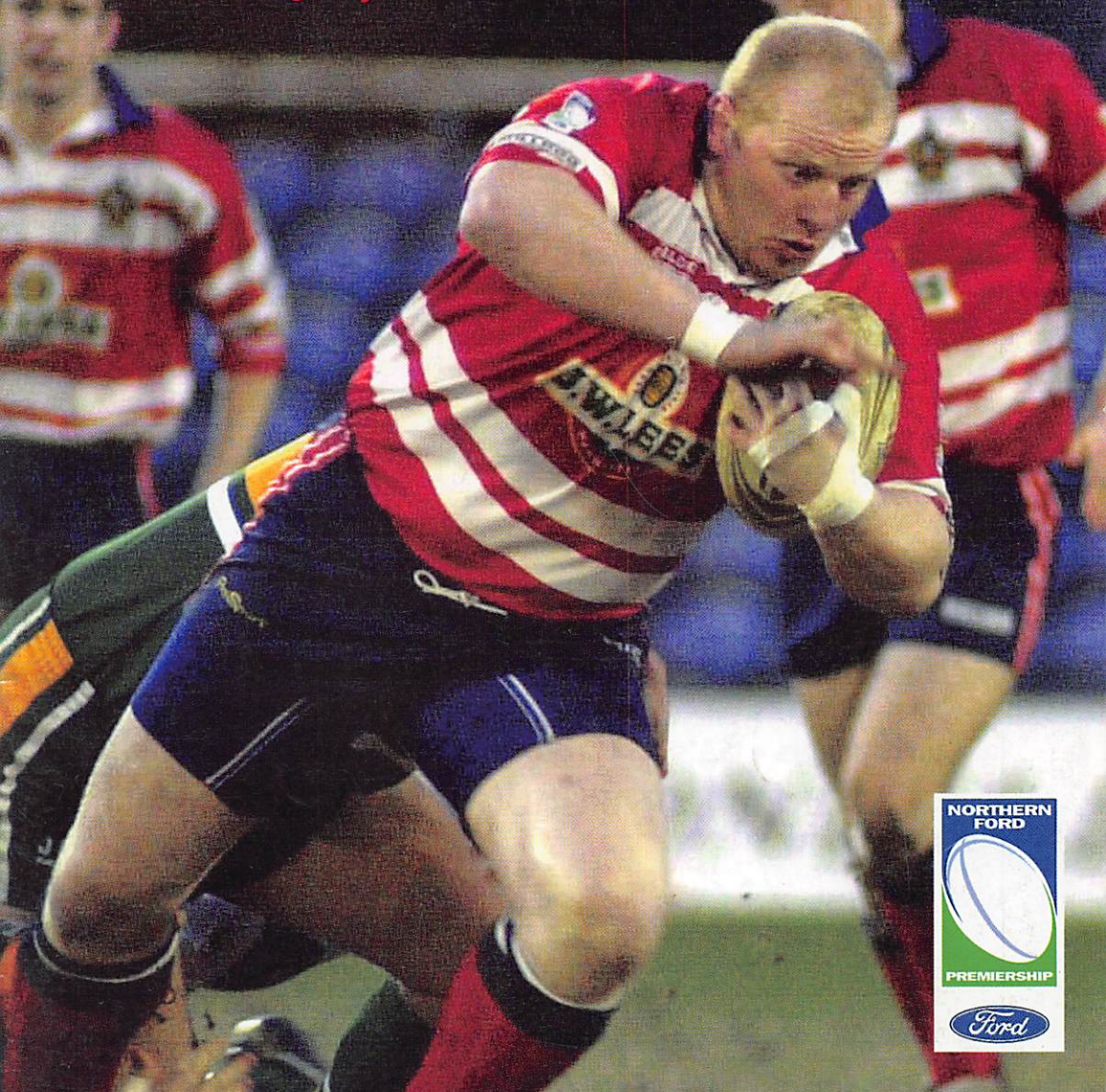


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The Roughyeds



ROCHDALE HORNETS

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Up Front

... with Christopher Hamilton



TODAY'S Derby match should be another cracker. Both sides are in good form and it shows how the top of the division is so competitive when there are something like 13 sides who are all believing that they can qualify for the top 8 play-offs. Rochdale, particularly, have improved over the last few games since they signed several new players and will be out to avenge our win at

Spotland on Christmas Eve.

If you also throw into the pot the small matter of this being a local Derby you have all the ingredients for a good game and a great atmosphere.

The fact that two of the three clubs above us in the table, Keighley and Dewsbury, both lost last week did us no harm at all and further cemented our place in the top four.

It appears at the moment that everybody and his dog has an opinion and the answer to the NFP's problems. We are all aware of the need to bring some security and structure to the division for the foreseeable future but one of the things I have stated as Chairman of the Association of Premiership Clubs, it that we must make decisions based on facts and look. With this in mind I will be meeting, together with Dave Callaghan from the RFL, several of the TV 'Big Hitters' in the week leading up to the Silk Cut Challenge Cup Final. Following those meetings, which will determine whether or not the NFP has any TV potential, terrestrial or otherwise, many of our decisions will fall into place. We are all aware of the time constraints under which we are working but please be assured that this time the reason why nothing has been made public is not because we haven't started to think about the problems facing us as a group of clubs, but instead it is because we have!!!

Enjoy the game.

Chris


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FRONT COVER
Jason Clegg "on the charge"

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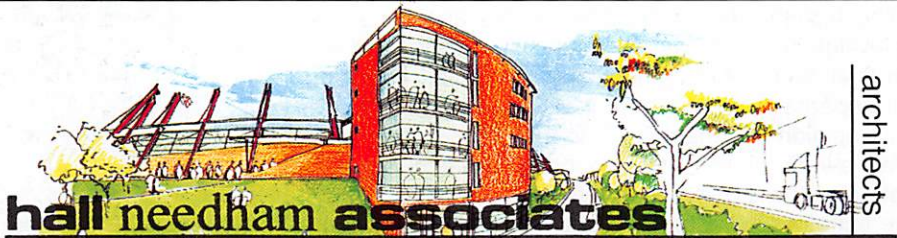


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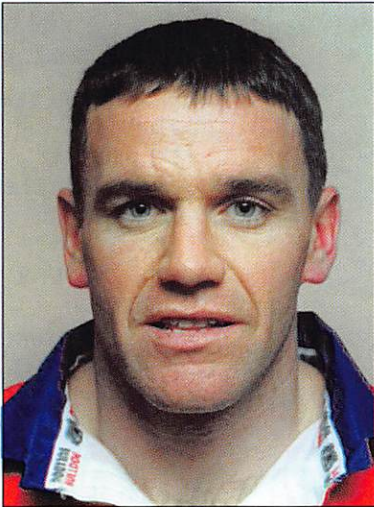
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FORD FOCUS . . . with Mike Ford



I WOULD like to begin this week by offering my sincere condolences to all at Warrington following the deaths of Letitia Nikau and Brian Briers (brother of Lee Briers). I played with Tawere Nikau at both Castleford and Warrington and I knew the family well: they were lovely people and Letitia's death is a great tragedy.

Last week's game against Batley gave us a tough test which was just what we needed after the easy wins over Hunslet and York. Batley were a tough, gritty side and their performance gives us plenty to work on. We seem to be getting sides just at the wrong time with Whitehaven, Sheffield, Batley and today Rochdale, all running into form just as we are due to meet them.

Hornets are on a high after winning six of their last seven games and being nominated team of the month for March. In addition they gave us a hard time on Christmas Eve, so today's match is the biggest game of the season so far. I think it will be close and I hope there is a big crowd, plenty of excitement and lots of noise. And most of all I want an Oldham win. It's very close in the League right down to about 12th or 13th place so there are lots of teams looking for a play-off place and not least Rochdale. Rest assured that with their Oldham connections and being a local derby the Hornets will be out to put one over on us. I'm not bothered what anyone else does, only that Oldham get the maximum number of wins and points possible. We're hoping Joey Hayes will be fit for the game and everyone else seems okay, so I should have a full squad to choose from.

Finally, on a personal note, I am very pleased and flattered by the appointment to help coach Lancashire in the revived fixture with Yorkshire in June. I hope its the first of many big clashes between rugby's oldest and greatest rivals and I'll be looking for a Red Rose victory.

Enjoy today's big game.

Mike

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Michael's Match

... from the pen of Michael Turner



IN welcoming the players, officials and supporters of our near neighbours, and old rivals, Rochdale Hornets to Boundary Park for our "derby" match, we turn the clock back ten years to the 1991- 92 season for today's match under review.

Both clubs were then in the old (eight club) second division playing under a format which saw the participants encounter each other four times a season.

Round one went to the Hornets who came to Watersheddings on September 29th 1991 and recorded a surprise victory by 26 - 18. This was the classic game of two halves. Oldham took an early six point lead through a Paul Round try improved by Charlie McAlister. Hornets replied with two Whitfield penalty goals and a try from Calland but by the break further tries from Steve Warburton and Neil Flanagan combined with two McAlister goals gave Oldham an 18 - 8 advantage.

The second half was one way traffic and tries from Gartland, Bob Eccles and Clark, all of which were converted by Whitfield, gave Hornets the spoils. Such was the Rochdale domination in the second period it would be fair to say that, if anything, that score flattered the "Roughyeds" who were well and truly beaten on the day.

OLDHAM: S Longstaff, R Irving, V Nicklin, K Newton, P Lord; S Warburton, N Flanagan; A Donegan, R Pachniuk, T Street, P Round, C McAlister, R Russell.

Subs: G Christie, B McDermott.

ROCHDALE: Whitfield, Fox, Abram, Calland, Garrity; Clark, Gartland; Marsden, Hall, C Eccles, Bamber, Duane, Kuiti.
Subs: Gormley, R Eccles.

Consolation came for Oldham in the remaining three encounters which all produced victories for the "Roughyeds".

On December 1 st, Oldham went to Spotland to return with a 20 - 10 victory and on April 17th they enjoyed a similar away success. This time just one point better registering a score of 21 - 10.

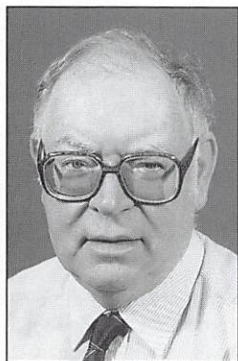
Sandwiched between these was the Boxing Day game at Watersheddings when Oldham reversed the score of their first home game, this time to triumph 26 - 18. Through the series of games current day stars, Chris Joynt, Tommy Martyn and Barrie McDermott all played in the "Roughyeds" colours.



Tim Street takes on the Hornet's defence with Neil Flanagan in support – Oldham v Rochdale September 29th 1991.

ROGER

ROGER



ROCHDALE'S re-emergence as a force in the NFP in the past few weeks is good for the game in this area.

Under the command of Martin Hall, a Watersheddings' mascot I recall when he was a slip of a lad not too many years ago, the Hornets have numbered Doncaster, Keighley and Dewsbury among their recent victims; some prize scalps there in anybody's reckoning.

As a consequence, they come to Boundary Park today with their sights set firmly on a place in the top eight and with a growing belief that they can emulate Oldham's achievements last year and go on to cause a few surprises in the NFP play-off matches.

They scored a NFP record 98 points against York at Spotland last Sunday to climb into 11th spot, but only two points outside the play-off qualification cut.

Oldham, on the other hand, cemented their place in the top four by beating Batley Bulldogs on a weekend when there were defeats for Dewsbury, at home to Widnes and their new former Rams boss Neil Kelly, and for Steve Deakin's Keighley Cougars, up at Whitehaven.

This is by far the most competitive season yet in the NFP.

Gone are the days when, with odd exceptions, you could forecast the result of nearly every match. Indeed, there are signs that the battle for top-eight spots this year could go down to the final weekend of matches in early July.

It is against this backcloth of dog-eat-dog, or the survival of the fittest, that Rochdale come to Boundary Park today for the traditional Good Friday derby.

When Oldham won 10-6 at Spotland on Christmas Eve, there was a crowd of 3,402 and that will almost certainly provide Hornets with their biggest gate of the season.

Today's attendance will have to go some to beat the current Roughyeds record - 4,747 for the visit of Leigh on January 14 - but you can be guaranteed of one thing: it will be significantly bigger than it would have been if Hornets had been 'easy beats'.

There's something wrong if they don't bring their best following for years to Oldham, and in terms of cash through the turnstiles that's to the Roughyeds' benefit.

When Oldham go to Rochdale the financial boot is on the other foot. As I say, if sporting neighbours are both competitive there are mutual benefits to be derived.

MIKE Ford's growing reputation was further enhanced last week when he was named assistant to Andy Gregory as Lancashire coach for the forthcoming county-of-origin clash with Yorkshire at Headingley.

Two things puzzle me.

1. If the event is to be billed as a genuine Test trial, why pick as head coach a man who is currently in charge of an amateur side?
2. Considering the main man behind the county-of-origin plan is David Waite - an Australian - wouldn't you have expected him to take advantage of the opportunity to provide an up-and-coming young coach with the top job.

Lee Crooks, the Yorkshire coach, is in charge of York, but if we are all to take seriously the importance of the Lancashire v Yorkshire game, wouldn't Brian Noble of Bradford Bulls have been a more appropriate appointment, or even Neil Kelly of Widnes.

This side of the Pennines we don't have a single Englishman, let alone a Lancastrian, in charge of a Super League club, but there are several contenders in the NFP, among them Ford, Hall (Rochdale), Steve Deakin, Paul Cullen and Mike Gregory.

THE funeral was due to take place yesterday of Peter Goddard, the former Oldham prop, who died last week aged 60. It is a measure of the sadness his death has caused among ex-colleagues and opponents that within hours of it becoming known that he had died, ex-players were ringing me up asking for funeral details.

They included Adrian Alexander and Malcolm Price, that prince of Welsh centres who signed for Oldham for a record fee from Union while Peter was still in the Oldham pack.

Malcolm can tell a tale or two about those far-off rugby days when he was the 'wealthy' new boy alongside Oldham-born bread-and-butter lads like Peter, Johnnie Noon and Brian Lord.

Adrian, who became friendly with Peter in later years through the licensing trade, was moved to remark: "At times like this us rugby men must stick together. See you at the funeral."

And I was indebted to Dennis Whittle, who has been covering Saints for the St Helens Star longer than I've been covering Oldham for the Chronicle, for reminding me that Peter was a regular in a high-profile Saints pack which included Cliff Watson and Bobby Dagnall alongside the Oldham lad in the front-row and a certain Ray French in the second-row.

On the local rugby scene Peter will be sadly missed.

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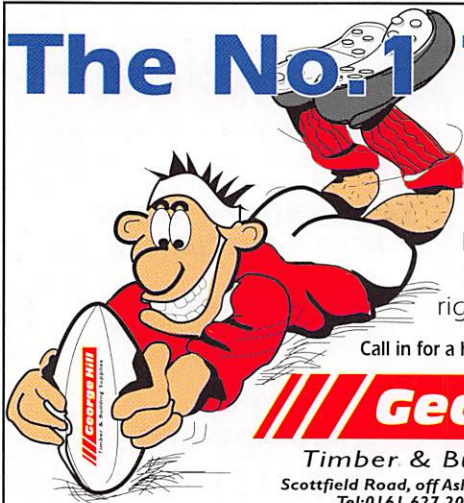
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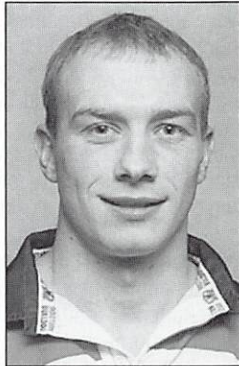


Alliance Action

... with Haydn Walker

THREE away games have been played since my last notes and we have had three excellent wins. Indeed I would go as far as saying these three games have produced the best performances in my time as Alliance Coach.

We defeated Whitehaven at the Recreation Ground by 28-20 after trailing by 20-6 at half time. Many of the squad's younger players came of age in this game with Lee Doran, Gavin Johnson, Matty Williams and Alex Peet leading the way. Joey Hayes made his comeback from injury and had a solid game, with Keith Brennan marshalling the side superbly.



Keith Brennan

The 56-16 win at Doncaster was an awesome performance, especially when you consider we arrived at 7.00pm and had just

thirty minutes to get ready to play. Fortunately our Magical Mystery tour of the region allowed physio Danni Turner time to strap the players on the coach so that when we did finally arrive it was on with the kit and warm up.

Although we conceded sixteen points in the first half we did manage to score thirty-two. We tightened up in the second half and kept the opposition scoreless but still managed five more tries. Outstanding on the night was emergency hooker Daryl Lacey, Keith Brennan, Lee Doran and Danny Arnold.

Two days of rain meant the pitch at Batley was a mud heap but this didn't stop us putting up a terrific performance to beat the Bulldogs 21-0. Playing up the slope in the first half we led 11-0 at the break following tries from Daryl Lacey and Joe McNicholas. At half time the team set the goal of preventing the home side from scoring. This was achieved and we added further tries from Alex Peet and Joe McNicholas as the pitch got even worse. Once again outstanding was Daryl Lacey at hooker, with Gareth Barber, Ian Sinfield, Lee Doran and Danny Naylor also contributing much to another fine win.

Junior Roughyeds



sponsored by **Oldham Advertiser**

HI TO ALL THE JUNIOR ROUGHYEDS

A WARM welcome goes out to the Junior supporters and club officials of Rochdale Hornets.



Gavin Woodward

The mascot for today's derby clash is GAVIN WOODWARD. Gavin joined the Junior Roughyeds this season and was delighted when he was selected at the first Junior Roughyeds meeting of this season. Gavin is 8 years old and his

favourite players are Anthony and David Gibbons.

Many thanks to Stuart and Joanne Gough of Celebrate Caterers who have sponsored the Easter eggs for each Junior Roughyed. These will be presented at today's Junior Roughyeds meeting in the Executive Box. Many thanks for their continued support.

Debra Rafferty

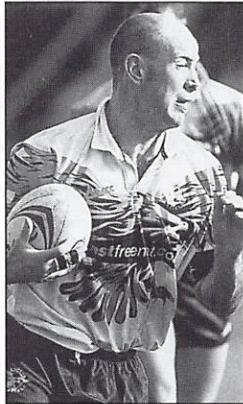
Our thanks also to **Geoff & Marjorie Cooke of Saddleworth Sports** who have once again sponsored socks and shorts for the Junior Roughyeds mascots.

Probing The NFP

TODAY's opponents Rochdale ran up a club record score at Spotland last week when they demolished hapless York 98-0. Marlon Billy equalled Hornets' tries in a game record with 5, while Brenda.n O'Meara scored 4 and Darren Robinson 3. Danny Wood landed 11 goals, but 8 misses kept the score below the century.

Two good results for Oldham were Widnes' win at Dewsbury (13-12) and Whitehaven's defeat of Keighley (17-4). I wondered previously in this column what would happen to Keighley if Martin Wood was ever injured and two successive defeats tend to provide the answer. With Chris Ross sent off for a foul on Wesley Wilson the Cougars, under pressure, seem to have lost some discipline. If Oldham can continue to pick up points in the meantime the clash with Keighley on May 29th promises to be a real humdinger. Meanwhile Dewsbury's defeat puts the Rams in striking distance for the Roughyeds, whose win against Batley came via two contrasting halves, an indifferent first period giving way to an entertaining and decisive second.

With Workington going down at Featherstone as expected (24-4), the highlight a Matt Bramald hat-trick, Sheffield took the chance to climb into 7th spot by beating Swinton 23-22 thanks to Richard Goddard with a try, 3 goals and a decisive drop goal. That left Hull KR, despite a convincing 38-8 defeat of Barrow just outside the eight. Mike Dixon grabbed a hat-trick for the Robins, but the sensation of the match was the dismissal of Barrow's prop Ian Rawlinson in the first tackle of the match (17 seconds - is this a record?) by under fire referee Nick Oddy.



Richard Goddard

As predicted, Leigh had a comfortable win at Hunslet by 50-6, while Chorley, having added the experienced Mark Lee from Salford to their strength, won the basement clash against

Gateshead 19-14.

Traditionally, as in soccer, Easter used to be the time when RL Championships or promotion and relegation were decided. Not so today when Easter marks the half-way point of the season. Nevertheless two games in four days can have a significant bearing on a club's season. None more so than Oldham who have two tough calls against Rochdale at home and Widnes away. Two points may be the best they can hope for. Hornets, meanwhile, have an extra day to recover before facing Sheffield on Tuesday, a game they should win but not without a gruelling battle.

Meanwhile, in Oldham's favour is the fact that Widnes play at Leigh today. Although the Vikings will be confident after defeating Dewsbury, Leigh are altogether a different kettle of fish and should secure a home win.

Keighley, at home to Swinton and away to Hull KR, ought to take maximum points, and a Leigh win at Swinton on Monday will see the top two extend their lead. Dewsbury face a tricky derby today at Batley, but have a comfortable home tie with Gateshead on Monday. A Batley win would certainly give the chasing pack – none more so than Oldham – great encouragement.

Featherstone should dispose of Hull KR today at the Lionheart, but Monday's trip to the 'House of Pain' is a likely Doncaster victory. However, the Dragons themselves will have faced a mighty South Yorkshire derby today at Sheffield, a game in which the Eagles could well prevail.

Top eight challengers Workington also face crucial derby fixtures, at home to Whitehaven and away at Barrow. they may have to settle for two points rather than four as their Cumbrian rivals seek to enhance their own positions. If Whitehaven can spring a surprise at Derwent Park they should secure two points at Chorley, Barrow no doubt having defeated the Lynx today.

In today's other fixture the battle of the basement between Hunslet and York should be a home win. And I see no joy for the Wasps either when they face Batley at the Huntington Stadium on Monday.

So, all in all, a pretty crucial few days which will enhance a few aspirations and dent the hopes of others. Here's hoping for a Roughyeds' four pointer.



ROCHDALE HORNETS

AFTER a slow start to the season Rochdale visit Boundary Park today with eight wins and six defeats from their fourteen league fixtures. Having given Oldham a real test in their 10-6 defeat on Boxing Day you can rest assured that Hornets will be out for revenge today and will arrive full of confidence after victories against Dewsbury, Hunslet, Gateshead and York.

The man behind the Hornets revival is Head Coach Martin Hall, who came to Spotland after serving as assistant coach at Halifax Blue Sox. A distinguished playing career saw Hall turn out for Oldham, Rochdale, Wigan, Castleford and Halifax, winning just about every club honour in the game.



Martin Hall

At fullback today expect to see PAUL

OWEN, a close season signing from Keighley who has recently moved from half back with great success.

Right wing WAYNE McHUGH is a powerfully built player with try-scoring ability and a strong defence.

Centre partner BRENDAN O'MEARA is an Australian reluctantly released by Dewsbury because of quota restrictions. He is team captain and a great asset whether on attack or defence. Ex-South Sydney and Illawarra Steelers.

Co-centre MATT CALLAND has returned to Hornets after starting at Oldham St. Anne's and featuring with Featherstone, Hull and Bradford. Big and strong with a no-nonsense style, Calland can be a real handful.

Left-wing MARLON BILLY signed from Swinton at the start of the season and previously played for Keighley. Great pace makes him a potential scorer in every game and he is a player not to be given too much latitude.

DANNY WOOD, who trialled with Oldham before Hornets snapped him up from Dewsbury, has made a highly successful move from centre to stand-off where his outstanding ball-handling skill can be given free rein. Also an exceptional kicker, Wood is 'the one who got away'.

With new signing LATHAM TAWHAI at scrum half Hornets now possess a potent and talented back division. A Kiwi, Tawhai has been recruited from Doncaster having previously played at Hunslet, where he was man-of-the-match in the Hawks' 1999 Grand Final winning side, and Keighley.

At prop DANNY SCULTHORPE is arguably the best in his position in the league and at 21 is still

learning. Possessed of a great pair of hands and always likely to break the defensive line. Once a junior at Waterhead, he subsequently did service at both Leeds and Warrington.

Hooker, DARREN ROBINSON is originally from Leeds, signed for Oldham and then transferred to Hornets. Another 21 year old who, having served his apprenticeship, is now beginning to make an impact. Loves nothing better than to score against the Roughyeds.

Big ANDY IRELAND at No.10 once interested Oldham before he joined Widnes, having previously played with Hull and Bradford. Now used as an impact player, Ireland's physical attributes allow him to get passes away when you think the ball's been smothered.

Two ex-Oldham

forwards make up the

second row. DAVID

STEPHENSON was a

star for Bears at hooker,

but transferred to Hull on

the demise of the old

club. Now a bit heavier

than in his Bears days,

Stephenson features in

the back row for Hornets.

His partner WES

ROGERS is a very recent

acquisition, having been

unable to break into

Oldham's ranks on a regular basis. Having also

played at Swinton, Rogers now has the chance to

stake a claim for regular first team football.

The spate of new signings has seen Hornets

switch mercurial halfback DAVE WATSON to no.13.

A Kiwi international on 19 occasions, Watson is very

experienced and hard to handle after service with

Halifax, Bradford, Sheffield, Workington and

Whitehaven.

The substitutes will come from: SEAN

COOPER former Bradford and Oldham threequarter

who was a popular figure in his time with the

Roughyeds; MARTIN BUNCE an ex-Saddleworth

and Waterhead junior who signed for Wigan's

Academy side before reverting to Rochdale. Now a

strong running and tackling second-row' DAVID

LARDER another second-row with experience at

Sheffield and Keighley. A solid player and son of ex-

Oldham centre and G.B.Coach Phil; WARREN

AYRES, another son of a famous father (who was a

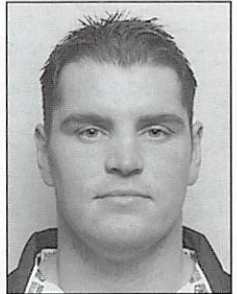
Hornets favourite in the 70s). Warren junior is a

lively halfback once on the books of Salford; JAMES

BUNYAN, a tough centre or second-row signed in

the last few weeks from Doncaster Dragons. Once

on the books at Huddersfield.



Wes Rogers

Walkerbout

... with Brian Walker

PETER GODDARD

Sadly Peter Goddard died on the 2nd of April 2001 Oldham Rugby League Club passes on its sincere condolences to his wife and family.

It was the Daily Mirror's Arthur Brooks who once described Peter Goddard as a rugby league Goliath. Brooks of course was referring to Peter being a giant of a man who used his size and bulk along with his magnificent ball handling skills in his quest to prove he could become one of the best English rugby league front row forwards of his era. Goliath, the champion of the Philistines succumbed to the slingshot and stones of the shepherd-king David but Goddard was determined to succumb to nobody in his quest to prove he could compete with the best.

A product of Oldham amateur rugby Peter Goddard joined Oldham during the 1958-59 season a time of change at Watersheddings. The side that for four years had wowed the rugby world with its classy football was beginning to break up. Forwards Vines and Turner were about to leave for Wakefield but there was still plenty of forward talent left at the club and Goddard had to compete for a place in the front row with players of the calibre and quality of Little, Jackson, Keith, Dufty, Lomas, Rowbottom and McKeown. The big forward still managed to break into the first team in his very first season standing in three times for Jack Keith at hooker.

Next season he made 17 appearances most of them at blind side prop but the following season Peter was back in the middle with 16 of his 20 appearances at hooker. By the 1961/62 season Goddard had put on more bulk and was to settle down to the blind side prop position and it was in the

first half of the following season (1962/63) that the selectors named him and fellow team mate Frank Pitchford as reserves for the Central Park test against the French.

Goddard's reputation as one of that rare breed of big, powerful, ball handling props was growing fast and already he had attracted the attention of several top sides and he was eventually persuaded to join St Helens. The Saints, who were in the middle of a successful period during which they appeared in 5 consecutive county cup finals, already had a powerful front row comprised of amongst others internationals Terry, Dagnall, Warlow and Watson. Goddard's extra ball playing skills forced him into the side and he was soon a favourite with the Knowsley Road fans.

After just one season Goddard was approached and signed by Huddersfield, playing 42 games for the Fartowners before moving on again, this time to the recently reformed Bradford Northern where he was to play over 90 matches.

Peter Goddard played 10 seasons at the top, a remarkable record for a prop forward of that era. Wherever Goddard played he managed to force his way into and hold onto a place in the front row of a classy pack. The combination of size, strength and ball handling ability placed him amongst the best front row forwards in the game and in constant demand. **Peter Goddard proved he could live and compete with the best.**

| | | APP | T | G |
|---------------|----------------|-----|---|---|
| OLDHAM | 1958/9-1962/3 | 74 | 8 | |
| ST HELENS | 1962/3-1963/4 | 20 | 1 | |
| HUDDERSFIELD | 1963/4-1965/6 | 42 | 2 | |
| BRADFORD NTHN | 1965/6-1969/70 | 93 | 1 | |
| BLACKPOOL B. | 1969/70 - | 10 | | 1 |




OLDHAM V WHITEHAVEN 2nd December 1961

Back row (left to right) L. McIntyre, P. Smethurst, D. Parker, J. Rae, Peter Goddard, B. Payne, B. Lord.
Front row (left to right) B. Patterson, G. Sims, J. Noon, F. Pitchford (Capt), A. Kellett, M. Bird.

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Cook(e)ing up a storm



WITH most clubs having just completed half their fixtures I thought the time was right to look at one or two statistics. I will return to attendances in the next programme, but for today I thought it might be interesting to look at the penalty count. The figures in the table refer to all fixtures i.e. include cup ties so penalties awarded will not add up to the figure for penalties conceded. Of course not all penalties are awarded for foul play: they include those conceded for dissent, offside etc. But they are revealing in the sense that they tell you a lot about a team's overall discipline, which is something modern coaches tend to stress.

Currently the least penalised sides in order are:-

- 1) Barrow (75) (who have been in this position virtually all season)
- 2) Keighley (76)
- 3) Hull K.R. (77)

However Barrow have played a game fewer than the other two so by average per game the top three are 1) Keighley (4.75) 2) Hull K.R. (4.81) and 3) Barrow (5.00)

The most heavily penalised sides are:-

- 19) Sheffield (143)
- 18) Featherstone (112)
- 17) Doncaster (108)

And these positions remain unchanged even on average. The respective averages are 8.41

Sheffield, 7.00 Featherstone and 6.74 Doncaster.

The teams most in receipt of penalties are:-

- 1) Featherstone (126)
- 2) Oldham (107) and
- 3) Sheffield (105).

On averages there is a slight change to those benefiting from referees' largesse i.e. 1) Featherstone (7.87) 2) Chorley (6.73) and 3) Oldham (6.69)

The teams enjoying fewest decisions in their favour are:-

- 19) Batley (74)
- 18) Swinton (80)
- 17) Keighley (84).

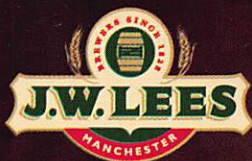
By averages this comes out as:- 19) Batley (4.62) 18) Keighley (5.25) 17) and Swinton (5.33).

Conclusion: if you want to see a game with a lot of penalties you should watch a) Sheffield b) Featherstone or c) Leigh. Whereas if you want to see a game of few stoppages try a) Keighley b) Hull K.R. or c) Swinton.

Footnote: until the last few games Oldham had one of the best records. Even then Oldham are more sinned against than sinning. You can see for yourself which teams concede more than they gain. It is noticeable that the top four sides receive more penalties than they give away. Is there a moral here?

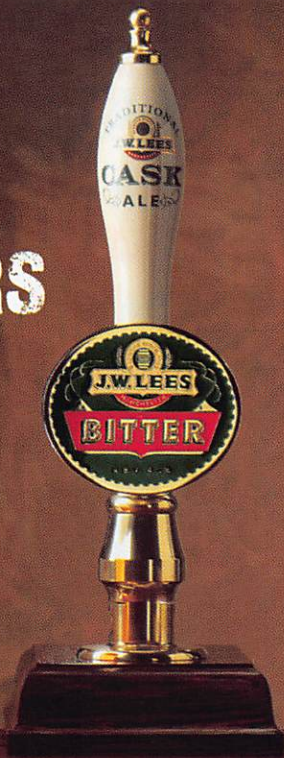
PENALTY COUNT (As at 1.4.01)

| | FOR | Av | AGAINST | Av |
|--------------|-----|------|---------|------|
| BARROW | 99 | 6.60 | 75 | 5.00 |
| BATLEY | 74 | 4.62 | 97 | 6.06 |
| CHORLEY | 101 | 6.73 | 90 | 6.00 |
| DEWSBURY | 98 | 6.53 | 87 | 5.80 |
| DONCASTER | 96 | 6.00 | 108 | 6.75 |
| FEATHERSTONE | 126 | 7.87 | 112 | 7.00 |
| GATESHEAD | 96 | 5.65 | 93 | 5.47 |
| HULL K.R. | 88 | 5.50 | 77 | 4.81 |
| HUNSLET | 93 | 5.47 | 93 | 5.47 |
| KEIGHLEY | 84 | 5.25 | 76 | 4.75 |
| LEIGH | 113 | 6.64 | 103 | 6.05 |
| OLDHAM | 107 | 6.69 | 88 | 5.50 |
| ROCHDALE | 93 | 5.81 | 101 | 6.31 |
| SHEFFIELD | 105 | 6.18 | 143 | 8.41 |
| SWINTON | 80 | 5.33 | 86 | 5.73 |
| WHITEHAVEN | 95 | 5.59 | 92 | 5.41 |
| WIDNES | 98 | 6.12 | 85 | 5.31 |
| WORKINGTON | 85 | 5.66 | 88 | 5.87 |
| YORK | 89 | 5.56 | 94 | 5.87 |



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121



..... **Warren Barrow**



Q. When did you start playing rugby league?

When I was eleven years old I started playing league at school, St Teresa's in Saint Helens. I played for school and also at the Crusaders till I was about fifteen, when I played at Orrell St James. The coach

at that time was Peter Farrell and playing there with my mates was terrific.

From Orrell I signed for Wigan where I played mostly 'A' team games, but had clocked up three first team appearances by the time I was nineteen.

Whilst I was at Wigan I played for the Lancashire Academy side against Yorkshire and Cumbria, really great games which I enjoyed. Unfortunately it was then I suffered a fairly serious injury and was advised to quit playing.

Q. Was that very disappointing for you?

Yes I was upset, but you have to take it on the chin. But then, after talking to various people and having spent a year out of the game, I decided to seek a second opinion, and it worked. I was given the opportunity to play in the South of France, where I played at Cannes. There were a few Aussies there and the lifestyle was great. I played injury-free for six months and came back to St Helens where I played in the 'A' team for two years; it was good to be back.

Q. Were there any players you admired when growing up?

Oh yes, Mal Meninga was a firm favourite; he seemed huge to me and was a superb player. Paul Newlove I have always admired for his strength and speed and good tackling. But I think the toughest player I've ever played against must be Keiron Cunningham; he really is hard, strong and very, very capable.

Q. Where do you think your professional career goes from here?

Having come to Oldham from Saints it feels good to be part of a professional set up. Mike Ford has a great squad of players, he goes into details and has a deep knowledge of the game. Personally I would love to get to the Grand Final with Oldham. It's a challenge which I relish and I think with our spirit and the fantastic support we get . . . well, let's keep our fingers crossed.

Q. Do you get 'any' time to relax?

Not a lot, but I do enjoy an odd night out with my mates, and a meal out with my brother Scott who plays union for Worcester, and I enjoy spending time with my family – without a Mum and Dad like mine I just couldn't have made it at all.



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DEALERS

Iwa Slateloose



THIS married couple had her brother-in-law living with them for about five years. So Sam said to Sarah, "We've got to get rid of your brother-in-law Joe. At dinner tonight I'll say 'the soup is hot', you say 'the soup is cold', and if he agrees with me, I'll throw him out, and if he agrees with you, then you throw him out.

At dinner that night Sam said to Joe, "Is the soup hot or cold?" and Joe said 'I'm not answering, I'm staying five more years.'

✱

She: When I was young we used to put on our own circus.

He: You used to put on your own circus?

She: Oh, yes. Uncle Otis was the strong man. He'd come out in a leopard skin and put six inch nails in his mouth and twist them between his teeth till they'd bend.

He: That's quite a trick.

She: Oh, yes, but he looked pretty ridiculous walking round with all those bent teeth.

✱

She: You look pretty miserable: what's up?

He: My wife's left me.

She: Your wife's left you?

He: Yes, three days ago she went out for a bottle of milk and she hasn't come back.

She: Well, how are you managing?

He: Oh, I'm using that powdered stuff.

✱

Just because you're old doesn't mean you're more forgetful. The same people whose names I can't remember now I couldn't remember forty years ago.

✱

Manny: "I love good music. I'm always at the opera. I've seen Carmen seventeen times: I know it by heart."

Heimy: "You know Carmen by heart? How does it go?"

Manny: "Good"

✱

This psychiatrist said: "I can cure anybody. I once cured a man who thought he was a rabbit. Of course, I have to admit by then he

and his wife had seventy eight children.

✱

She: "Do you want to know about my brother?"

He: "No, I don't want to talk about your brother".

She: He's an undercover agent."

He: Your brother's an undercover agent? Is he in in the secret service

She: No, he knows about it."

✱

I found this hat on Blackpool beach. When I lifted it up there was a head underneath. So I said to this man, 'what are you doing there?' And he said 'I got caught by the tide when it came in and I was buried up to my neck in the sand. Can you get me out?' So I said, "I'll go and get a shovel". And he said 'better make it a big one I'm on a donkey'.

✱

A man went for a job as a lumberjack. The foreman said, 'you'd better show us what you can do.' So the man goes out to the wood, climbs up the nearest tree, axe in hand and proceeds to work his way down chopping as he goes. When he gets to the bottom all that's left is a neat pile of logs. The foreman says, 'blinking heck, that's good. Where have you worked before?' The man replies, 'the Sahara Desert'. 'The Sahara Desert?', says the foreman, 'but there aren't any trees in the Sahara Desert. "I know says the man, 'I told you I was good'.

✱

A man went in a pub. He sees another chap with a big Alsatian dog. So he says to the dog owner, "I'll bet you fifty pounds I can make your dog obey me". 'Don't be daft', says the owner, 'my dog only responds to me'. The first man insists, so the dog owner thinks, 'I'm onto an easy fifty quid here'. 'Go on then,' he says, 'let's see you'. And the first man gets hold of the dog, throws it on the fire and shouts, 'Get off!'.

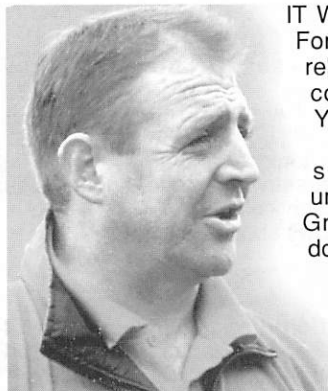
✱

With apologies to George Burns and others.

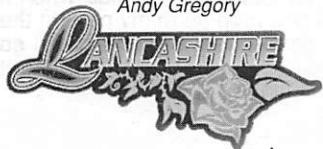


Guest Writer

... *The Independent Dave Hadfield*



Andy Gregory

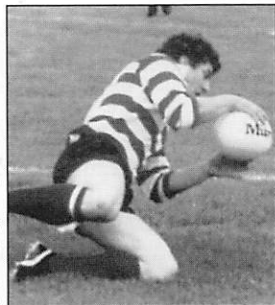


IT WILL not have escaped anyone's notice in Oldham that Mike Ford has been rewarded for the sterling work he has done in rebuilding this club by being named as Lancashire's assistant coach for the revamped, rebranded Origin Match against Yorkshire in June.

There are those - me included - who would not have been surprised to see him get the main job, but it is perhaps understandable that those have gone to two coaches - Andy Gregory and Lee Crooks - who will not be involved in the dogfight for NFP play-off places around that time.

All the same, Fordy has got his foot on the representative ladder and has clearly been identified as one of the bright young British coaches who deserve to be nurtured through appointments like this.

It was another man with strong Oldham connections, Ray Ashton, who last coached Lancashire, immediately before the War of the Roses fixture died of embarrassment and neglect.



Ray Ashton

Much as it pains me as a Lancastrian to admit this, that demise was 99 per cent Lancashire's fault. The other mob, under that prototypical Yorkshireman Peter Fox, always took it seriously enough. It was our blokes who ruined it, with the late pull-outs and the lack of application that eventually discredited the concept.

It should be different this time. For one thing, this one will be a Test trial, in which a big performance from a fringe player will have a definite impact when the time comes to select a team to face Australia.

For another, players starved of representative football for almost a decade are hungry for something like this. Both Super League and the RFL are solidly behind it and there should be - touch wood - no fiascos over non-availability to undermine it.

On the face of it, the Red Rose starts as favourite - especially when exiles like Iestyn Harris and Kevin Sinfield are dragged back across the Pennines to line up alongside fellow Oldham lad Paul Sculthorpe.

But I seem to remember similar assumptions being made last time around. What really matters is that it should be a fiercely competitive affair, with no room for doubt about players' commitment.

It won't be State of Origin straight away, that's for sure, but it will be no vicarage tea-party either. And, whilst I will be maintaining my usual impartiality on June 5, I hope Mike Ford is in the winning dressing room at Headingley that night.



Lee Crooks



**DAVE HADFIELD
THE INDEPENDENT**

BACKROOM STAFF – PHYSIOTHERAPIST DANNI TURNER

Age: 24

Job at Club?

I am the Physiotherapist for both the Alliance and Academy teams. I have been here for one year. Jodie Whittle was asked to do the job and she asked me to come along. I also help Lisa Sherratt (our first team physio) with re-hab.

Do you enjoy watching the game?

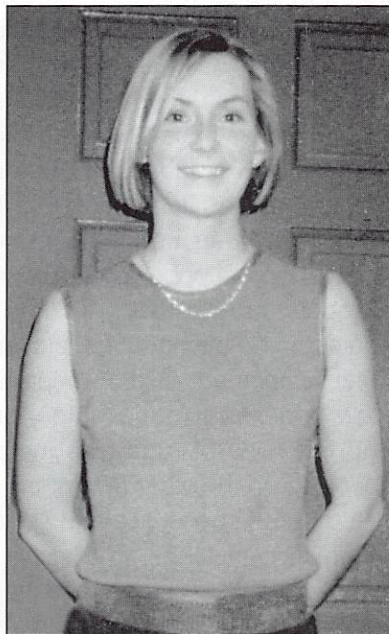
Its hard to watch a game, I have to watch out for players getting injured and get on to the pitch as fast as possible.

What is the hardest part of the job?

Trying to do the strapping on the coach.

What gives the most satisfaction?

I love to see players getting back to match fitness as quickly as possible.



What's the worst injury you have dealt with?

Head injuries are the worst, but one amusing thing that happened during a game was one of the players went down in agony and when I got to him he said he was okay and the pain was through food poisoning (doner kebabs?)

Is it true that Mike Ford and John Henderson are the tightest men in the world?

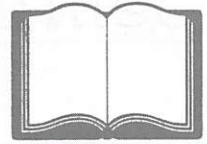
I can't say its true about Mike: he always pays his way, but John is as tight as they come. We had a bet on a game last week, I won and the stake was only a drink . . . I'm still waiting!

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NEXT July a party of young players from this region will be jetting out on the journey of a lifetime visiting Fiji, New Zealand and Australia. This tour is the fourth such trip undertaken by the North West counties under-16s since 1990 and will provide valuable experience, both on and off the pitch, for the 42 players as well as their coaches, managers, medical and support staff. It is not only an opportunity to test skills and tactics against international class players from other nations but also an opportunity to view first hand the facilities, cultures and lifestyles of rugby league playing countries on the other side of the globe.

The tour spans July and August and will involve matches against Fiji under-16s, Auckland under-16s and the district league teams of Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Maryborough, the Gold Coast and Ipswich as well as the development teams of Australian Super League clubs Penrith and Parramatta.

Four youngsters from the Oldham area have been selected to tour. They are the Waterhead scrum-half Ryan Collins and three players from Royton Tigers, centre or second-row forward Michael Rowe, stand-off or loose-forward Brad Tindall and second-row forward Wayne Corcoran.

The tour manager for this massive undertaking is Steve Bithel, founder of the Royton Tigers club and a vastly experienced official. Waterhead youth coach Gary Highton is the team manager with overall responsibility for

all rugby matters whilst also accompanying the party will be the Oldham Chronicle rugby league correspondent Roger Halstead who is the tour press officer. With such superb coverage of the local amateur game in the 'Chron' each week we should have no difficulty following the tour via the sports pages of the local evening rag.

The overall cost of the venture amounts to around £175,000 and with the tour receiving no funding from either the National Lottery or the Rugby Football League each tourist, including all officials, will have had to raise in the region of £3,500. Fund raising has been going on for almost two years with bucket collections, dinners, charity evenings, individual donations and a players lottery which the parents and relatives of all the youngsters have subscribed to.

Officials are confident that the required sum will eventually be raised but there is still some way to go so should anyone wish to make a donation, no matter how big or small, or if someone has an idea or is willing to promote a fund raising activity, they should contact **Steve Bithel on 0161-678-6047** or contact any local amateur club.

Remember these boys are the internationals of the future and they could be helping the Roughyeds to bring further honours to the town one day.

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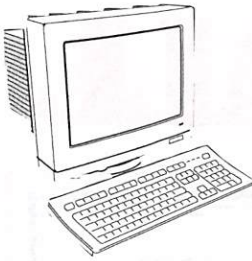
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Stay on this road (approx 2 miles) and you will reach a large junction/traffic light system. Go straight ahead at lights, but try to be in right hand lane. Ignore the sharp right hand turn, signpost for Town Centre. About 200 yards past lights, the road splits in two. Take right hand fork, signpost for Stadium, and after passing through traffic lights, follow road round to the right. At traffic light controlled crossroads go straight ahead and in about 150 yards take 2nd exit at roundabout. Almost immediately go straight ahead at a mini roundabout into Lowerhouse Lane, Stadium is about 200 yards on right. The Stadium car park is restricted to permit holders but there is a free council car park on Caldwell Road (turn right into Milton Road just before the stadium then second right) and there is also plenty of on-street parking in the vicinity.

Admission to the North & West Stands is £9 (Adults), £5 (Senior Citizens) and £1 (under 16s). To the South Stand £10 (Adults), £5 (Senior Citizens) and £1 (under 16s). The stadium is an all-seater. Adults PAY CASH at turnstiles, Senior Citizens and Juniors need to buy a TICKET from one of two booths at either end of the North Stand or from the Club Shop situated in the Stadium car park.



WINNARDS

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... with Simon Winnard

OLDHAM's recent form leading up to today's crucial derby game has been somewhat erratic and yet we still find ourselves in the top four and on course to play a crucial part in the play off picture come the end of season. In contrast to this, Rochdale visit Boundary Park fresh on the back of a record 98-0 hammering of York last week. That result re-wrote the record books for both the club and the Northern Ford Premiership and they too will be increasingly confident of making a play off challenge.

Prior to last week's game Martin Hall's men have claimed some noticeable scalps and made a couple of useful additions to a squad which pushed the Roughyeds all the way in the teams' first encounter at the excellent Spotland Stadium on Christmas Eve.

There is no doubting that Oldham's defence has significantly improved this year but had been placed under undue pressure far too often due to a lack of consistency with the ball in our hands. We have looked far too flat on attack and, following the awful displays against Whitehaven and at Featherstone, Fordy decided to ring the changes. There is no doubting that they will need to perform at their best to come out on top in this game and should be fired up for a cracker.

Fordy has faith that the current squad of players are capable of making a challenge for a Grand Final appearance. However I'm not convinced. I have no doubt that we will be there or thereabouts come the end of the season but I feel we lack a cutting edge which can be seen as the defining characteristic between a good NFP side and a potential champion side.

There is no shortage of honest endeavour and commitment to the cause. However, I feel that we are short in one or two key areas. In my opinion, we are in need of a ball playing loose forward, a go forward centre who can break a tackle and another impact player at second row/prop to share the workload of Casey, Clegg and Proctor.

This last week or so has seen two significant pieces of news for the Roughyed faithful. The first was that Fordy has put forward Phil Farrell, Neil Roden, Gavin Dodd, Gareth

Barber and Lee Doran for consideration at GB under 21 level. These players will form the basis of any SL challenge which will take place during Fordy's next three and a half year tenure.

Phil Farrell has been simply magnificent for Oldham. His work rate is phenomenal and, of all the candidates for International recognition, he will have the best case. Roden won't be too far behind him whilst the likes of Dodd, Doran and Barber undoubtedly hold the promise but still have some way to go. This augers well for the future and, in addition to the fantastic work being done at youth level behind the scenes by the likes of Jacko, Hadyn Walker and Mark Knight, it all points to the long term success of the club.

The second announcement was that the old War of the Roses clash has been officially revived. Yorkshire will play Lancashire in British Rugby League's inaugural Origin Game on the 5th June at Headingley.

Whilst the Yorkshire team will be coached by Lee Crooks and Peter Roe, Lancashire's challenge will be plotted by Andy Gregory and our very own Mike Ford. The game is intended to provide a viable trial for players hoping to be selected in their national squads for the next series of representative fixtures which will be played on the following dates: Ireland 11th June, Scotland 18th June, England and Wales 25th June 2001.

Commenting on the announcement, the Rugby Football League's Executive Director of Rugby Greg McCallum said, "The Origin game is an important stepping stone between potential and performance and it gives players a chance to go beyond club football into representative football. We are keen for this match and the other representative fixtures to play their part in developing our elite payers for internationals. The match will also serve to enhance and develop Rugby League's image in the UK alongside our vibrant club competitions and the international teams. Some would say Yorkshire v Lancashire is Rugby League's oldest rivalry and I can't wait to see the two adversaries meet head on."



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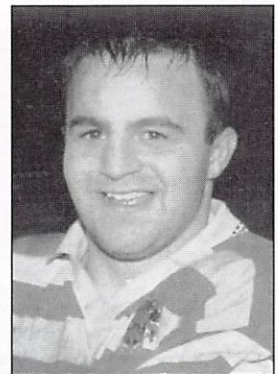
Don Yates looks back to April 13th yesteryear

THIS afternoon local rivals Rochdale Hornets make the short journey up the M627 to Boundary Park. Ninety-four years ago, on Saturday 13th April 1907, it was the Roughyeds who were making the short journey to Rochdale, although in those days the route was not the M627 to Spotland but Shaw Road, Rochdale Road and then Milnrow Road to the Athletic Grounds. Oldham's visit to Rochdale was not for a league encounter but for a Challenge Cup semi-final tie against Salford, a tie which attracted a crowd of 16,000 to Rochdale's old stadium. The Roughyeds were seeking their thirteenth consecutive victory but the superstitious members of the squad need not have worried for their luck lasted as they defeated Salford 6-0 with tries from winger Tom White and second-row forward Bert 'Slosher' Avery. Unfortunately Oldham lost their next two matches, the Championship Final against Halifax and then the Cup Final against Warrington. The Athletic Grounds, now sadly redeveloped as a supermarket, has been the scene of many big sporting occasions. Sixty-one years ago, on Saturday 13th April 1940, it was the scene of the longest recorded successful goal kick. The occasion was the second leg of a wartime Lancashire Cup semi-final tie between Rochdale Hornets and Swinton. Hornets, eight points behind from the first leg, chose to play with a stiff breeze behind them in the first half and quickly reduced the arrears with a converted try. Swinton held out and then went 7-5 in front during a rather over vigorous second half. Late in the match a flare up occurred out on the wing close to the Swinton 25 yard line. As a result Rochdale scrum-half Freddie Lamb, an Oldhamer signed from the Clarksfield junior club, was sent off and a penalty awarded to Swinton. The Lions' skipper, second-row forward Martin Hodgson decided to take a kick at goal mainly to allow tempers to cool and waste a little time. Despite the fact that Hodgson was a prolific marksman with a powerful boot, the attempt seemed foolhardy even with the stiff breeze to aid him. Remarkably Hodgson landed the goal to

extend Swinton's lead to 9-5 and his effort was later measured and found to be 77 3/4 yards from kick to posts. A truly amazing score.

It was on this day in 1986, Sunday 13th April, that the BARLA open age squad met France 'B' over at Thrum Hall, Halifax. The British amateurs began well and at half-time led 2-0 thanks to a penalty from Willie Richardson of Egremont Rangers. After the break the more powerful French, selected from professional personnel, made their speed and strength count, and went on to win 12-2. At prop-forward in the British line-up that afternoon was Mick Hough, the Waterhead stalwart who was a regular member of the international squad for many years. Also included in the British squad were second-rower Tony Humphries (Crosfields) and substitute Mark Meadows (Folly Lane), two forwards who enjoyed spells with Rochdale Hornets during successful professional careers. Easter Monday, 13th April 1998, was a significant day in the career of back-row forward Ian Sinfield. The former Waterhead junior, signed by the Roughyeds from Salford, made his debut for Oldham that afternoon up at Workington. It was a winning debut for the hard working forward as the

Roughyeds pulled off an encouraging 22-18 victory. Also included in the Oldham line-up that day three years ago were four players who will now be hoping for a Rochdale victory after teaming up with the Hornets. They are centre Sean Cooper, scrum-half Neil Flanagan, now



Neil Flanagan

assistant coach at Spotland, loose-forward Mick Martindale and substitute Darren Robinson who has successfully switched from stand-off to hooker.

Fixtures

Date Opponent Result Att

DECEMBER

| | | | |
|----|------------|--------|-------------|
| 3 | Barrow | F - A | 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 | 24 - 16 | 1,503 |
| 25 | Featherstone | 22 - 8 | 1,966 |
| 28 | HUNSLET | 58 - 4 | 1,038 |

APRIL

| | | | |
|----|----------|--------|-------|
| 1 | York | 70 - 6 | 514 |
| 8 | BATLEY | 26 - 8 | 1,598 |
| 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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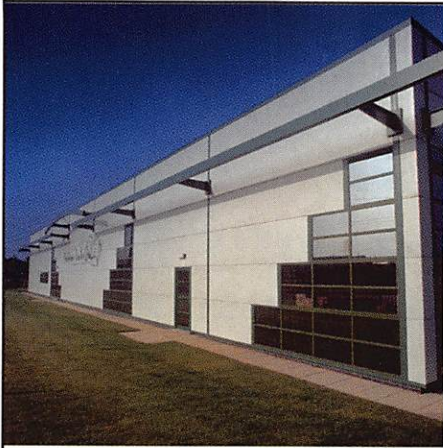
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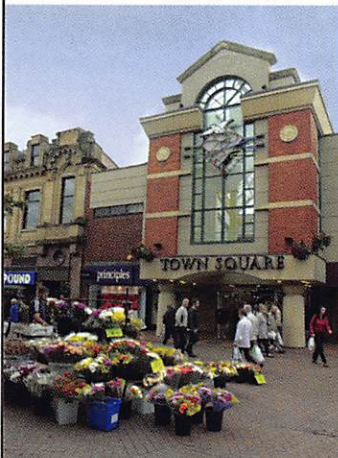
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