHRIS JUDGE (Second row/prop/centre)

A new signing from York Wasps, also played for Wakefield and Carpentras. A player who gives 100% for the full 80 minutes. A player who should add experience and guile to the team.

STEVE HILL (Prop)

Player of the Year last season with York, another new signing. Also has Super League experience with Castleford. A big, hard running prop who should add to Eagles solid front row.

WAYNE FLYNN (Centre/back row)

Former Eagles player who was never given the opportunity to show his full potential. Signed from Batley. A utility player who can play centre or back row. Very explosive.

IAN THOMPSON (Winger/centre)

A quality signing from Featherstone with speed to burn. A specialist winger who knows exactly where the try line is.

ANDY SPEAK (Hooker)

A highly rated player signed from Leeds Rhinos where he was a member of the Challenge Cup semi-final team last season. Also played on loan with Wakefield Wildcats. Alliance Player of the Year at Leeds in 1999.

SCOTT RHODES (Scrum half/stand off)

A highly rated player who loves to attack the line. Formerly with Leeds Rhinos and a member of the recent Scottish World Cup team.

GARETH HEWITT (Centre/wing)

Has Super League experience with both Leeds Rhinos and Salford and representative honours with both Yorkshire Academy and Scotland.



Heath Cruckshank

Walkerbouts . . .

. . . with Brian Walker

THE LOSS OF A ROSE!



THIS atmospheric oil painting, the most famous painting of any sporting event, depicts the Roses Match played at Bradford's Park Avenue Stadium in 1893. It now hangs on the wall of the boardroom at Twickenham, an ironic setting as the game between Yorkshire and Lancashire embodied most of the problems with which the Rugby Football Union struggled to come to terms. Here were many of the sports most prominent players participating in the sports most fiercely competitive match of the rugby calendar in front of a massive crowd of paying customers.

It is the work of the celebrated artist W. B. Woollen R.A. and was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in the summer of 1895, shortly before the momentous events which tore the world of rugby asunder.

The most prominent Lancashire player in the painting, tackling the Yorkshire player passing the ball, is Oldham back Sam Lees and to the right, the Lancashire player with both hands on the ground is Oldham's Bill McCutcheon. In the chasing pack is former Oldham forward Abe Ashworth who, just three years before, was the first player to be banned for life when the Lancashire Union accused him of joining a new club, which included the enticement of a better paid job! The ban was reduced to a suspension and Ashworth went on to play for England.

THE POINT OF THIS ARTICLE SURROUNDS SAM LEES AND THE RECENTLY FORMED OLDHAM RUGBY HERITAGE TRUST.

Last summer it came to our attention that several items relating to Lees were due to be auctioned at Kempton Park Racecourse in Middlesex by auctioneers Mullock and Madeley. It was scheduled for the Sunday morning of the day Oldham were to play at Lancashire Lynx. We already had in our collection Ashworth's Lancashire and England caps and have access to McCutcheon's Triple Crown. But here was the chance to obtain the very Lancashire Cap awarded to Lees for appearing in this famous match. On the Saturday morning prior to the auction we were contacted by the Museum of Rugby at Twickenham and the Rugby League, who were both in for other items but agreed to give us as clear a route to Lees's county cap as they could.

Michael Turner, Mick Harrop and myself arranged a telephone link direct to the auction but agreed strict bid limits beforehand. Sam Lees's famous Lancashire Cap is now owned by a rugby union club in South Africa! And that is one of the prime reasons for the formation of the Trust. A significant item from Oldham's sporting past has now been lost to the people of the town perhaps forever. You can imagine the furore if the Woollen painting itself was to end up in South Africa!

A portion of the profits from the sales of the recent Oldham International Collection water colour has been allocated to the Trust and from time to time the Trust will announce other cash raising events. ORISA too have promised a contribution when required. But a fund sizeable enough to ensure that the Sam Lees situation is never repeated must be made available.

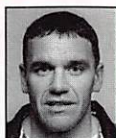
(Thanks to Robert Gate for added information in respect of the W. B. Woollen painting.)



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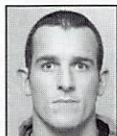
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Cook(e)ing up a storm



Martin Murphy

CONTINUING the theme from the last programme of those players who have given most entertainment (note not necessarily the best player in each position) there follows my Oldham team of entertainers. As I came to Oldham in 1968 my side will not contain any of the heroes of the '50s or '64. Sorry.

1. MARTIN MURPHY

The slightly built England fullback was pure magic. In the good old days fullbacks went in for copybook

tackling round the legs and Murphy was one of the best exponents as last line of defence. His attacking prowess was outstanding: great pace and a superb eye for a gap.

2. MIKE ELLIOTT

The best part of the Oldham team of the early '70s was the right wing partnership of Elliott and Larder. Wingman Elliott seemed to glide past opponents and was a prolific scorer. Good sidestep and plenty of speed, the essential attributes of a try-scoring winger.

3. PHIL LARDER

I think people forget how good a centre Larder was. He took a lot of the knocks in order to free his winger and knew when to straighten up and give the man outside some room (unlike many these days). He knew the way to the line himself and was an outstanding kicker. But he was not a nasty man and I am convinced he could have been an international if he'd had the nastiness of a Syd Hynes or a Les Dyl.

4. CHARLIE McALISTER

Charlie is not the best centre ever to play for Oldham, but when it comes to providing enjoyment the big Kiwi was second to none. With thighs like tree trunks and plenty of raw power Charlie in full flight was a joy to behold. And being met in the tackle by a McAlister shoulder was like being hit by a plank.

5. PAUL LORD

Oldham haven't had a lot of good left wings in my time but speedy Paul Lord was one of the best. Fast players outstripping a defence are always a pleasure to watch and Lord, other than Chris Eckersley, is probably the fastest we've had.

6. TOMMY MARTYN

The irrepressible Martyn is purely and simply a gem. For enthusiasm and commitment they don't come any better than Tommy and he's never yet gone on a field and let anyone down. If you want invention, something unusual, something to excite then Tommy's your man.

7. RAY ASHTON

Mike Ford could be the best scrum-half we've had but 'Ashy' runs him close and for excitement was probably ahead. The darting runs and the linking up with Terry Flanagan were the inspiration behind Frank Myler's team of the early '80s. Like Tommy Martyn 'Ashy' always seemed to have something unusual up his sleeve.

8. HUGH WADDELL

Twice in my experience players representing other clubs 'murdered' Oldham and we were sensible enough to sign

them. One was Hugh Waddell of Blackpool Borough, the other John Cogger of Runcorn Highfield. Hughie, of course, went on to become a Great Britain international and to star in G.B.'s famous 1988 victory against Australia in Melbourne. For taking the ball up and breaking the defensive line they didn't come any better than Waddell.

9. KEVIN TAYLOR

A proper hooker in the days when scrum possession mattered. It would be a rare day for Taylor (aided of course by the great Tug Wilson) not to get over 50%. A great tackler and wonderful distributor from play the ball, Taylor was never less than efficient and effective.

10. MICK MORGAN

Larger than life Morgan was the ball handling prop supreme. Who that saw them can ever forget the combination between Morgan and the young Andy Goodway. Well travelled on the R.L. circuit, Morgan was always value for money. He could operate a 'run around' play better than anyone: what's more he had a great try-scoring record too.

11. BOB IRVING

The much missed, late Bob Irving was simply one of the great running second-rows. His power-packed frame allied to his pace made him unstoppable at times, despite not being all that big a man. A Gt. Britain international by right he was a wonderful sight in full flight.

12. ANDY GOODWAY

Andy Goodway never set foot on a field in an Oldham shirt and gave less than 100%. Whatever failings he had were as nothing to his supreme professionalism as a player. Goodway was the epitome of the modern second-row and whether on attack or defence was dynamic.

13. TERRY FLANAGAN

The supreme ball handling loose-forward so rarely seen these days. Flanagan's ability to slip a pass in the tackle round the body of the tackler or his timing of the ball for a runner was perfection. One of the best captains Oldham have had in recent times and a cornerstone of Frank Myler's wonderful team.

And this week I'll give you four substitutes as well

14. ADRIAN ALEXANDER

Big Alex was always good value. Great enthusiasm and a bit 'devil may care', but a handful for any opposition.

15. BOB MORDELL

Like his mate Alexander, Bob Mordell was great entertainment value. No slouch as a second-row runner he had a bit of that R.U. sociable side to him that endeared him to the crowd.

16. PAUL ROUND

With two equally memorable spells at Oldham 'Roundy' is one of the great characters of the game. Rough, tough and frequently mean, you nevertheless warmed to him no matter what.

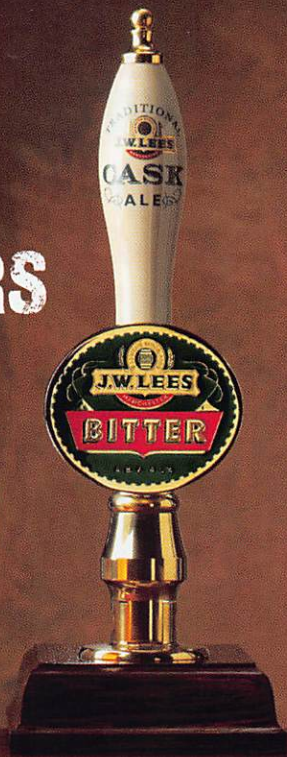
17. CHRIS JOYNT

Oldham didn't see the best of Joynt but we all saw the potential of the St. Helens skipper before we so disastrously let him go.



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121

..... **Danny Arnold**

Q. Where and when did you start playing rugby league?

I started playing when I was about 7 for our local club Lunt Heath Lions, Widnes. I stayed with them until I was about 14 and then went onto play for Wigan St. Judes for a further couple of years, I absolutely loved playing and training and was proud when Eric Hughes signed me up for St. Helens.

Q. Who was the biggest influence on your career?

When I became a part of the professional set up at the Saints and mixing with players who were experienced at top level rugby I soon realised commitment was everything. Chris Joynt and I became friends and he kept me level headed, giving me good advice. So listening to your coach and experienced players is a tip for younger players to take on board. I had a terrific time at St. Helens, and I played in two Challenge Cup and three Premiership Finals. **They were great years.** In 1998 I went to Huddersfield where in a short space of time there were three top coaches, Gary Schofield, Mal Reilly and John Kear, all great men in their field; but Huddersfield somehow couldn't get things together so coaches and players moved on. Whilst there I was impressed by the different approach and ideas introduced by Mal Reilly; particularly his ability to prepare players mentally.

Q. Who are your favourite players?

I have always admired Phil Veivers for his skills and all round ability. At present I believe Wendell Sailor to be one of the best: he seems to have no weaknesses. I think the toughest opponent I have ever encountered is Vaigi Tuigamala: facing him and tackling him is like trying to stop a bus at speed!!

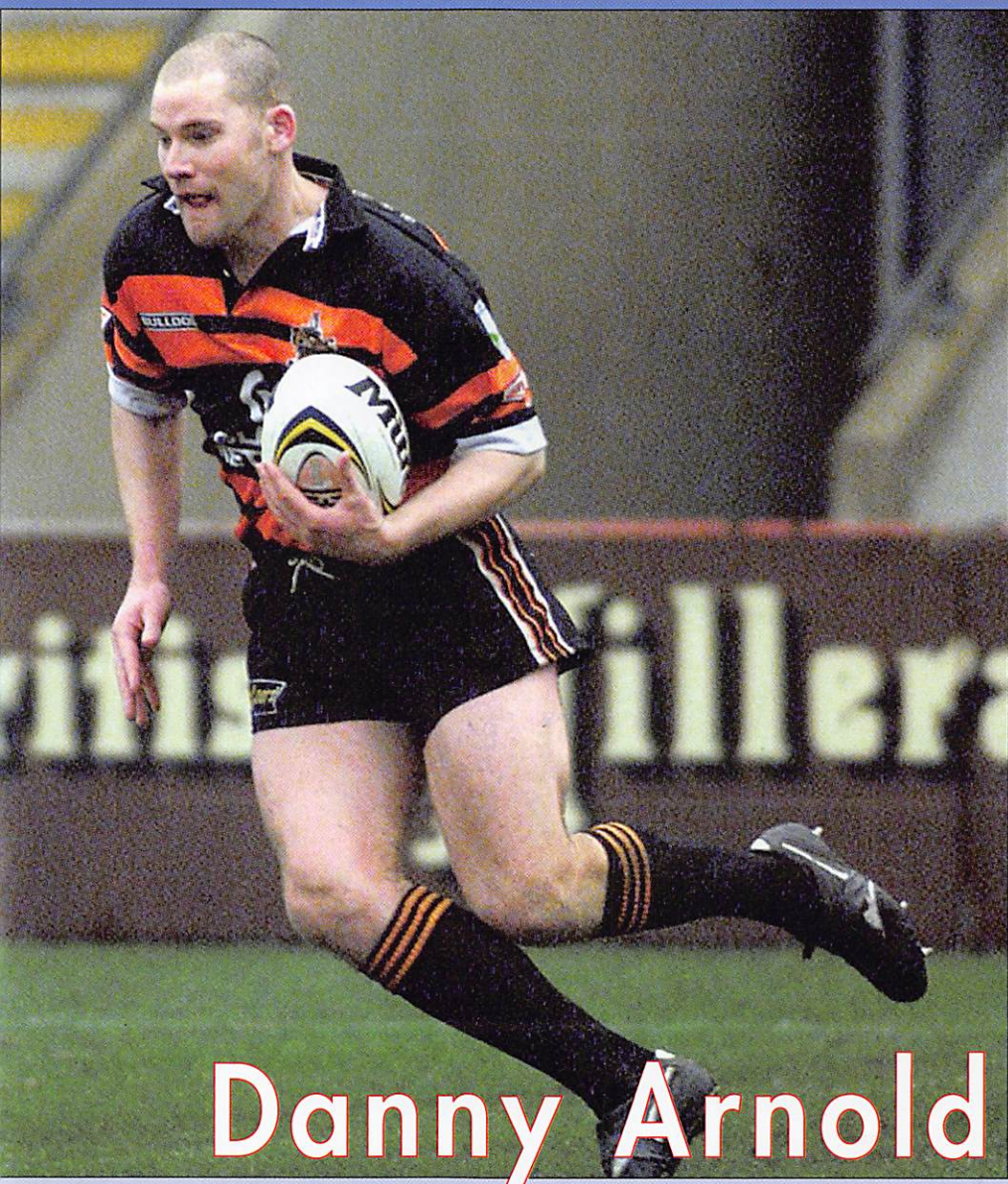
Q. How do you see your future?

I am still ambitious and want to play top level rugby again, I feel I have a lot more to give the game and would like to do it with Oldham. I am training again and itching to get back into the deep end. I still enjoy everything and feel there are still things to learn out there as a pro. On a personal level for relaxation I enjoy walking my dogs and playing golf. I am also looking forward to returning to Bali, a great place at which I had a holiday a few years ago. Meanwhile bring on the big boys, we can do it!



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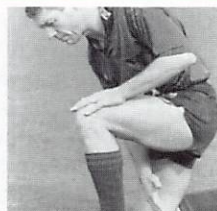
Iwa Slateloose



THIS SYNCHRONISED SWIMMING'S A DODDLE



WHERE'S THAT DACHSHUND GONE NOW?



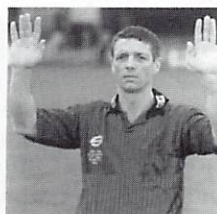
I'VE LOST MY WHITE STICK



DON'T GET TOO CLOSE, MISSUS



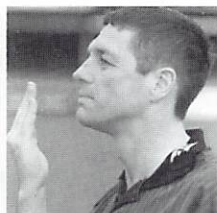
KEEP THAT ROD HULL AND HIS EMU AWAY FROM ME



I NEED A HAT THIS BIG



SEND ON LENNOX LEWIS



DOES THAT SMELL LIKE I THINK IT DOES?



IT SURE DOES!



THESE DUMBBELLS ARE LIGHT.....



IN FACT SO LIGHT I CAN LIFT THEM WITH ONE HAND



COULD DO WITH SOME DEODORANT THOUGH



JUST CHOPPING THE CHIPS NOW, SIR



IS A KING GOOD ENOUGH IN THIS GAME....



O.K. THEN, THIS ONE'S AN ACE



TELL THAT CHARLIE FAIRHEAD I'LL GET ON CASUALTY YET



Alliance Action

... with Haydn Walker

THE Alliance have yet again been inactive for the last couple of weeks. This time it not being down to bad weather but just the way the fixtures have fallen. With no games however the lads have not had it easy with two extra Sunday morning training sessions being the order of the day. These have been very physical sessions with full on no holds barred contact. This being necessary to try and keep our match sharpness.

During the last two weeks the players have all received a statistical summary of their own contribution so far this season. I am sure the supporters would be interested to know some of these. For example Lee Doran has made most tackles with 173, closely followed by Alex Peet with 168. Lee has also made the most hit ups and has the best yardage with 79 hit ups and 539 yards. Anyone who has watched the Alliance this

season will know that apart from the sheer volume of Lee's work there is top quality stamped all over everything he does.

In the backs Gavin Dodd and Daryl Lacey have some excellent stats and have certainly justified their promotion to the first team.

The team overall has made 1567 tackles this season with 94 misses. We have made only 759 hit ups. You will see from this that we are doing far too much tackling, and this is confirmed by the fact we have made 95 handling errors.

We have now set a number of goals for the next few games and we will be looking to make some improvement in these areas of weakness.

Haydn Walker
Alliance Coach

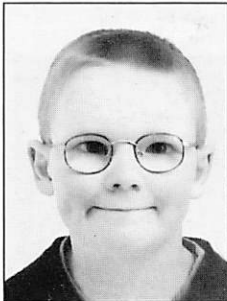


Junior Roughyeds

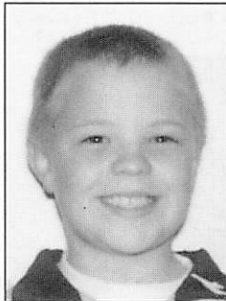
HI TO ALL THE JUNIOR ROUGHYEDS

A warm Oldham welcome to the Sheffield Eagles Juniors and supporters.

The mascot for today's match is John Wood. John is 8 years old and plays rugby for Royton Tigers. His favourite player is Joey Hayes.



John Wood



Adam Woodward

The mascot for the Featherstone Rovers away game is Adam Woodward. Adam joined the Juniors this season and was very pleased to be chosen as mascot. Adam is 9 years old and his favourite player is John Hough.



Ann-Marie Wright

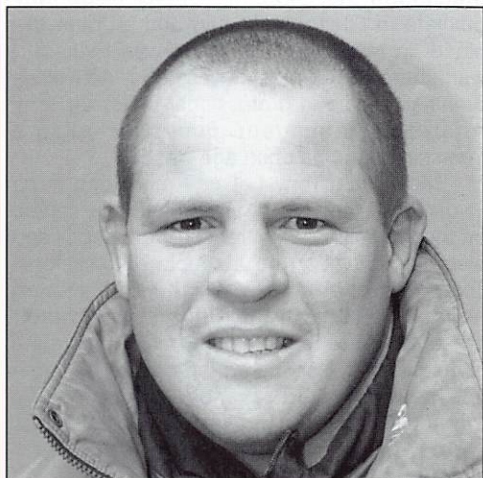
The mascot for the York away game is Ann-Marie Wright. Ann-Marie is 11 years old and her favourite players are David and Anthony Gibbons.

Debra Rafferty

Behind the Scenes

... with Dave Roberts

MARK KNIGHT - ACADEMY COACH



This week **BEHIND THE SCENES** turns the spotlight in the direction of Mark Knight, our 35 year old enthusiastic Academy coach, born in Warrington but brought up in Widnes. As a youngster he played for the Widnes Tigers before joining the professional ranks with Warrington. Married with two daughters, Mark helps make a living as an export supervisor and still lives in Widnes.

Firstly Mark, born in Warrington, brought up in Widnes and signing for the Wire?

Yes, I had four seasons at Wilderspool making the first team, but as a kid I was a Widnes fanatic and fondly remember that great team that became World Club Champions. Towards the end of my playing career I did in fact join Widnes helping to bring on the kids.

Did you play for any other clubs?

I played in the first team at both Leigh and Chorley and also spent time on loan at Saints. And remember, I have packed down in our Alliance side this season!

Is this your first position as a rugby coach?

No, I was coach of the Widnes Academy side when they were the only NFP club in the Academy Premier. Also I am head coach to England Students and assistant coach to GB Students. I am very ambitious with aspirations to handle a Super League side. But it all starts with the kids and initially persuading them away from all the distractions especially soccer. It can be a real fight just to keep them interested in rugby league.

So what about the squad that you are putting together here at Oldham, and your expectations for it?

My first target is to finish in the top five and then to go on and win the play offs. The squad to enable us to do that will comprise of around 23/24 players, a number that I feel is right, for both Peter Beswick and myself, to have sufficient time to give attention to each individual player.

Last time around we started late but still did reasonably well, but already this term we have signed players of the calibre of Paul Bennett, Adam Clayton, James Wilkinson, James Kirkland, Andy Whitehead and Matt Williams and there will be more. Sufficient proof if it is needed of the clubs intentions of not being left behind in signing local talented players!

Already some of these youngsters have made the Alliance side, and, they all have the added incentive of being selected for the mid season NFP representative competition, East v West, a stepping stone to further Academy honours.

What are your medium and long term plans for our Academy?

Simply this. It is vital to provide the first team coaches with a conveyor belt of well disciplined and talented youngsters. Without them there is no future short, medium or long term!

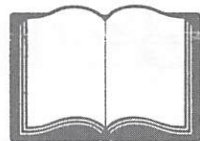
Note: The Academy start their season on the weekend 21st/22nd of April, although fixtures have still to be finalised. As last season the side will play its home games at Castleton.

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Amateur Album



.....WITH DON YATES



*Before Bradford v Castleford Match 1994
Jim Fallon, Dave Campbell & Tony Richmond*

YOU DO not need to be an outstanding player, or indeed a top official or administrator, to enjoy a lifetime of satisfaction from the game of rugby league. Just ask Tony Richmond, a junior winger of limited ability, then a capable official who attained senior touchjudge grade whilst at the same time dedicating many hours to the running of the Waterhead amateur club. Tony was brought up in a fanatical rugby league family at a time when Oldham had the best team in the land. He stood with his father on the Odsal terraces in 1957 to see Oldham crowned Champions of the Rugby Football League. 'It was a terrific day.', says Tony. Not many Oldham fans who were stood there with him would disagree with that.

A few years later Tony's playing career began when he joined Shawside where he played at under 17s. A couple of years later he moved on to Saddleworth where he played at under 19 level before joining the Ferranti open age team. Tony's next move was to Waterhead although by then his interest had switched from playing to refereeing. That was over thirty years ago and Tony is still refereeing. These days he is restricted by age to officiating at amateur level, choosing to referee matches in the Pennine League. But Tony did spend over ten years officiating at professional matches in the top grade, the Super League of that era. 'I thoroughly enjoyed it.' he says, 'Nowadays

officials in the Oldham Society frequently officiate in Glasgow, Dublin and all over the place. In my day the best trip was Fulham. I went there a few times. It was good.' As well as running the line in professional matches, Tony refereed top amateur games including a Yorkshire-Cumbria open age clash.

Meanwhile Tony became more and more involved off the field at Waterhead. He served on the committee, was treasurer for a spell and also club chairman on a couple of occasions. Tony was chairman when the club moved headquarters from the Church Inn to their present clubhouse in Peach Road. Although he is not currently serving on the committee, Tony has been involved recently in Waterhead's ambitious plans to move to new premises within a refurbished Waterhead Park. Unfortunately the cost of such a move, even with the help of Local and Sport Council funding is likely to prove too big a hurdle. Nevertheless Tony is happy to help out at the club in whatever capacity required.



Being awarded Dennis Davies Trophy for services to Lancs County Referees Society in 1995 from Bob Connolly

He also enjoys his trips to Boundary Park which he describes as being 'a good family day out'. Tony goes along with his two sons, Graham and Keith, and, of course, his father, Foster Richmond, who at 81 years of age still maintains his interest and enthusiasm for the Roughyeds. Let us hope that by the seasons end the Richmond family will have plenty to cheer about.

CLUB CALL

JUNIOR ROUGHYEDS

The Junior Roughyeds have now had their Enrolment Night but it's not too late to join in the fun.

You could even get the chance to be Team Mascot for the day.

For more details on the Junior Roughyeds give the Club a ring on

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Our trip to London on Silk Cut Challenge Cup Final weekend is proving to be a hit and is already half booked, so if you want to enjoy a trip to the capital taking in, bed & breakfast in a four star hotel in the heart of London, side view tickets for the final at Twickenham, and free time in London call now on

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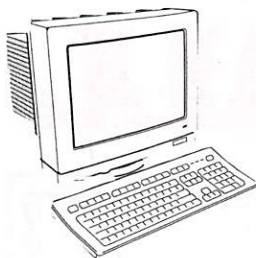
NEXT GAMES FOR THE ROUGHYEDS

SUNDAY 25 MARCH FEATHERSTONE ROVERS (A)

SUNDAY 1 APRIL YORK WASPS (A)

NEXT GAME AT BOUNDARY PARK

SUNDAY 8 APRIL OLDHAM V BATLEY BULLDOGS K.O.3.00PM



WINNARDS

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... with Simon Winnard

DESPITE being so early in the season, we are already seeing a clearly defined split in playing standards in the NFP. Recent commentators have expressed the possibility of looking at a three division split once again. However, I feel that we have been down that road once too often before. Today's visitors, in a former life, were involved in a disastrous 8 team middle league competition which saw us play London Crusaders on no less than five occasions in what could only be described at best as a dour season.

So just how many fixtures do we need in a season to supply an appropriate amount of revenue but also maintain the paying public's interest?

This term, Super League has adopted a 28 game season with some teams playing each other 4 times. The worst performers last season have been rewarded with more games against poorer opposition and, with no relegation, more meaningless fixtures full of a lower playing standard are hardly going to endear the sporting public to return in their droves. Not too long ago, Super League was trimmed down to 12 clubs with the farcical expulsion of Gateshead and Sheffield. The RFL claimed that fewer fixtures than the 26 game programme used at the time would protect players from too much Rugby and improve playing standards in the top flight. As they are now affecting a complete turnaround, presumably they are willing to accept that this was a mistake?

If the powers that be wish to increase the number of games in a season, they should quite simply return to a 15 / 16 team split between Super League and the NFP. By absorbing the top three sides from the Premiership they would create a viable home and away fixture programme in both divisions whilst satisfying the need for additional revenue.

Last weekends narrow defeat at the hands of Dewsbury was both disappointing and frustrating for many of the Roughyeds faithful. Having led the game and held out on our own line for so long the inevitable pressure told as the Rams, thanks mainly to the outstanding contribution of second rower

Richardson, went over for a late try to seal the game.

Whilst I don't feel that Dewsbury offer the same calibre of opposition as they did last season, they gave an error free second half performance with the ball in their hands and in truth deserved the spoils. Oldhams inability to control the football early on in the half meant the home side enjoyed the lions share of possession and it was only testament to our defence close to our own line that they didn't score more.

However, in possession of the football we lacked direction and composure at times and spilled the ball far too many times early in the tackle count. Whilst full credit must go to the lads for their efforts and contribution to a great game, the lack of an incisive attacker like Richardson was to prove our undoing. At times we look short of one or two quality players. Add a Shayne McMenemy or Steve Molloy to the side and I'm certain we would be viewed as a different prospect.

Sheffield on the other hand visit us today on the back of a couple of really impressive results. None more so than last weekends defeat of pre-season title favourites Widnes. Its been a magnificent effort over the last 18 months by everybody involved at the Eagles and full credit must go to Mark Aston and his squad for the progress they have made without the backing of any News Corporation money.

The recent departure of hard tackling second row forward Heath Cruckshank to St Helens doesn't seem to have adversely affected the teams fortune on the park. Cruckshank has left to join his old boss Ian Millward at Knowsley Road. However he has not left without a parting tribute for his contribution from Eagles coach Mark Aston, "Heath has been a great acquisition, but I couldn't stand in his way when St Helens made their approach. We shall miss his enthusiasm and approach to the game and wish him all the best".

One thing is for sure, the Roughyeds will need to be on top of their game to clip the Eagles wings today in what promises to be a typically competitive encounter.



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'THE DON'



ON THIS DAY . . .

Don Yates looks back to March 18th yesteryear

ONE hundred and two years ago, in 1899, Oldham won the Challenge Cup, the first Lancashire side so to do. It was on the way to that triumph, on Saturday 18th March, that they registered a club record victory with a 63-0 win over Goole, the Humberside amateurs. That victory, the largest marginal victory by an Oldham professional club, stood until last January when the current team put 64 points past Queensbury without reply. Wing-threequarter Sam Williamson led the way in 1899 scoring five of the 17 Oldham tries.

Around nineteen-seventy was a much less successful period for Oldham. The team which represented the Roughyeds that year suffered twenty consecutive league defeats despite having such stars in their squad as Martin Murphy, Bob Irving and Kevin Taylor. All three were internationals and all three played in the league match against Huyton which was included in that dismal run and which was staged at Widnes on Wednesday 18th March 1970. Huyton, with a pack containing former and future Oldham players Bill Payne and Dick Bonser, won that match 9-2 with the Roughyeds' only score being a penalty landed by centre Terry Garrett.

Exactly twenty years later, on Sunday 18th March 1990, Huyton visited Oldham, although by that time they had been renamed Runcorn Highfield. Making his debut for the Roughyeds in that game was Tony Anderson, a club record £70,000 signing from Halifax earlier that month. Anderson was a try scorer



Kevin Taylor

in the match which Oldham won by 60 points to two. Unfortunately he stayed at Watersheddings for less than two years before injury curtailed his career. He made only 20 appearances for Oldham and scored just three tries. That's £3,500 per appearance and over £23,000 per try!!!

Another try scorer that day was prop-forward Leo Casey who crossed for a couple of touchdowns. Casey later left Oldham for Featherstone and he then moved to Swinton and Rochdale before returning to his home town club. Casey's transfer from Featherstone to Swinton occurred exactly five years ago, on Monday 18th March 1996. He made 44 appearances for the Lions and scored three tries.

It was on this day in 1931, Wednesday 18th March, that England defeated Wales 23-18 at Fartown, Huddersfield. At loose-forward for Wales in that match was Oldham's Reg Hathway who was making the first of his two Welsh appearances. Another Welshman who made two international appearances was Oldham prop-forward Gareth Owen. His second appearance took place at Craven Park, Hull on Wednesday 18th March 1980 when he was the only Oldham player involved in England's 17-4 victory over Wales. Dave Parker's two international appearances were for Great Britain, his second appearance coming on Wednesday 18th March 1964 when he was a member of the British team which defeated France 39-0 at Leigh. Finally, twelve months ago, on Saturday 18th March 2000, the top amateur club in Sheffield, Hillsborough Hawks, were in town for a Conference League match against Waterhead. The local club were in top form and went on to win 52-6. John Thewlis (2), Ward Jones (2), Dean Partington (2), Nick Wood, Carlton Campbell, Paul Lord and Darren Dixon scored tries for Waterhead with Pete Pearson adding six goals. Jason Davidson snatched a late consolation try and conversion for the visitors.

Fixtures

Date	Opponent	Result	Att
DECEMBER			
3	Barrow	28 - 16	1,294
17	Workington	22 - 6	1,295
24	Rochdale	10 - 6	3,402
JANUARY			
1	WIDNES	20 - 12	3,471
7			
14	LEIGH	18 - 44	4,747
28	QUEENSBURY (SCCC R3)	64 - 0	1,559
30	CHORLEY	56 - 2	1,210
FEBRUARY			
4	WHITEHAVEN	P	
11	HULL KR (SCCC R4)	17 - 6	2,008
18	GATESHEAD	52 - 6	1,451
25	WAKEFIELD (SCCC R5)	6 - 26	3,071
MARCH			
11	Dewsbury	13 - 18	1,453
18	SHEFFIELD	H	
25	Featherstone	A	
28	HUNSLET	H	
APRIL			
1	York	A	
8	BATLEY	H	
13	ROCHDALE	H	
16	Widnes	A	
22	Batley	A	
29	KEIGHLEY	H	
MAY			
2	Swinton	A	
6	BARROW	H	
13	Chorley	A	
20	WORKINGTON	H	
27	DONCASTER	H	
JUNE			
3	Gateshead	A	
10	SWINTON	H	
17	Whitehaven	A	
24	Keighley	A	
JULY			
1	Hull KR	A	

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For the attention of Lewis Laverty

Dear Lewis,

Just a quick note to thank you and Brian for your invitation to Frank Stirrup's Hall of Fame induction which I am sure you feel was a total success.

It's only due to your efforts and the co-operation of the Club that the Ex-players get the chance to meet and chat about the 'Good old Times'. I, for one, appreciate the time and effort expended on their behalf and can only ask that you keep up the good work. There are only so many 'stars' who can be considered 'special' but days like Sunday are there for everyone to share and enjoy together, players and fans alike.

Best wishes,
Joe Collins (ORLFC 1964 - 73)

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