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AUTO QUEST
STADIUM

Widnes Vikings v Oldham

Northern Ford Premiership, Monday 16 April 2001, Kick Off 3.00pm
Official Matchday Magazine £1.50



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WIDNES VIKINGS

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S Evans, A Harris (Deputy Chairmen),

T W Fleet (Managing Director),

E Bate, R Brown, J A Hodgson,

J Mills, A Murray,

J H Quinn, F Vowles.

General Manager: **Harold Lynskey**

Football Secretary: **Frank Myler**

Head Coach:

Assistant Coach: **John Foran**

Alliance Coach: **George Mann**

Hon. Surgeon: **Mr P Rostron**

Club Doctors: **Dr G Tandy**

& Dr P Stockton

Physiotherapists:

K Fisher & D Vose

Hon Dental Surgeon:

Mr I Hawley

P.A. Announcer: **Chris Moore**

TELEPHONE:

General: **0151- 495 2250**

Club Shop: **0151-420 0054**

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Widnes Vikings Matchday Programme

Designed and Produced by Tobin Design and Steve Fox

Edited by Steve Fox. Editorial by Chris Westwood, Colin Pheysey,

Rod Steele, Andrew Kirchin. Photography by Ron Sutton,

Sportphoto, Stuart Bogg, League Express, Rugby Leaguer

Views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editor or Widnes Vikings RLFC

CLUB HONOURS

Rugby League Champions

1977-78, 1987-88, 1988-89

Challenge Cup Winners

1930, 1937, 1964, 1975, 1979,

1981, 1984

Lancashire League Winners

1919-20

Lancashire Cup Winners

1945, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1978,

1979, 1991

John Player Trophy Winners

1976, 1979, 1992

Premiership Winners

1980, 1982, 1983,

1988, 1989, 1990

Floodlit Trophy Winners 1978

Charity Shield Winners

1988, 1989, 1990

European & World Club Champions 1989

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MATCH

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KELLY'S EYE... Vikings Head Coach Neil Kelly comments

Note - due to printing deadlines for the Easter period, this interview took place early last week, prior to the signing of Sean Richardson.

Q. What sort of gameplan did you put in place for the Dewsbury game, given the heavy pitch and rainy weather?

A. In those circumstances it was never going to be a free flowing game like the Hunslet one, so we tried to concentrate on ball control, good kicking and a good chase. Poor conditions emphasise the basics of the game and I thought the players understood that and got their rewards.

Q. The defence was very impressive, wasn't it, especially in the last quarter?

A. Well defence was one of the things we have been working on and the team have responded well. In those two games, Hunslet and Dewsbury, we only conceded two tries and both of those were from kicks, so we can be pleased with that. The crucial thing is that the spirit was there, as it was in the two previous games - any technical adjustments only matter if the players have that will to win.

Q. Did you set the players any sort of target coming into this run of tough games?

A. Prior to the Dewsbury game I gave them a target of winning two from three. By the time people read this they will know how we have got on against Leigh but even if we slipped up there, then

we still have a chance to meet that goal with a win against Oldham.

Q. It's the same for both sides, but what special problems does a second game in four days bring?

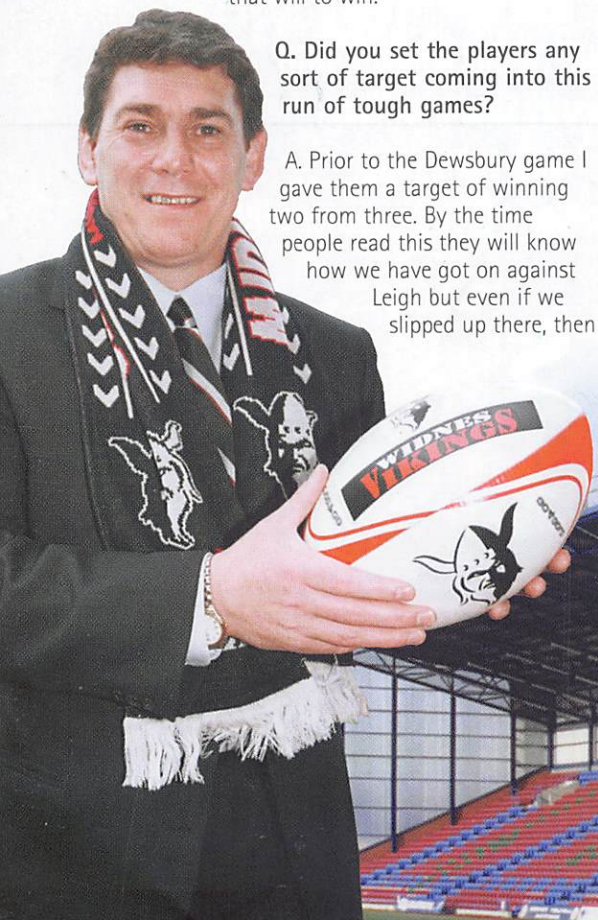
A. The obvious one is the lack of recovery time from any knocks and bumps, and also if a player is on the treatment table then he can't be on the training field, so preparation is affected. We had the one training session scheduled, on Sunday, but of course that's nowhere near the same sort of time you would have to prepare in a normal week. Times like this show the value of having a strong squad.

Q. Talking of which - what can you tell us about the three players you brought in prior to the Hunslet match?

A. I think his performance at Dewsbury showed why we signed Paul Atcheson - he has a lot to offer in defence and attack - although he is still working back up to full match fitness. Matt Long grabbed a couple of tries on his debut and then showed the value of a big forward in the mud at Rams Stadium. Richard Agar hasn't had a chance to show the fans what he can do yet as he is just easing his way back after a hand injury, but he will be an asset to the squad.

Q. And what of the players who have left?

A. I was honest with Paul Cook and told him that the signing of Paul Atcheson meant his first team opportunities would be limited and so he asked to be released from his contract, which we agreed to. Kevin Crouthers departure to Dewsbury was tied in with the signings of Matthew and Richard.



VIKING NEWSLINES

AWAY TRAVEL

WHITEHAVEN 6 MAY, 3PM

BY CAR: M6 - take junction 40, A66 signposted Keswick. After passing Keswick and Cockermouth, turn left onto A595. Stay on the A595, pass first junction with A5094. Turn right at traffic lights into A5094 (Inkerman Terrace), left into Coach Road, and the ground is on the left.

BY COACH: As always there will be a Supporters Club coach. To book, see Alan Rae either at half time today by the South Stand bar, at his Sunningdale Avenue Shop, or by calling 0151 424 2524.

TODAY'S SPONSORS

BIG MATCH HOST: Sam Evans & Sons. Iron & Steel merchants - Demolition & Dismantling Contractors. Tel. 0151 424 3944.

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Many thanks to Alive & Nippin' and Spekehall Vauxhall who have booked their respective sponsorships for the entire season.

ALLIANCE

Our Alliance side were due to play last Saturday, 14 April, against Whitehaven although of course the result is not known at the time of this programme going to press. There is more Cumbrian opposition at the

AutoQuest next Saturday (21 April) as the lads take on Workington, kick off 2.30pm. Other forthcoming fixtures: 26 April Oldham (A), 10 May Rochdale (A).

SPONSORSHIP

There is a Man of the Match sponsorship package still available for the fixture with Gateshead later in the year - if you would like further information on this, please speak to Harold Lynskey on 0151 420 0054.

BALLOON RACE

The balloon race taking place today has been organised by the Widnes Vikings Supporters Club. Proceeds will be divided equally between club funds and Peter Smith's Testimonial. The organisers would like to thank AIR PRODUCTS for their kind sponsorship and welcome their representatives to today's game. The balloons are being released by the children of Weston Point CP School Runcorn. The children are currently taking part in the Sportsmatch Scheme and would like to thank John Foran for all his work with them.

OTHER EASTER GAMES

Chorley	v	Whitehaven
Doncaster	v	Featherstone
Gateshead	v	Dewsbury
Hull KR	v	Keighley
Rochdale	v	Sheffield (Tuesday)
Swinton	v	Leigh (Sunday)
Workington	v	Barrow
York	v	Batley

WALLY LEWIS IS COMING!

*Sportsmans Dinner, 26 April
at the AutoQuest Stadium*

Guest speaker:

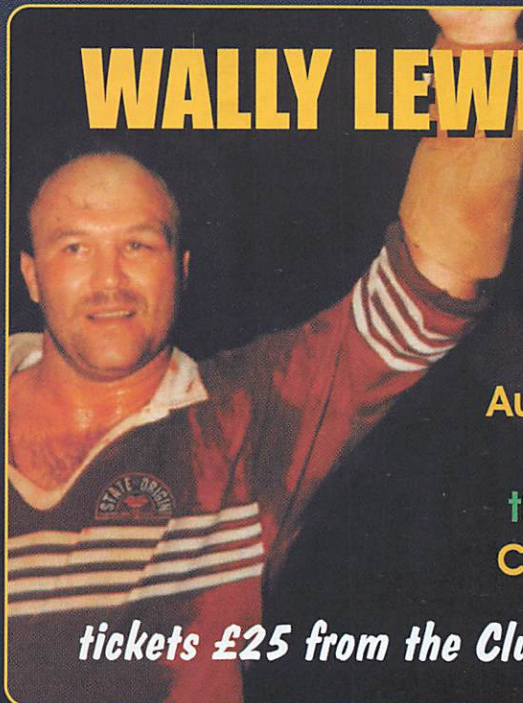
Aussie Test legend Wally Lewis

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WIDNES
VIKINGS



MARK SIBSON

Former Loughborough student who has had spells at Castleford and Bramley. Very elusive runner from full back, capable of scoring from long range.

JOEY HAYES

A firm favourite with the Oldham crowd. This former Super League star with St Helens and Salford is always likely to get on the score sheet.

ANTHONY GIBBONS

Former Leeds and Bramley player with a good step off either foot. Also one of the best defensive centres in the NFP.

PAT RICH

Geordie Law graduate who was previously with Keighley. A very reliable goal kicker, he represented England students in the Student World Cup Final.

DANNY ARNOLD

Another player with Super League experience playing at St Helens and Huddersfield. A prolific try scorer who can play wing, centre or full back. Played his junior rugby at Lunts Heath Lions in Widnes.

DAVE GIBBONS

Twin brother of Anthony, he too played at Bramley and Leeds. Very pacey with an eye for an opening. He is an aggressive defender who also has a sound kicking game.

JASON CLEGG

A massive prop with deceptive agility. He gives the team a big go forward and a quick play the ball. Formerly with Bradford.

JOHN HOUGH

The re-formed club's first ever signing, this Oldham-born hooker was the club's player of the season last year. Very fast out of dummy half. He is a regular try scorer.

ANDY PROCTER

Club captain and a prop with a big work rate. Formerly with Wakefield and Bramley.

LEO CASEY

Now reaching the veteran stage. An Irish international prop with a wealth of experience. Former clubs include Rochdale Hornets and Featherstone.

DANNY GUEST

Huge young prop formerly with Keighley and Chorley. Has started to push through this season and big things are expected of him.

PHILLIP FARRELL

Second row who joined the club along with Neil Roden. Brother of England captain Andrew. He is probably the most exciting young second row in the NFP. A massive work rate and a great pair of hands.

PAUL NORTON

Signed in the off season from Chorley, 'Knocker' has been one of the club's most consistent performers. Very strong defender who can play prop or second row.

IAN SINFIELD

Oldham-born player, equally at home at loose forward or second row. An aggressive defender with pace running out wide.

KEVIN MANNION

Former student international player. A loose forward with a good pair of hands. Wigan born and another former Rochdale player.

GARETH BARBER

Young stand off born in Oldham and signed in the



oldham roughyeds

pass notes

club founded: 1876 *ground:* Boundary Park

coach: Mike Ford

first major trophy: RL Challenge Cup 1898/99

last major trophy: Lancashire Cup 1958/59

honours: RL Cup 3, Championship 4, County Cup 9

first player capped for GB: T Llewellyn, A Smith 1908

last player capped for GB: Hugh Waddell 1988

record win: 70-6 at York, 1/4/2001

record defeat: 0-84 at Widnes, 25/7/1999

tries in a game: 7, James Miller, 3/10/1908

goals in a game: 14, Bernard Ganley, 4/4/1959

points in a game: 30, Abe Johnson, 9/4/1928

record attendance: 28,000 v Huddersfield, 24/2/1912

summer from Warrington. A player with huge potential, he has already played a number of first team games.

DARYL LACEY

Young winger or full back signed in the summer from Wigan. A player with plenty of pace and a safe pair of hands.

DEAN CROSS

Former Widnes wing or centre with great pace. A regular try scorer.

CHRIS FARRELL

Twin brother of Phil and another summer signing from Wigan. A loose forward with great vision.

GAVIN DODD

Young full back or winger and a former student international. A very elusive runner with great pace.

LEE DORAN

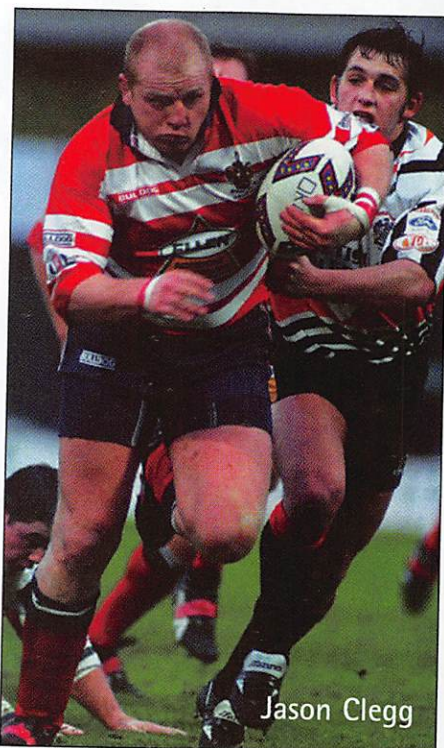
Teenage prop who has been starring in the club's alliance team. A very exciting prospect.

KEITH BRENNAN

Reserve team scrum half coming back after a serious knee injury. Expected to push through strongly for a first team pace when he's back to full fitness.

WARREN BARROW

Big winger signed from St Helens. A regular try scorer last season and strong finisher.



Jason Clegg

STADIUM NOTICES

Safety Information

Spectators should note that at each Vikings home game, medical resources are on hand to deal with any injury or sudden illness within the Stadium. The location of the first aid room is near to the South East Concourse bar area and is manned by the Red Cross. Red Cross personnel are also located at the north-east corner disabled area. Medical resources can be contacted via any safety steward or any staff behind the concourse bars.

Spectators using the South Stadium (main) should enter via the appropriate turnstile for the end where they wish to be seated. There are no crossover facilities between the south-west (social club turnstile end) and the south-east seating areas (Naughton Road and shop corner turnstiles, or vice versa).

For the comfort and enjoyment of all other spectators, please remain seated whilst watching the match. Alcohol must not be taken into or consumed in the seated viewing area.

The use of racist or obscene language often causes offence or distress to others and can lead to police arrest or ejection by stewards. Such language or behaviour is strongly condemned jointly by Halton Borough Council, the Rugby Football League and Widnes RLFC.

Drivers of vehicles possessing match day car parking passes are advised that there may be a short delay at the end of the match in releasing traffic from the car park into Lowerhouse Lane. This is to facilitate the safe departure of pedestrian spectators away from the ground.

Your co-operation in these matters would be appreciated.

The Auto Quest Stadium Ground Rules and Regulations

1. You must not invade the playing area.
2. Cans, bottles, klaxon horns, fireworks, dogs and dangerous articles must not be brought into the stadium.
3. You must not use racist, obscene or offensive language.
4. You must not throw any missile, object or article onto the pitch.
5. You must not behave in a manner which disrupts the comfort, enjoyment or safety of others.
6. Persons seeking admission may be required to submit to a search so as to uphold these regulations.
7. The club reserves the right for its servants/agents/police to remove from the ground any person contravening these regulations.
8. Strictly no alcohol may be brought through the turnstiles or consumed in the seated viewing areas during match events.

BEST OLDHAM TEAM OF PAST 20 YEARS

As selected by Brian Walker

1. Paul Atcheson

2. Joey Hayes 3. Mick Parrish 4. Des Foy 5. Nigel Heslop

6. Tommy Martyn 7. Mike Ford

8. Barrie McDermott 9. John Hough 10. Andy Goodway

11. Chris Joynt 12. Bob Lindner

13. Terry Flanagan

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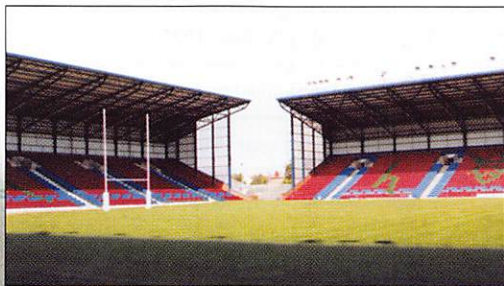
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Vikings Quiz sponsored by *Spekehall Vauxhall*

1. Who is the only one of the following Vikings players who didn't play for Oldham Bears in Super League?
Paul Atcheson, Joe Faimalo, Damian Munro, Martin Crompton, Peter Smith?
2. Which former Oldham player appeared in Widnes' 1981 Challenge Cup final win over Hull KR?
3. Which two former Widnes players made appearances in the Oldham first team during 2000?
4. Here's one to test the memory banks - when we beat Oldham by our then record score of 84-0 in 1999 the half time score was 48-0. However in our game the following week against Leigh the interval score was somewhat different. But what was it?

Answers on William Boot page

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WIDNES VIKINGS ²⁰⁰¹ factfile

	V	K.O	Result	(H-T)	Referee	Pens.	Att.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
DECEMBER 2000																									
3	WHITEHAVEN	H	3.00	W22-14	(8-2)	N Oddy	11-6	3,864	MunroT	CoussonsT	Percival	MartinT	ForsterT	HammondG	Birdseye	Knox	Cantillon	Holgate	Faimalo	McKinney	Hodgkinson	Crompton	Rhodes	DemetriouT	Gee
10	Rochdale	A	3.00	W24-14	(12-14)	P Lee	3-5	1,547	Munro	CoussonsT	Percival	MartinT	Forster	Hammond4G	CromptonT	Knox	CantillonT	Holgate	Faimalo	McKinney	Hodgkinson	Hill	Rhodes	Demetriou	Gee
26	LEIGH	H	3.00	L20-25	(6-9)	S Nicholson	8-7	6,644	Munro	CoussonsT	PercivalT	Martin	Forster	Demetriou	Crompton	Knox	Cantillon	Holgate	Faimalo	McKinney	Hodgkinson	Jones2G	Rhodes	GeeT	ArgentT
JANUARY 2001																									
1	Oldham	A	3.00	L12-20	(8-11)	R Silverwood	5-6	3,471	MunroT	CoussonsT	Percival	Kilgannon	Forster	Demetriou	CromptonT	Knox	Cantillon	Rhodes	Faimalo	McKinney	Hodgkinson	(Jones)	Holgate	Hill	Argent
7	WORKINGTON	H	3.00	W26-16	(16-16)	P Taberner	5-2	3,312	Munro2T	Coussons	Demetriou	Flanagan	ForsterT	Crompton	WatsonG	Rhodes	CantillonT	HolgateT	Faimalo	McKinneyT	Hodgkinson	Hammond	Gee	Percival	Shea
25	SWINTON	H	7.30	W16-8	(2-6)	S Nicholson	11-5	3,004	MunroT	Coussons	Percival	Demetriou	Forster	Hammond	Watson4G	Argent	CantillonT	Holgate	Faimalo	Shea	Crompton	Gee	Rhodes	Knox	McKinney
28	WIGAN ST PAT'S CC3	H	3.00	W70-2	(38-2)	R Silverwood	5-3	2,465	Munro2T	CoussonsT	Percival3T	Demetriou	JonesT	Hammond	Watson9G	Knox	Cantillon4T	Holgate	GeeT	McKinney	Crompton	Forster	Rhodes	Hodgkinson	FaimaloT
FEBRUARY																									
4	Barrow	A	3.00	D6-6	(0-2)	C Morris	11-5	1,116	Munro	Coussons	PercivalT	Demetriou	Jones	Crompton	WatsonG	Knox	Cantillon	Rhodes	Gee	Faimalo	Hodgkinson	Forster	Hill	(Flanagan)	McKinney
11	Bradford CC3	A	3.00	L10-54	(4-32)	I Smith	4-6	7,760	Munro	Coussons	Percival	Demetriou	Jones	CromptonT	WatsonG	Rhodes	Cantillon	Faimalo	Gee	McKinney	HodgkinsonT	Forster	Hill	Hammond	Argent
18	YORK	H	3.00	W90-6	(42-6)	R Loughton	5-2	2,941	MunroT	CoussonsT	PercivalT	DemetriouT	Jones	Crompton	Watson13G	Knox	Cantillon7T	Rhodes	Gee2T	Hodgkinson	HammondT	ForsterT	HillT	Foran	Argent
25	Chorley	A	3.00	W48-14	(24-0)	P Lee	8-11	710	Jones	Coussons2T	MunroT	Demetriou2T	Forster	Crompton	Watson6G	Knox3T	Cantillon	Rhodes	Gee	Hodgkinson	Hammond	Foran	Mills	Hill	Argent
MARCH																									
7	Gateshead	A	7.30	W30-18	(20-0)	R Loughton	3-9	517	Jones	Coussons	Munro	DemetriouT	Forster	Crompton	Watson5G	KnoxT	CantillonT	Rhodes	Gee	Hodgkinson	HammondT	Cook	Hill	CrouthersT	Argent
11	Sheffield	A	3.15	L17-26	(12-4)	P Lee	8-4	1,560	Munro	Coussons	Crouthers	Demetriou	CookT	Crompton	Watson2G	Knox	Cantillon2T	Rhodes5/0	Gee	McKinney	Hodgkinson	Percival	Hill	HammondG	(Forster)
18	DONCASTER	H	3.00	L10-18	(10-6)	P Taberner	6-4	3,209	Munro	CoussonsT	Percival	Crouthers	CookG	Demetriou	Crompton	Knox	CantillonT	Rhodes	Gee	Faimalo	Hodgkinson	Hulme	Hill	Watson	(Forster)
25	KEIGHLEY	H	3.00	L19-22	(11-10)	S Nicholson	6-3	3,469	Cook	Coussons	Percival	Crouthers	Forster	Demetriou	Watson3G,dg	Knox	CantillonT	Holgate2T	Hodgkinson	Faimalo	Crompton	Munro	McKinney	(Hill)	Gee
APRIL																									
1	HUNSLET	H	3.00	W64-4	(16-0)	C Morris	5-1	3,253	AtchesonT	CoussonsT	Percival	Demetriou2T	Forster	CromptonT	Watson6G	KnoxT	Cantillon2T	Holgate	Gee	Faimalo	Hodgkinson	Munro2T	Rhodes	Agar2G	Long2T
7	Dewsbury	A	2.00	W13-12	(13-6)	S Presley	8-8	2,135	Atcheson	Coussons	Percival	DemetriouT	Forster	Crompton	Watson2G,dg	Knox	CantillonT	Holgate	Gee	McKinney	Hodgkinson	Munro	Rhodes	Agar	Long
13	Leigh	A	3.00																						
16	OLDHAM	H	3.00																						
22	HULL KR	H	3.00																						
MAY																									
6	Whitehaven	A	3.00																						
9	GATESHEAD	H	7.30																						
13	ROCHDALE	H	3.00																						
20	FEATHERSTONE	H	3.00																						
27	Workington	A	3.00																						
JUNE																									
3	Swinton	A	3.00																						
6	Batley	A	7.30																						
10	CHORLEY	H	3.00																						
24	York	A	3.00																						
JULY																									
1	Hunslet	A	3.00																						



Brian Simpson MEP

Labour Member of the European Parliament
For Widnes and the North West of England



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WILLIAM BOOT

- A warm welcome back to the AutoQuest to Sean Richardson, who rejoined the club last week.



I was one of 1,200 people who saw his performance for Widnes against Keighley at Canal Street towards the end of the 1997 season. He was absolutely unstoppable that day, but sadly that was the afternoon when he suffered his bad

leg break. He did come back the next season, but probably too soon, and never quite recaptured that form.

But anyone who saw him tearing our defence to shreds at Dewsbury last week won't need telling that he is back to his best!

He even had the confidence to try to chip Paul Atcheson on one of his rampaging runs, which reminded me of a game at Wakefield in that 97 season. We needed to win to have any hope of avoiding relegation and we were pressing for the winning try in the closing stages. Twice Sean found himself with the ball in his hands on the last tackle and twice he put perfectly weighted grubbers into the in-goal, both times resulting in drop restarts by Trinity. Eventually the pressure told and we scored, in no small part due to the tactical kicking of one S. Richardson.

- Some people have funny ideas.

That win at Rams Stadium was a huge effort in difficult circumstances, and not helped by yet another mysterious forward pass decision which cancelled out what looked like a perfectly good try.

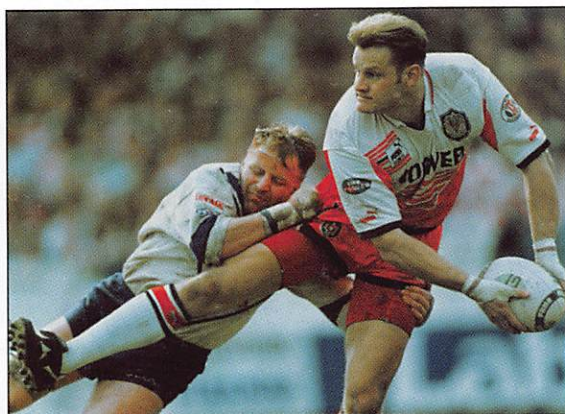
But coming out of the ground a Dewsbury fan was berating his Vikings counterparts with the words: "One point? Is that all you can beat us by?" Well I have news for him - one point is all it takes and I'll bet Neil Kelly and the lads will happily take a similar winning margin in every game between now and the end of July.

- Did I get hold of the wrong end of the stick?

I'm sure I heard a news story in midweek that megastar DJ Chris Evans was to marry Rochdale winger Marlon Billy.

- Patch is back!

Having welcomed one former Widnes player, let me add another - Paul Atcheson. When he was last here he faced competition for the fullback jersey from Alan Tait, Jonathan Davies and Stuart Spruce - quite a



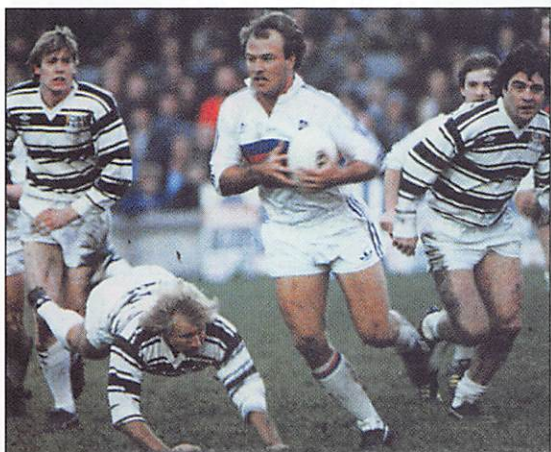
formidable trio to have to try and dislodge. Even so we didn't exactly do the best piece of business ever when we swapped Paul for David Myers from Wigan. But that was Phil Larder for you, a decent technical coach but not quite a Doug Laughton in the transfer market - Phil once tried to arrange a trade with Leigh, a young Karle Hammond for an old David Ruane. Thankfully the deal fell through and we later ended up receiving £100,000 from Saints for Karle. Getting back to Patch, he scored his first try for the club in December 1990 and his second just the other week. At that rate, one try every ten years, I reckon it will take him until the year 4331 to overtake Mal Aspey's Widnes career record of 234. I wonder if the Vikings medical staff are conversant

QUIZ ANSWER: 1. Damian Munro.
2. Brian Lockwood. 3. Wes Rogers and Dean Cross. 4. Widnes 1 Leigh 0.
JUNIOR QUIZ: 1. Rochdale Hornets. 2. Hull KR. 3. Sheffield Eagles. 4. Paul Atcheson

with cryogenics?

● As you may have seen elsewhere in the programme, 'Wally Lewis IS coming', as the guest speaker at a Sportsman's Dinner here on Thursday 26 April, with tickets price £25 available from the Club Shop.

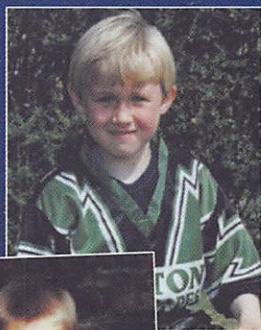
That phrase is one used as the title of a Wakefield Trinity fanzine, a club for whom the return of



The King was always a rumour but never quite a fact. I say 'return' because, of course, he played a ten game guest spell at the club in 1983. Those days seem a long way away for a number of reasons. For one the 'astronomical' fee that he was paid then of £1,000 per game would seem like chicken feed today to players who haven't got a fraction of his talent. It is also a reminder of the times when the very best of Aussie players came over here in their prime and not just to earn a few bob for their retirement fund. Indeed the picture, above, shows Wally in opposition to Peter Sterling, and we also saw the likes of Andrew Ettingshausen, Brett Kenny and Les Cleal (spot the odd one out!).



today's mascots



Today's mascots are Adam Lawton and Jonathan Hayes. Adam is seven years old and goes to Ditton Primary and he plays for Halton Hornets.



Jonathan is eight and goes to Moorfield Primary. Both lads name Phil Cantillon as their favourite player.

attention parents!

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We still have 'vacancies' for the home games with Hull KR, Gateshead, Chorley and Rochdale - for more details contact the Club Shop (0151 420 0054).

JUNIOR QUIZ

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2. **WHICH NFP CLUB IS NICKNAMED THE ROBINS?**
3. **WHO PLAYS AT DON VALLEY STADIUM?**
4. **REARRANGE THESE LETTERS TO GET THE NAME OF ONE OF OUR NEW SIGNINGS THIS SEASON:**
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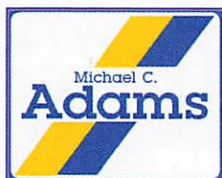


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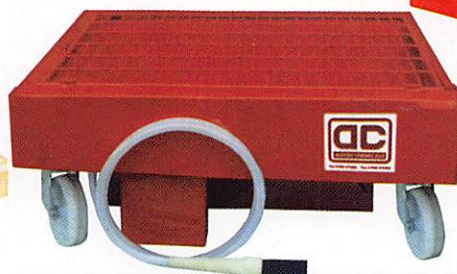


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“ I must have been the tallest hooker ever! ”

Q. When you took over at Dewsbury you were still playing at that stage – when did you hang up your boots?

A. Well it tailed off gradually and I finally played a couple of seasons ago, but they were just a handful of cameo appearances off the bench. You soon learn that a player coach is in an awkward position because your own performance has to be faultless or else you leave yourself open for criticism if you are picking up on the failings of others.

I envy the players now when they're running on to the pitch on match day but I wouldn't say I get frustrated as such by not being in the thick of things because if I'm doing my job properly during the week then I am helping to shape what happens on the field on Sunday.

Anyhow, I still have my Saturday football. I'm in an eleven-aside team called Torquay United Supporters Club along with my brother Andrew, in the Wakefield Et District League – the First Division – which doesn't say much for the standard of that Saturday which clashed with the Dewsbury fixture but I wasn't too disappointed at missing out because I was suspended anyway after an indiscretion a few weeks ago.

Q. Looking back on your playing career, rugby not soccer, how would you sum it up?

A. Well most young lads when they turn pro have dreams of cup finals and Test matches but I never managed to achieve those things, though I did play in some important games and against some great players. I'd like to think I'll be remembered by colleagues and opponents as a hard working, honest pro.

Q. Some of the press coverage when you came to Widnes described you as a hooker but I remember you as a loose forward. Which is right?

A. Well most of my pro career I was in the back row, more of a footballer than a power player because I still wasn't the bulkiest of forwards. But during my second spell at Dewsbury I wasn't getting a game and the coach at the time Maurice Bamford asked if I would fill in at hooker. I thought it would be a way of getting my foot in the door again but I ended up at number nine for five years! I must have been the tallest hooker ever, I used to hold the two props up.

Q. How did you come to take over the reins at Dewsbury?

A. I simply happened to be the person on the spot. Just before the first summer season the financial problems came to light, we lost coach Tony Fisher and most of the squad and I was put in charge and given a few weeks to assemble a side. Given that we had just finished bottom of the First Division in the Centenary Season anyway, winning only two games and most weeks getting thrashed, I think the fact that we finished eighth out of eleven and avoided relegation in my first season was as big an achievement as getting to the Grand Final, as we did a few years later.

Q. Had it always been your intention to get into coaching?

A. I think most coaches will tell you that they knew from quite early on in their playing careers that they wanted to coach at some stage and that was certainly the case with me. Even as a kid I had to think about things on the field a bit more because, as I said, I wasn't very tall so I had to achieve by scheming what other lads could do by sheer size, so maybe that was the start of it. But in my professional career I was always keen to talk to coaches and other players, to exchange ideas about the game.

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introducing *Neil Kelly*

Since his arrival at the AutoQuest a couple of weeks ago, a number of fans have asked us to provide some information about the background of our new coach. So Steve Fox grilled him about his life and career to date, and this is what he had to say...

Q. You were born in May 1962. Am I right in thinking you're from Wakefield?

A. Yes, and like a lot of lads born there around that time I was named after Neil Fox because Trinity won three of the four cups that year. There were six of us kids altogether - a good Catholic family! - and my dad used to take us to Belle

Vue. David Topliss was my favourite player in those days. Of my three brothers, two played Rugby League professionally, Andrew of course made a

name for himself at Wakefield and Hull KR.

Later he coached

Wakefield and, as most people will know, is at Gateshead now.

Richard played a while at Dewsbury and Trinity before drifting out of the game.

As a youngster I wasn't so big as my brothers so I tended to play halfback positions.

Q. When you turned professional in 1982 it was with Dewsbury. How did that come about?

A. Well I'd played all my junior rugby at Wakefield but when the time came they just didn't offer me terms and I was determined that I was going to play at that level so I accepted Dewsbury's offer.

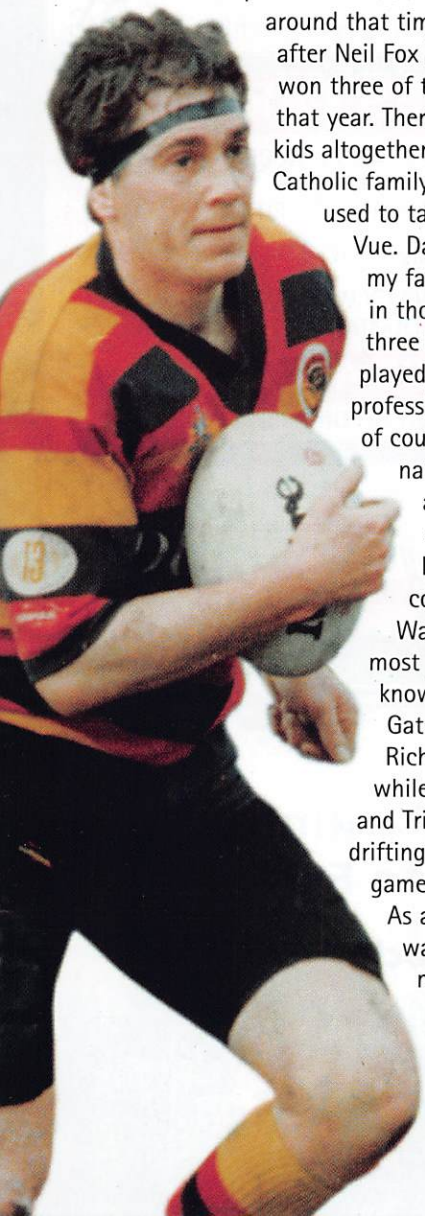
Q. At what stage was it that you finally signed for Wakefield Trinity?

A. Well Dewsbury were promoted in season 1984/85 but we struggled the following year and the club were eventually relegated. But half way through 1985/86 I transferred to Featherstone, who were also in the top division, and I played a year at Post Office Road. It was then that Trinity came in for me and I didn't have to be asked twice! To be absolutely honest it wasn't the best Wakefield side that there has ever been, but even so it was a thrill for me to play for my home town club. Things bubbled along there for a while and then, ironically, it was the arrival of David Topliss as coach which was the catalyst for me leaving Belle Vue. I went back to Dewsbury early in the 1988/89 season and that was at a very difficult time for the club. The stand had just burned down at the old Crown Flatt but we had a good spirit in adversity.

Q. Didn't you also have a spell playing for a club in New Zealand?

A. I played for a club called Pont Chevalier in the Auckland comp in 1984 alongside a couple of lads from Bramley, Peter Lister and Karl Harrison. I grew up a lot on that trip, partly from the experience of the travel and also the quality of the football, which was very tough. Graham Lowe took a few training sessions there and it was something different to experience his more technical approach after being used to the coaching of the old pros back home whose training plan was a few laps round the pitch then a game of touch and pass. Wherever I've been I've always been interested in looking at the different methods coaches have taken in approaching their job. Later I had separate spells in Australia, including winning a Country Grand Final in 1990 with Eden Tigers against a side coached by a young man called Stuart Raper.

◀ Neil Kelly in action for Dewsbury



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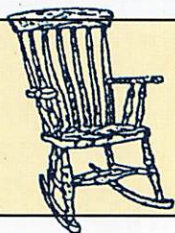
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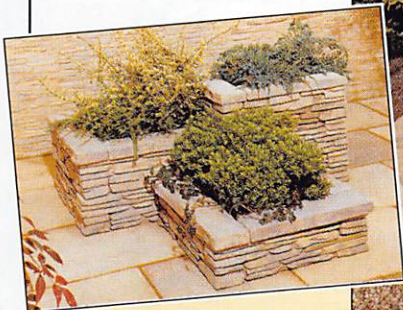
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Well not quite, although it does seem a bit odd, that Rugby League has such a low profile in Coronation Street, after all 'Weatherfield' is supposed to be Salford: notwithstanding that they use a picture of Bolton Town Hall in the opening credits. I know that Dougie whatsisname, current landlord of the Rovers, is supposed to be an ex Featherstone Rovers player, but you'd think they'd be running a Sunday League side wouldn't you? Even the 'Queen Vic' has a London Broncos poster up behind the bar and 'T'Woolpack' had most of the Cougars squad plus Martin Offiah involved on one story line. The best they have done so far is have Adam Fogerty beat Jack Duckworth up and Ben Lynch go out with a Wigan supporting truck driver.

It doesn't have to be this way does it? All the stereotypes are in place just waiting to make money available for signings, write letters to the 'Rugby Leaguer', and be involved in 'an incident outside a Widnes night club'. Fred Elliot and Mike Baldwin would be directors of course, although Audrey Roberts looks more likely to fill the Kath Hetherington role than Linda, who would be more at home having an affair with the stand-off. Time keeper and club historian would be Roy Cropper. Tyrone, a dead ringer for Terry Newton in any case, would be one of the 'local lads', in the squad. The Battersbys would be the 'Sid

and Doris Bonkers' types you always end up next to no matter where in the stadium you find yourself.

Match Ball sponsors? Kev's Garage. Main sponsors? Newton & Ridley. The programme editors job can go to only one person... Ken Barlow.



Martin rehearses the scene for Emmerdale in which he discovers that Jack Sugden has contracted Foot & Mouth disease

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The Pheysey File



I thought I might do a review of some of the Rugby League press this week and examine one or two of the changes which have been occurring to our favourite rugby reads.

I have often thought that the Australians have always been a little more direct at making a point than their British ancestors, something that was reflected superbly in the letters page of their rugby league magazine, Rugby League Week. For those of you who haven't come across this much-respected organ of Rugby League in Australia, it used to be in broadsheet format but is now more like a tabloid. Not only has the format of the magazine changed this season, but so has the content and the contributors.

The new look Rugby League Week editorial team have invited comments from their readers and they have been printed on a regular basis throughout the early part of the season. Not surprisingly, all of the comments have been positive and supportive about the changes that have been introduced. Until that is, the March 22nd issue hit the stands. All credit to the editorial team for reproducing the following letter, in full, which appeared in the 'Your Shout' letters column, written by a Mr Nick Butt (honestly), from Earlwood, NSW. The letter reads; "Disgust is what I felt when I flipped through the first issue of Rugby League Week this year. I used to like reading the magazine every week - I even paid for my copies sometimes - but no bloody more. The only time I'll pick one up now is if someone leaves a copy in the dunny (toilet) at work. Thanks heaps for wrecking a rugby league institution, you bastards."

Clear and to the point, I would have thought, and a view shared by quite a few I bet, though whether they would all express their views in this manner I'm not so sure. Can you imagine League Express or Rugby Leaguer printing criticism so finely tuned as that? The letters pages in these two papers are more of the 'I hate Wigan', 'I hate St Helens' type, which are rather tedious. And although there are occasionally one or two useful issues debated, the letters usually lack objectivity, humour or both. I reckon Mr Butt's letter from NSW, contained both. Good for him.

During the last two seasons I have enjoyed the

Friday edition of League Express, entitled Total Rugby, and its preview of the coming weekend's matches and the news and views of the game which have emerged since the previous weekend. Unfortunately, the printed version of this newspaper is no more, a victim no doubt of the harsh realities of the economic market place that confronts rugby league. The newspaper does exist in electronic form, however, and is published on the internet (www.totalrl.com) each week with contributions from the old team of writers except, thank goodness, one guy called Neil Fissler, the self proclaimed 'Marf from the Sarf'. He reckoned everything NFP is/was rubbish despite only ever having seen a couple of games. He is no loss to the world of rugby league literature, believe me!

Despite the quality of the Total Rugby website, the problem is that it cannot be accessed by as many people as before, which makes it rather exclusive. Only those with a computer and modem have any chance of getting a look in. (Another problem is that, in real Jim Royle style, it cannot be taken to the dunny - see earlier reference - as the monitor and leads won't stretch to the bathroom, but that is another story.)

It is a shame that such a high class publication should be lost to so many readers. Even the Rugby Leaguer underwent some changes to its content as well as to its mast-head earlier in the year. In its wisdom it decided to print a page of what might be called 'people-to-people' ads, which brings like minded people together. At first I envisaged a pen-friend type organisation, you know the kind of thing, "Oldham fan in Saddleworth wishes to swap programmes, badges and jock-straps, etc, with similar collector east of the Pennines." Clearly people brought together by their common interests! But further reading of the advertisements suggests that the common interests might not be confined to rugby league. Whatever next?

Anyway, this personal ads page has been discontinued for the time being. Perhaps there is no market in rugby league land for such a service, but then again...

Colin Pheysey

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Agar, Richard	0	2	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	2	0	4
Argent, Steve	1	6	2	0	0	8	22	17	6	0	0	24
Atcheson, Paul	2	0	1	0	0	4	6	4	2	0	0	8
Birdseye, Lee	1	0	0	0	0	0	14	6	1	7	0	18
Cantillon, Phil	17	0	22	0	0	88	83	0	66	0	0	264
Coussons, Phil	17	0	10	0	0	40	17	0	10	0	0	40
Cook, Paul	3	1	1	1	0	6	3	1	1	1	0	6
Crompton, Martin	16	1	4	0	0	16	16	1	4	0	0	16
Crouthers, Kevin	3	1	1	0	0	4	3	1	1	0	0	4
Demetriou, Jason	15	2	8	0	0	32	15	2	8	0	0	32
Faimalo, Joe	11	1	1	0	0	4	11	1	1	0	0	4
Flanagan, Mark	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Foran, Chris	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Forster, Mark	11	4	2	0	0	8	11	4	2	0	0	8
Gee, Steve	10	6	4	0	0	16	32	11	18	0	0	72
Hammond, Karle	7	3	2	5	1	19	70	11	31	20	3	167
Hill, Mike	0	9	1	0	0	4	20	32	2	0	0	8
Hodgkinson, Tom	15	1	1	0	0	4	29	3	2	0	0	8
Holgate, Stephen	9	1	3	0	0	12	9	1	3	0	0	12
Hulme, David	0	1	0	0	0	0	435	36	161	0	1	645
Jones, Liam	6	1	1	2	0	8	24	1	7	55	0	138
Kilgannon, Eddie	1	0	0	0	0	0	13	2	1	0	0	4
Knox, Simon	14	1	5	0	0	20	26	4	7	0	0	28
Long, Matthew	0	2	2	0	0	8	0	2	2	0	0	8
Martin, Scott	3	0	2	0	0	8	3	0	2	0	0	8
McKinney, Chris	9	3	1	0	0	4	9	3	1	0	0	4
Mills, David	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Munro, Damian	14	3	11	0	0	44	95	5	60	2	0	244
Percival, Chris	13	2	6	0	0	24	78	14	33	0	0	132
Rhodes, Stewart	9	7	0	0	0	0	9	7	0	0	0	0
Shea, Alan	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Watson, Ian	12	1	0	53	2	108	12	1	0	53	2	108

NFP Table (as at 9/4/01)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Pts
Leigh	15	14	0	1	615	134	481	28
Keighley	15	11	1	3	507	206	301	23
Dewsbury	14	11	0	3	458	184	274	22
Oldham	14	10	0	4	413	185	228	20
Widnes	15	9	1	5	417	223	194	19
Featherstone	15	8	2	5	419	195	224	18
Sheffield	16	9	0	7	365	266	99	18
Doncaster	13	9	0	4	265	186	79	18
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Hull KR	15	8	2	5	276	219	57	18
Workington	14	9	0	5	314	288	26	18
Rochdale	14	8	0	6	369	228	141	16
Batley	15	7	0	8	231	316	-85	14
Whitehaven	15	6	1	8	219	204	15	13
Barrow	14	5	1	8	259	372	-113	11
Swinton	14	5	0	9	276	299	-23	10
Hunslet	16	3	1	12	186	559	-373	7
Chorley	15	2	0	13	215	659	-444	4
York	15	1	1	13	113	741	-628	3
Gateshead	16	0	0	16	125	578	-453	0

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