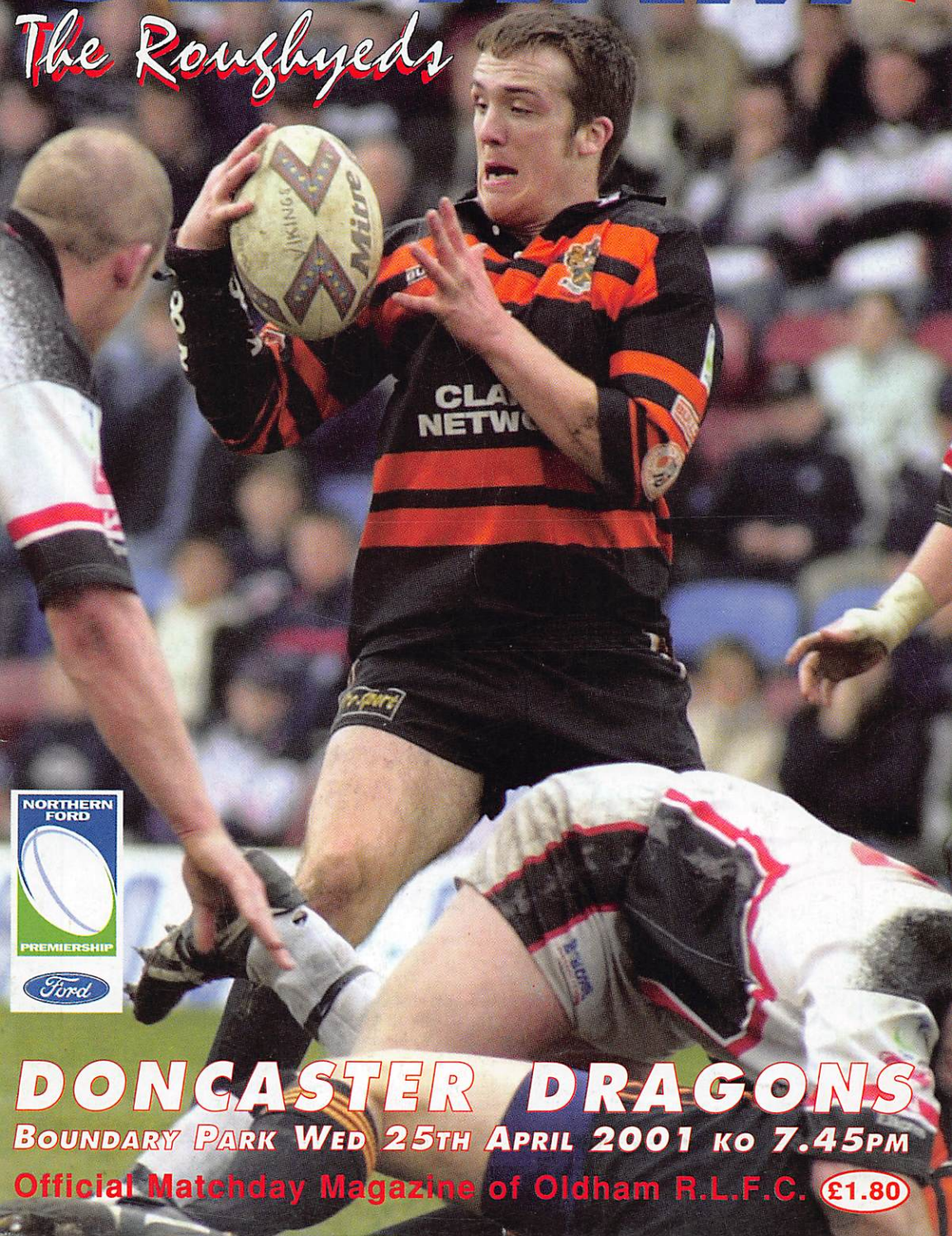


# OLDHAM RLFC

*The Roughyeds*



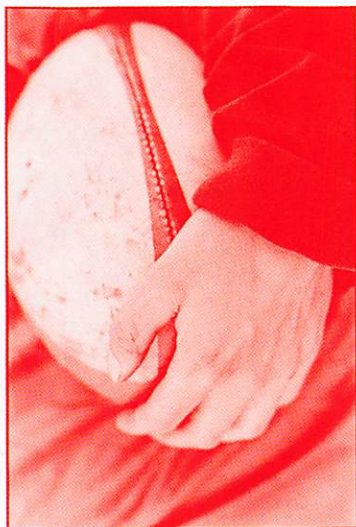
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# Up Front

... with Christopher Hamilton



TONIGHT'S hastily re-arranged fixture is as a result of the new pitch soon to be put in at Boundary Park. The upshot of the decision by OPP (Oldham Property Partnership and previously known as Hiretarget) to spend somewhere in the region of £600,000 on a state of the art "Desso" system pitch means that we are again in the situation where we have to re-organise the back end of the season.

At this moment in time we think that in addition to tonight's game and Sunday's game at home to Keighley the only other game we will be able to play at Boundary Park will be the Barrow game which is scheduled to take place on Sunday 6th May.

That should then mean that the games against Workington and Swinton on 20th May and 10th June respectively will have to be played 'elsewhere.' We are trying desperately to bring those games forward but Swinton have a similar problem to us with Gigg Lane due to be re-seeded and Workington have to compensate their players for loss of earnings to come down for a midweek fixture. We are trying hard to strike a balance but one of the most important factors in this is to ensure that we do not place too much of a burden on Mike and the players. If we can get a further game played at home on the 9th May that will mean 7 games in 21 days for the players and that in terms of tiredness and injuries could have an impact on our final league placing.

Mike and myself sat down to look at the alternatives and it is fair to say that Fordy is very understanding of the positions we are in. If we do end up playing all those games in such a short space of time, however, he has confidence in the squad being capable of coming up trumps. The club is determined to overcome this latest difficulty. **Please** give us your usual encouragement to do so.

Finally it is only right that I should place on record our club's appreciation of John Wright, Ray Green and all their colleagues at Doncaster for agreeing to bring this game forward at such short notice.

Enjoy the game.

Chris



## *The Roughyeds*

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### FRONT COVER

*Action from the away game at  
Widnes*

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS MATCHDAY MAGAZINE DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF OLDHAM RLFC (1997) LTD.

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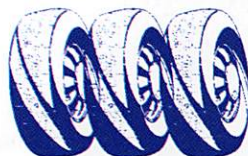
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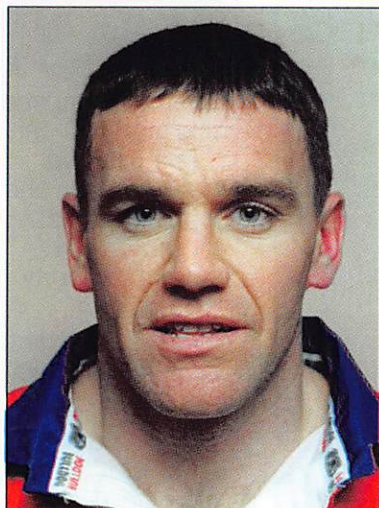
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# FORD FOCUS . . . with Mike Ford



WE DO not need telling how disappointing the Easter fixtures were. Against Rochdale on Good Friday we let ourselves down and let you, the spectators down. As you might expect we sat down after the game and had a good discussion analysing where we went wrong. To some extent we felt we put matters to right against Widnes especially with our first half performance. In the second half we didn't feel we 'got the rub of the green' and several decisions went against us so that in the crucial period after half-time we just couldn't get hold of the ball. Since then we have looked again at what we hope to achieve this season. We are still in the top eight and our aim remains a top four position. And the way results are going for other sides we are not the only ones suffering setbacks. The support we got at Widnes from our travelling fans was, as ever, terrific and

was much appreciated in view of the display against Rochdale.

Tonight we welcome Doncaster Dragons in a match brought forwards from May 27th. We thank Doncaster for their co-operation in fulfilling the fixture. In view of the problems with Boundary Park and fitting in the re-arranged game with Swinton at Gigg Lane we could end up playing seven matches in 21 days. All the players readily agreed to do this even though they know how demanding a schedule that is. It speaks volumes for the attitude and commitment of the players we have here at Oldham that they did not hesitate to agree.

As for tonight, although Doncaster have had their problems, they are not a side to be underestimated. They still have top 8 ambitions of their own and are definite play-off contenders. There are still a host of good players on the Dragons' books and any side coached by my old mate St. John Ellis will be a tough nut to crack.

Give us your backing as usual.

**Mike**



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# Michael's Match



... from the pen of Michael Turner

FOR THIS evening's re-arranged fixture we offer a hearty welcome to the players, officials and supporters of the Doncaster club. Since the reformation of the "Roughyeds" in 1997, there have been some titanic battles between ourselves and the "Dragons". None more so than that nail-biting NFP play off match at Belle Vue last season.

The featured match for this programme is the first ever visit of the "Dons" to Watersheddings on October 12th 1963. Oldham were in impressive form and prior to the match skipper, Frank Dyson led out his team-mates to collect the Mackeson trophy award. (see pic) This honour went to the club who scored most points in a set period and the first winners of the 1963-64 season were the "Roughyeds".

As for the match itself, Oldham continued their high scoring spree by registering a 45 - 13 victory. Dyson was in superb kicking form

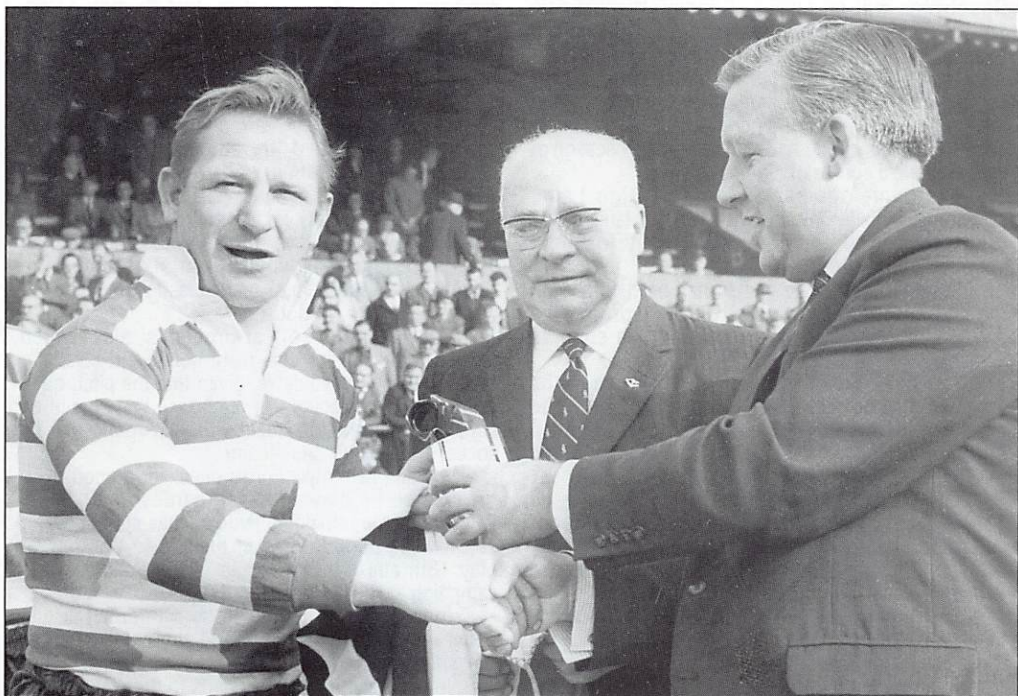
with nine goals, which complimented the nine tries from, Elliott, 2. Smethurst, 2. Lord, Simms, Pycroft, McIntyre and Robinson. The second touch down from wingman Mike Elliott was scored within forty seconds of the restart after half time.

This match started a run of seven consecutive victories for Oldham who had been defeated the week before by the Australians by twelve points to four. Included in that run was the return match at Tattersfield, where this time Doncaster provided a stern test before going down by twelve points to six.

## OLDHAM TEAM: October 12th 1963.

F Dyson, M Elliott, B Lord, P Smethurst, T Simms; V Nestor, J Pycroft; C Bott, L McIntyre, K Wilson, G Robinson, H Major, D Parker.

Attendance: 5,621



Frank Dyson receives the Mackeson "top points" award before the match against Doncaster on October 12th 1963 from the company's regional manager Mr J.H. Beardmore with Oldham president Harry Goodwin looking on in the background.



# ROGER

# ROGER



IF ALL goes according to plan, Oldham's players will be eating, sleeping and breathing rugby league over the course of the next three weeks.

By bringing forward the Doncaster game from Sunday, May 27th to this evening, the club has been pushed into a

situation in which Mike Ford and his men could be faced with the burden of seven NFP games in 21 days.

At the time of writing, it had not been established beyond all doubt what was going to happen to the home game against Workington, but if that is brought forward from Sunday, May 20th to Wednesday, May 9th, as has been mooted, the Roughyeds will be playing Sunday, Wednesday, Sunday, Wednesday, Sunday, Wednesday, Sunday up to and including the game at Chorley on May 13th.

That's a tall order by any standards and, of course, it doesn't include four Alliance team games in the same period and the emergence of the Academy side, which was due to have started its new season at Featherstone a couple of nights ago.

The game against Swinton at Gigg Lane, postponed initially on January 21st and later called off a second time, has been fixed for next Wednesday, May 2nd.

Cramming of home games has been forced on the club by the requirement to start work on the laying of a new Boundary Park pitch as soon as possible.

A great deal of expensive work has to be completed in comparatively little time, bearing in mind that there are only about 14 weeks between Athletic's last home game of the soccer season and the start of the new season in August.

The Latics' last home game of the season is on Saturday, but Roughyeds chairman Christopher Hamilton has said that all three parties, namely Athletic, Oldham Council and the Roughyeds are working closely together for the common good.

The Roughyeds, naturally, are keen to minimise the effects of the ground's pending closure, hence the move to get as many as possible of the remaining five home games played on this ground before the doors are locked and bolted for the remainder of the summer.

Apparently, the match against Keighley Cougars

here at Boundary Park on Sunday (don't forget the 5pm kick-off) can go ahead as scheduled.

The start has been put back two hours to give those supporters who have planned to go to London for the weekend for the Silk Cut Challenge Cup final at Twickenham a little bit more time to get home on the day of the Keighley game. That applies to Keighley fans just as much as it concerns Oldham supporters, some of whom are going to Twickenham for an overnight stay on an official Roughyeds club trip.

So Keighley here on Sunday is O.K. Next Wednesday, Oldham go to Gigg Lane for the Swinton match (7.45 kick off again) before Barrow come to Boundary Park on Sunday, May 6 as scheduled, (kick off 3pm).

Club officials await confirmation, of otherwise, of the Workington match on Wednesday, May 9th, but it appeared when these notes were written, to meet deadlines at the printers, that Boundary Park would probably be unavailable from May 9th whether or not Workington were able to accede to the Roughyeds' request.

If they were, that would only leave the Swinton home game still to be rearranged. It was originally scheduled for June 10th, but the ground will be closed long before then, so it remains to be seen when and where this match will be staged.

If Oldham qualify for home games in the play-offs these will also have to be played elsewhere, as they were last year when, from sixth place the Roughyeds qualified for a home clash with Hull K.R., which took place at Spotland.

These are the sort of problems, alas, which make life difficult for chairman, board and coaching staff. They are unavoidable, given that the pitch clearly needs replacing with a surface that should be sufficiently durable to cope with year-round use by soccer and rugby league teams.

It won't help Mike Ford's quest for a good play-off spot to be playing seven games in 21 days, followed by the remaining five matches spread over a seven week period between the trip to Chorley on May 13th and the last regular league game of the campaign at Hull K.R. on July 1st.

Indeed, there might well be a three week gap between the Chorley game and the next match at Gateshead on June 3rd.

In the meantime it's all hands to the plough for a club and a team that will require maximum support from its fans during a period when the squad will be tested to the full, as will the mental and physical



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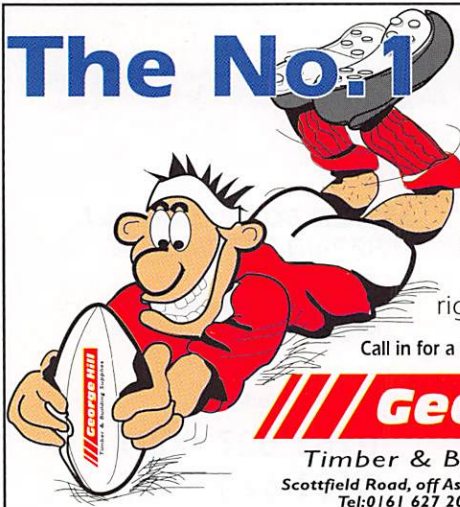
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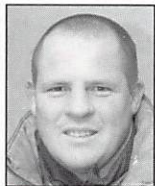


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# Alliance Action

... with Mark Knight

IN THEIR latest fixture, the Alliance team maintained their push towards the play-offs, with a 54-28 victory over Doncaster.

On a cold and wet evening they, at times, played some attractive football, but were let down by their concentration, particularly in defence.

Danny Arnold and Mark Sibson showed their finishing skills in scoring three and two tries respectively. Gareth Barber scored two tries and two goals, Keith Brennan scored a try and kicked five goals. The scoring was completed by a try from Lee Doran.

We will have to lift our performance, in particular in defence for the visit of Widnes on Thursday for a top of the table clash.

*Please note that the next Alliance game v Widnes Vikings is at Castleton Gabriels on Thursday 26th April, k.o. 7.30pm*

## ALLIANCE TEAM FIXTURES

Dec				
6	Keighley	A	7.30	L16-36
21	Rochdale	H	7.30	W24-0
Jan				
3	Hunslet	A	7.30	W26-10
10	Leigh	A	7.30	L36-18
18	Widnes	H	P	
20	Workington	H	2.30	W24-0
Feb				
3	Whitehaven	H	P	
15	Hunslet	H	7.30	W44-6
22	Batley	H	7.30	W38-10
March				
17	Whitehaven	A	2.30	W28-20
22	Featherstone	H	7.30	L24-30
29	Doncaster	A	7.30	W56-16
April				
4	Batley	A	7.30	W21-0
19	Doncaster	H	7.30	W54-28
26	Widnes Viking	H	7.30	
May				
3	Featherstone	A	7.30	
10	Keighley	H	7.30	
19	Workington	A	2.30	
24	Rochdale	A	7.30	
31	Leigh	H	7.30	
June				
7	Widnes	A	7.30	
13	Top Five Play Offs			
14	First Division Grand Final			

# Junior Roughyeds

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HI TO ALL THE JUNIOR ROUGHYEDS

A WARM Oldham welcome goes out to all the Doncaster fans who have made the trip to Boundary Park for tonight's match.



Emma Cameron

The Junior Roughyeds mascot for tonight's match is 11 year old **EMMA CAMERON**. Emma's favourite player is David Gibbons.

Have a good night tonight Emma.

At the last Junior Roughyeds meeting

held on Friday 13th April each Junior Roughyeds was presented with an Easter Egg to enjoy during the match. The eggs were donated and distributed to each child and the four players in attendance by **STUART GOUGH of CELEBRATE CATERERS**. Many thanks Stuart.

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

EASTER weekend threw up its fair share of surprises. The big winners of the weekend were Featherstone and Rochdale each with two wins, while the big losers were Keighley and the two teams who clash here tonight, Oldham and Doncaster.

Coming out of the tough Easter programme Leigh emerged as clear favourites for the N.F.P. Championship after beating Widnes 26-22 and Swinton 40-0. Fullback Neil Turley took his try-scoring feats to 32 for the season only one short of Paul Charlton's all time record for a fullback of 33. With the news that Super League would accept Leigh's



Neil Turley

Hilton Park ground and plans for a new stand things are really beginning to fall into place for Paul Tierzis and the Centurions.

Two defeats for Keighley, both games you would have taken them to win only a few weeks ago (22-26 against Swinton at home and 10-17 against Hull K.R. away), dropped the Cougars down to third. This enabled Dewsbury, on the back of a 33-22 win at Gateshead, to climb to second, but the Rams defeat at Batley (14-12) on Good Friday which I forecast in our last programme means they are now capable of being caught by the chasing pack.

Featherstone's two victories (23-16 at home to Hull K.R. and 21-15 away to Doncaster) consolidated them in fourth, while Widnes after losing to Leigh disposed of

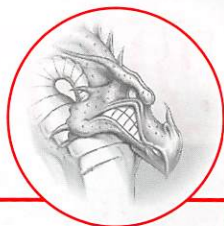
Oldham 34-16 on Easter Monday to move into fifth. This dropped Oldham down to seventh on points difference where they lie among a clutch of clubs all on 20 points, behind Rochdale Hornets, whose brilliant form continued with a scintillating win at Boundary Park and the smashing of Sheffield at Spotland on Tuesday. Hornets are definitely the form team of the competition at the moment and it's going to take a good side to halt their progress.

With Sheffield, Hull K.R. and Workington all boasting 20 points Oldham could well do with a win tonight to move clear. This would have the double advantage of preventing Doncaster moving up as well, although since these were written before Sunday's fixtures a rapidly evolving table may already have changed some more. Certainly the way things have gone recently the division has got even more competitive barring the bottom four of Hunslet, Chorley, York and Gateshead, teams any of the clubs above them would expect to beat.

So how about these forecasts for last Sunday? Barrow to have beaten Gateshead; Oldham to have won at Batley (ever the optimist me, despite Mount Unpleasant not being a happy hunting ground); Featherstone to have pegged back Hornets (despite my previous comment about form: it's ground advantage, see); Keighley to have overcome Chorley; Leigh to have buried (bold choice or word here, note) Dewsbury; Swinton to have beaten Doncaster (I must be mad to tip Swinton to beat anybody, yet every now and then they win the most unlikely of games); Whitehaven to have pulverised Hunslet; Widnes to have accounted for Hull K.R.; and (my second only forecast of an away win - generous or what?) Workington to have comfortably disposed of York.



# IN Town TODAY



## DONCASTER DRAGONS

**SUPPORTING** Doncaster is like a ride on the Big One – lots of massive ups and downs. After years of being RL's whipping boys, Doncaster in the '90s got their act together and even enjoyed a spell at the very top level. However, sale of ground, numerous financial crises and several changes of ownership later Doncaster now find themselves on familiar territory: a half decent team but enough off field difficulties to perplex the United Nations.

With the club and its tough talking coach St. John Ellis having parted company with several players lately, notably Ase Amoné, Latham Tawhai, James Bunyan, James Walker and Joe Berry, and with wingman Neil Bennett serving an eight match suspension, today's Dragons team will not turn out quite as intended. However, I would expect our visitors to line up something like this:-

**Fullback – LEE MAHER.** A big hit in his first spell with the Dragons and a top quality attacker, Maher has since had spells at Rochdale and Keighley before re-signing for Doncaster recently. Selected in the NFP 1999 'Dream team'.

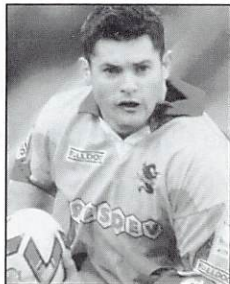
**Right wing – CARL HALL.** A non-nonsense threequarter, the experienced Hall has played for Leeds, Featherstone and Bradford. He is a junior New Zealand international.

**Right Centre – PAUL MANSSON.** Another New Zealander, the talented and versatile Mansson is one of the best play-makers in the NFP. Represented the League side against Villeneuve in 1999 and formerly with Hunslet and Widnes.

**Left centre – SIMON IRVING.** The experienced goal-kicking Irving is a Hunslet lad once on the books at Leeds and with appearances also for Keighley. A reliable player with a sound defence.

**Left wing – ANTON GARCIA.** A penetrating attacker who featured with Sheffield Eagles in Super League. Also played with Lancashire Lynx and Widnes.

**Stand-off – CRAIG WESTON.** Another outstanding play-maker, Australian Weston has played for Gold Coast, Sydney Roosters and South Queensland. On coming to Britain he signed for Huddersfield



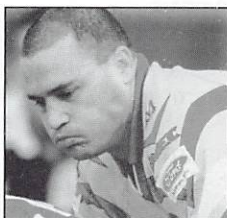
Craig Weston

before transferring to Doncaster. Gave Oldham plenty of trouble last year when he broke the Dragons' tries in a season record. Also kicks goals.

**Scrum-half – PADDY HANDLEY.** The former Featherstone number, 7 originally signed by Leeds from Heworth, is a tricky customer with plenty of tricks up his sleeve. He will need to be subdued if Oldham are to win today.

**Open-side prop – IAN RAMSKILL.** A real workhorse who hits the ball up and tackles hard in midfield.

**Hooker – PETER EDWARDS.** A Kiwi tourist in 1993 Edwards signed for Auckland Warriors in 1995 before spending three seasons with Salford. He subsequently signed for York Wasps before moving to the Dragons. A combative and troublesome midfielder operator.



Peter Edwards

**Blind-side prop – MAEA DAVID.** The big Samoan played for Illawarra in Australia, before representing Hull Sharks, Bramley and Featherstone.

**Second-row TONY MILLER.** Recent departures have seen the return to first team duty of Assistant Coach Miller, a crafty player now enjoying a testimonial season at Doncaster. Once with Featherstone, but longer ago than he cares to remember.

**Second-row – TONY FELLA.** Wide running second-row who will exploit any gaps. Very dependable defender as well.

**Loose-forward CRAIG LAWTON.** A high workrate is what his game is all about. Expect him to be involved in a lot of plays.

**Substitutes: CHRIS ALLEN** is a halfback just signed from York Wasps and could be joined by two other former York players for whose services the Dragons are negotiating as we write. One is the experienced and gifted centre-cum-loose forward SHAUN AUSTERFIELD and the other powerful ex-Heworth prop CRAIG FORSYTH. Also in the running for places in the squad will be former Wakefield hooker or halfback BILLY CONWAY together with local products graduating from the Academy and Alliance sides in prop ALAN LANGHAM, TONY ATTER and scrum-half DEAN COLTON.



# Walkerbout

... with Brian Walker



## 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

STEVE 'and another thing' Fox rang me prior to the match at Widnes and asked that I pick a BEST OLDHAM TEAM from whatever period took my fancy which they would include in their match programme against Oldham. 'We do this with every visiting team' he said 'the idea is to promote discussion. Don't include any subs'.

Never once did Fox hint that at the game I would probably need protection! I hadn't even got into the car park before ringing in my ear was 'Nigel Heslop! how the hell can you justify...' and before reaching the turnstiles 'Mick bloody Parrish what about John Henderson, David Liddiard, Iva Ropati and Big Charlie?'. John Barrett the Oldham timekeeper chipped in 'Anyone leaving out Martin Murphy should be certified!'. Leo Casey injured and out of the game standing by the mouth of the tunnel said nothing but I read into his glare 'Why Barrie McDermott?'

By half time, bruised, dishevelled and out of excuses the penny had dropped that the Vikings were onto a programme winner and I made a mental note to discuss this with our programme editor Geoff Cooke. After the game and back in the car fantasy took a firm grip and I named several Oldham teams arrived at using one format or another. The oldest. The dirtiest. One match wonders. The most stupid signings. So on and so forth and by the time I hit the Oldham by-pass I was at peace with myself for leaving out of my original selection players of the quality of Worral, Ashton, Waddell, Solomona, Fieldhouse, McCurrie, Topliss and Hobbs.

The following is a team of overseas players again selected from those who have played during the last twenty years. Should you disagree with the selection I am sat in seat 6, row A of the Watersheddings stand and I am also ex-directory.



*Tiny Solomona*

1. Nick Wright
2. Green Vigo    3. Iva Ropati    4. Gary Warnecke    5. David Liddiard
6. Glen Liddiard    7. Paul Taylor
8. Brett Goldspink    9. Jamie Bloem    10. Tiny Solomona
11. Mal Graham    12. Bob Lindner
13. John Cogger



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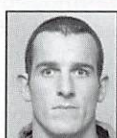
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**Leo Casey**  
Kevin, Chris & Sam



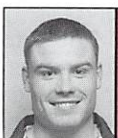
**Danny Guest**  
Peter Royales



**Ian Sinfield**  
John Barrett  
(Time keeper)



**Jason Clegg**  
Junior Roughyeds



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**Kevin Mannion**  
Joan Wild and  
Carol Stott



**James Wilkinson**  
Alpha Tec  
Alex Peet  
Castleton  
Gabriels





# Cook(e)ing up a storm



I THOROUGHLY enjoyed watching 'Ten Years of Rugby League' on Sky on Thursday 18th April. And, once again, I was struck by how good a job Sky have done in presenting the game: in fact Sky have revolutionised coverage of Rugby League and the only pity is that, because we are talking a subscription service here, their programmes do not reach anything like as big an audience as terrestrial T.V. Despite this, Eddie and Stevo (together with Bill Arthur and Angela Powers) are now familiar to R.L. followers throughout the country and their promotion of the sport - love them or loathe them - is totally committed. Long may they continue to publicise 'the greatest game'.

Several other reflections were prompted by the programme, too. Firstly it was striking how close we here in Britain got between 1991 and 1995, to the standards set by the Australians. In terms of international rugby this was a true 'golden era' when Malcolm Reilly and Phil Larder did so much to restore Britain's standing. Unfortunately since the 1995 World Cup it seems to have been all downhill at international level, the 2000 World Cup representing, I hope, some kind of nadir. But then for all the supposed improvements in coaching technique and the advent of full time professionalism I do not think we have the same quality of player. I am prepared to admit that Super League is an incredibly good CLUB competition and is getting better. But, as regards developing players of test match quality, I do not think Super League is producing the goods. You can disagree if you like, but in my opinion Sean Long is not as good a halfback as Andy Gregory or Sean Edwards. Paul Sculthorpe is no Phil Clarke or Ellery Hanley. We don't have a Martin Offiah and may never see his like again. Where now are the likes of Jonathan Davies or Garry Scholfield? And which modern fullback can hold a candle to Steve Hampson or Joe Lydon? And what we wouldn't give for prop forwards of the calibre of Kevin Ward and the magnificent Andy Platt. Only at hooker, in the

shape of Keiran Cunningham, and second row, in the form of Chris Joynt, do we have rivals to Martin Dermott or Martin Hall and Andy Goodway. Add in Iestyn Harris as a star in any era and you can see how poor we now are in international terms. Hopefully, Eddie and Stevo are right and we have a crop of young players maturing who will restore British pride. Certainly in the likes of Paul Wellens, Leon Pryce, Chev Walker, Tim Jonkers, Richard Horne, Mark Calderwood, David Hodgson and John Stankevich there are youngsters of promise. But, then, the generation immediately before them, now in their mid '20s, have not fulfilled the promise they once had. Poor Andy Farrell must look around him and wonder where it all went wrong.

The second thought the programme induced was what a fantastic achievement it was for Wigan to have won the World Club Championship against Brisbane Broncos in Brisbane. I well remember watching the match on T.V. and urging Wigan to win, one of the few occasions - if not the only occasion - I have wanted Wigan to win anything! How pleasing then for St. Helens to have repeated the feat in 2001, albeit on home soil. At their best Saints are arguably the most entertaining club side in world rugby emphasising once more that club football has become the be all and end all of British rugby.

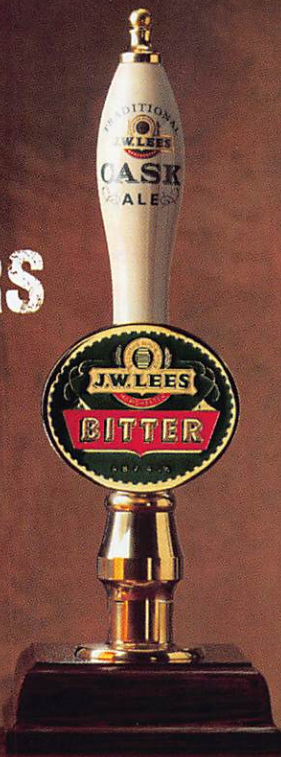
And the third and final point arising from the programme is the structure of Super League. Because no matter how you look at it Super League has inaugurated the 'greed is good' era. Looking back from S.L. VI can anyone explain how Widnes were ever excluded; how Workington, Doncaster and Oldham were sacrificed; why France was abandoned; why clubs deserving promotion like Keighley, Hunslet and Dewsbury were barred; and why a league that clearly needs 14 clubs and 26 fixtures has only 12 teams in it? (Sorry, about the last one: that's obvious - the money goes further with fewer teams).





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# 121



..... **Keith Brennan**



**Q. When and where did you first start playing rugby league?**

*I suppose you could say I was a late starter being 14 years old when I first played at Waterhead. I went on*

*to play at Higginshaw and Shaw Rhinos before being asked to play in a few 'A' team games at Leeds.*

*I have been at Oldham for three seasons now and have enjoyed every minute. There is a brilliant team spirit within the squad at Oldham and all of us are keen to get into the play offs despite a few set backs.*

**Q. Have you any favourite players past or present?**

*At this moment in time I think Andrew Johns is the perfect player and as for the past, well, Ellery Hanley is my favourite of all time., His will to win is legendary in the game. On a more personal level I would like to keep a 1st team spot and will play anywhere to keep one, although my favourite position is scrum half and I have always enjoyed watching good scrum halves.*

**Q. Training demands a lot of your time, do you relax in any way?**

*After loads of encouragement in the early days from my mum for my rugby I now have my lovely wife and children to keep me busy and my feet on the ground. In fact the whole family are very understanding and helpful and I could not be a pro player without them. My little daughter Ellie, who is 4, and son Keegan at 10 months keep us all happy and busy. If I get the chance to watch T.V. I like to watch golf: I think it comes across on the small screen brilliantly.*

**Q. Have you any personal ambitions yet to be achieved?**

*Yes, I would like to achieve full physical fitness, and keep a permanent 1st team spot in my best position. We have a great bunch of players at Oldham and we all want to do our best. When Mike Ford took us to training camp before the season started it was one of the hardest activities I have ever taken part in. We were pushed mentally and physically and it is now that we are all digging deep for the strength we found on that camp. We have so much self belief we would love the supporters to see that and carry on giving us their vocal backing. They are a great lot of fans.*

NOW HERE IS A LITTLE TEASER.

**Q. Which player is nicknamed Bobby Bouchette by the squad?**

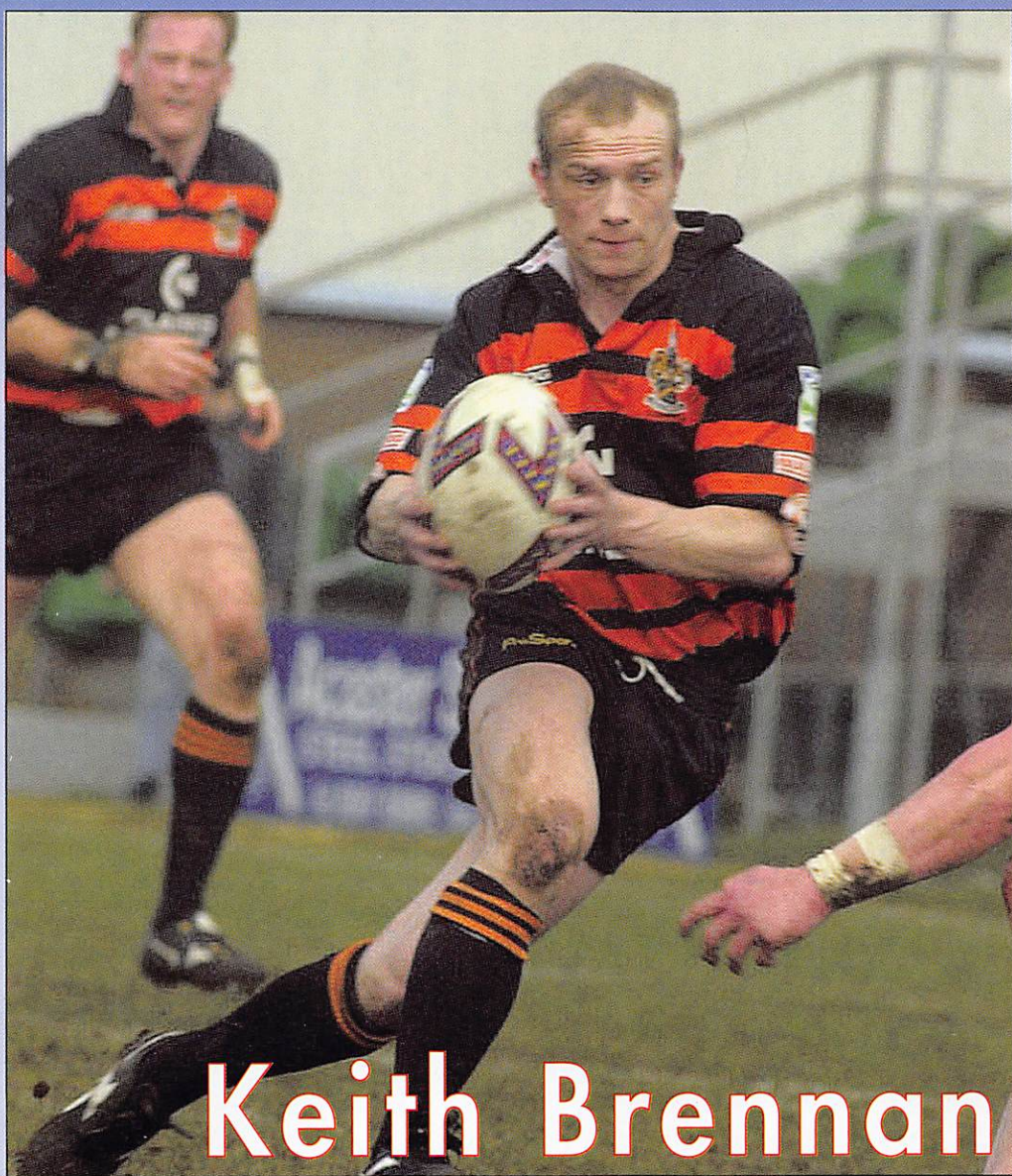
ANSWER IN THE NEXT PROGRAMME.



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DEALERS



# Iwa Slate loose



You thought the people in charge of our safety knew what they were doing, didn't you? Well, take a look at the picture below and the accompanying letter . . .

## Propped up: Shay safety control box

WHILE watching Halifax Blue Sox take on London on a freezing evening at the new safety-conscious Shay stadium I glanced to my right to view the new east stand taking shape.

Near the corner at the south stand, inside the perimeter of safety fencing surrounding what is still a building site, was the ground safety control box and its occupants.

At the back the box was balanced on one row of the new concrete seating and, at the front, to my amazement, it was propped up by a couple of rows of loose breeze blocks. Were the occupants in there for ballast?

Need I say any more about our Council's so-called safety committee? I suggest they watch the kids' programme "Bob the Builder" for a few tips. Can they manage it? No they can't.

It's about time competent people were in charge of the whole set-up



**MARK FAWCETT** The Shay safety control box . . . "propped up on breeze blocks".

*(With thanks to the Halifax Evening Courier)*

REMEMBER these people (Ground Safety Officials) are the sort of people who think Halifax Town need 62 stewards for a crowd of 2,000; the sort of people who closed down Blackpool Borough (which club at that time had the newest stand in the entire Rugby League); the sort of people who think the handbag of a 70 year old woman needs searching for concealed weapons; the sort of people who take no action whatsoever when you report home spectators for foul, abusive and intimidatory language (again directed at elderly pensioners); and the sort of people who fail every time there is anything like a decent number of visiting supporters to direct them to seats which are not reserved for Oldham season ticket holders.

There, that's got that off my chest!

And you think it's me that's got a slate loose.





# Guest Writer

... Ian Wilson Rugby League Express and Oldham Fan

AS I write this, (before the two Easter games), we are in fourth place in the table, after convincing wins against both Hunslet and York, a disappointing effort at Featherstone followed by grinding out a victory against Batley. Prior to that, there were brave efforts against Wakefield and Dewsbury, another poor one v Whitehaven, and one somewhere in the middle v Sheffield. With almost half the season gone, how do we stand?

It all depends on what you think are the objectives, of course. Things may have changed significantly after the Easter weekend; but at the moment, you could say that we are the best of the rest. Leigh, Keighley and Dewsbury have been up there on their own, and we head the next group, which consists of maybe twelve teams who, on their day, have the capability of beating anyone else in the division.

Is this good, satisfactory or disappointing? Should we be satisfied with nothing less than a realistic challenge for the league leadership? Or is best of the rest a challenging enough target at this stage in the new club's development?

After half of our home league games, the average recorded attendance is 2086. Is this satisfactory or not?

We all have our own opinions in response to all these questions. I am quite clear about mine. One of the biggest disappointments of the season so far was a rumour that we

may have been about to sign Paul Atcheson - heard, I may say, when standing on the terrace at Featherstone, behind the try-line we were attempting to defend, fairly abysmally. It was such a relief to learn later that it was an unfounded rumour since I felt - and I was certainly not alone on the terrace that afternoon in this - that such a signing would completely run counter to the principles on which the club has been rebuilt.

I have nothing against Atcheson as a bloke - but to me he is part of our discredited past. If he had come in to displace Gavin Dodd, what would that say to the youngsters we are signing, and asking Mike Ford and his staff to bring on? What would it say, too, to those who have stood by the club over the painful past few years?

We must, surely, stay patient, and take the long view. If we were to finish fourth this season, **and** trade within our means, **and** further develop some youngsters who may become quality players in the future, the end-of-term report has to be: "good progress".

If you agree with me, there is only one real problem. How on earth can we get more Oldham people through the turnstiles, both to give the club and the team the support they deserve, in a so-called "rugby town", and to help to generate the finance needed if we are to be able to move a further step up the ladder.

*Ian Wilson*



## ***BACKROOM STAFF – JOHN BEACH***

**Age:** 18

**Nickname:**

*Blackpool (Blackpool beach)*

**Job:**

*Sales Assistant at ASDA*

**Time at Club:**

*6 months*

**Jobs at Club?**

*First I started on work experience in October and was asked to stay on part time. My job on matchdays involves supervising the main door. Sometimes it can be hard because I take some abuse from people who don't have the right tickets.*

*I love being involved with the Club and helping out in any way that I can.*

*I have been watching the Roughyeds for 13 years. In those days I used to come along with my dad and my uncle. The only thing I hate about my job is losing (and going for the office staff's lunches).*

**What other sports interest you?**

*I love football, I am a Blackburn Rovers fan and go and watch them as often as I can. Also I enjoy golf but rugby is my main sport.*

**Any more interests?**

*Drinking beer.*

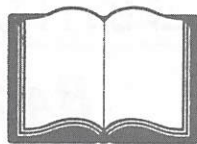


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# Amateur Album



.....WITH DON YATES

NEXT weekend the Rugby League Summer Conference kicks off its fourth season. Thirty clubs will contest the 2001 competition, the winners of which are awarded the Harry Jepson Trophy. Six new clubs have joined the Conference this year with five of the newcomers forming a new North East pool. These are Bridlington Bulls, Gateshead Panthers, Newcastle, Sunderland City and Teesside Steelers. The sixth newcomer, Cardiff Demons, are the first team from Wales to join the competition and will contest the Central South pool alongside Gloucester Warriors, Hemel Hempstead Stags, Oxford Cavaliers and Worcestershire Saints.

The other four pools are South, East, Midlands and North with local club Manchester Knights once again being placed in the North pool. The winners of the six pools, plus the two runners-up with the best records, will go through to the quarter-finals. Current Champions Crawley Jets of the South pool will once again be a force to be reckoned with alongside Rotherham Giants and Wolverhampton Wizards. The Knights have reached the play-offs in each of the past two seasons but coach Craig Howson is hopeful of further progress this year. The squad will basically be the lads who have competed in Division Six of the winter North West Counties League although players from Shaw Rhinos, Saddleworth Rangers and Eccles have indicated their intentions of joining the squad, thereby strengthening it considerably ready for a determined assault on the title. 'I expect us to do well', said Howson, 'Certainly better than we have during the past two years.' Centre three-quarter Barry Mulholland and stand-off or loose-forward Craig Jinks will lead

the team which will play its home matches at the Medlock Leisure Centre, Droylsden after the Conference Management Committee ruled that the team must play in a development area and move out of Oldham.

## **Manchester Knights' fixtures commence next Saturday with the full fixture list as follows.**

All are Saturday matches kicking off  
at 2.30pm.

5 May	Rotherham Giants	Away
12 May	Crewe Wolves	Away
19 May	North London Skolars	Home
26 May	Derby City	Home
2 June	Chester Wolves	Away
9 June	Teesside Steelers	Home
16 June	Rotherham Giants	Home
23 June	<i>free date for representative fixture</i>	
30 June	Crewe Wolves	Home
7 July	North London Skolars	Away
14 July	Derby City	Away
21 July	Chester Wolves	Home
28 July	<i>free date for representative fixture</i>	
4 Aug	Teesside Steelers	Away
11 Aug	Play-off quarter-finals	
18 Aug	Play-off semi-finals	
1 Sept	<i>Grand Final at venue yet to be decided</i>	

It is to be hoped that during the forthcoming season mini coaches will run to away matches. They will run from the New Inn, Five Ways Roundabout, Droylsden where landlord Alan Gardner will be happy to take bookings on **0161-371-6801**.



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## NEXT GAMES

### HOME

SUNDAY 29TH APRIL, 2001  
v **KEIGHLEY COUGARS**  
KICK-OFF 5.00PM

### AWAY

WEDNESDAY 2ND MAY 2001  
v **SWINTON LIONS**  
KICK-OFF 7.45M

### ALLIANCE DIVISION 1

THURSDAY 26TH MAY 2001  
v **WIDNES VIKINGS**  
KICK-OFF 7.30PM

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unfold.

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Thunder.

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morning taking in the Metro  
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at leisure in Newcastle and  
then on Sunday taking in the  
game

*For more details call the Club  
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# WINNARDS

WEB.SITE: COMMONSENSE.COM

... with Simon Winnard

TO SAY that the Easter weekend of 2001 will not be remembered as the best of times by the Roughyed faithful would be somewhat of an understatement. The club is going through a difficult time at present.

The hammering dispensed by the old enemy on Good Friday was described by Fordy as the lowest point of his coaching career. Make no mistake about it, our coach will have felt the very same deep despair that we all did. We then travelled to Widnes and staged a first half revival before suffering a second half whitewash, conceding 28 unanswered points as the Vikings continued their revival under new coach, Neil Kelly. The ship was then steadied on Sunday with the narrowest of victories at Mount Pleasant as we now prepare for tonight's re-arranged visit from Doncaster.

Like many other observers, I wasn't surprised by the two Easter defeats. Both teams have recently entered a second phase of quality player recruitment and, as a direct result, are both likely to have a big say in the play-off picture come the end of the season. Our recent results, and more importantly the performances this season, have prompted disappointment from many supporters and resulted in a gradual decline in crowds throughout the season.

I feel that Fordy's recent comments about the team's performance have hit the nail firmly on the head. Last season we were the NFP's surprise package and sneaked into the play-offs without being considered a real threat. At that early stage of the club's development any kind of success was deemed an unexpected bonus. We went on to reach the semi-finals of the play-offs in what could be described as a successful season that perhaps came a little too soon. However, expectations have significantly changed

since then.

At the start of this season, I felt that we would do well to reach the same sixth position in the NFP come the play-offs. Last season we were a workmanlike side with a few impact players who could break down defences. Whilst never doubting the team's endeavour and graft, quite clearly you can't expect to lose the likes of McMenemy and Molloy without replacing them and expect to perform to the same level.

The key here is managing people's expectations. The start of the season saw confidence high. The momentum gathered at the end of the last campaign was set to continue and perhaps we all got a little carried away. On reflection, Fordy has acknowledged that we have placed undue pressure on ourselves by setting ambitious goals. Whether its the press, the fans, or the club touting the Roughyeds as a top four candidate, it may well be that this was a little premature. However, should a couple of quality additions be made to the squad in the near future, despite not hitting the high notes we could still be poised to mount a similar end of season push to last season.

Naturally, people are disappointed and quite rightly too. There would be nothing more disconcerting than people showing nothing but apathy to the situation. However, this has unfortunately prompted a frank exchange of views between some supporters and Chairman, Chris Hamilton. Compared to many clubs we are in a strong position, particularly financially, and in a very short space of time we have come an exceptionally long way. It is more than reasonable for Mr Hamilton to ask people to put the current situation into some kind of perspective.





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# 'THE DON'



## ON THIS DAY . . .

### Don Yates looks back to April 25th yesteryear

THIS evening's hastily rearranged match again Doncaster takes place exactly 76 years after one of Oldham's great triumphs, the 1925 Challenge Cup Final when on Saturday 25th April, the Roughyeds defeated Hull Kingston Rovers 16-3 to lift the trophy. A crowd of 28,335 were in attendance at Headingley, Leeds where Oldham won the toss and elected to play with a strong breeze. The Roughyeds dominated the opening half but the only points scored during that first period were a try from winger Reg Farrar which he converted himself. The big defensive stint undertaken by the Robins' however, had taken its toll and in the second half Oldham went on to score further tries from winger Joe Corsi, centre Evan Davies and second-row forward Albert Brough. A Ferrar penalty completed the scoring and the Challenge Cup was on its way to Watersheddings for the first time in 26 years.

Six years later, on Saturday 25th April 1931, the Roughyeds were involved in another big match when fourth placed Oldham were called upon to visit top-of-the-table Swinton in a Championship semi-final. The Lions had defeated Oldham both home and away in the regular season so were firm favourites to progress through to the final. The match went as predicted,



*Sid Rix*

Swinton winning 61-3 before a crowd of 13,662. Winger Sid Rix was the Oldham try scorer. On Sunday 25th April 1993 Oldham were involved in another play-off when Dewsbury came to Watersheddings for a second round Divisional Premiership tie. Third division Dewsbury were expected to provide no more than a stepping stone for the Roughyeds to reach the semi-finals but

Dewsbury turned out to be the better side on the day and it was the Roughyeds who were made to hang on and force a replay. Stand-off Tommy Martyn (2) and his half-back partner Sean Devine scored tries for Oldham that afternoon with Devine and full-back Wally Gibson adding goals. Three days later Dewsbury finished the job with a 20-18 victory in the replay at their temporary home, Batley's Mount Pleasant ground.

Welsh rugby union international Bill McCutcheon was a great servant to the Oldham Club first as a player and then as administrator. He was also a top referee and on Saturday 25th April 1914 took charge of the Championship Final between Salford and Huddersfield. That final was staged at Headingley and produced one of the biggest upsets in Championship Final history. The Huddersfield 'Team of-all-Talents' were expected to win comfortably so no-one was surprised when they took an early lead. A determined Salford hit back and, surprisingly, went in front 5-3, a lead they maintained up to the interval. Huddersfield attacked throughout the second-half but heroic, last ditch tackling from Salford ensured that there was no further scoring as the Reds pulled off a sensational victory.

At a slightly lower level, three years ago on Saturday 25th April 1998, Middleton Rhinos clinched promotion from Division Five of the North West Counties League with a 28-4 home win over Milnrow Tim Bobbin.

Less successful were Hollinwood who lost the Pennine League Second Division Play-off Final 42-18 at Undercliffe where the home side led 26-2 at the interval. It was also a disappointing afternoon for Higginshaw who lost 50-18 at home to Farnworth in the Premier Division of the North West Counties League, Craig Dickinson (2) and Des Ashton scored tries for Higginshaw with Nigel Lyons landing three goals. Elsewhere in the North West Counties League that day, Shaw Rhinos overcame a 10-6 half-time deficit to win 23-16 at Haresfinch and Heyside Eagles won 30-20 at Pendle Lions.



# Fixtures

**Date Opponent Result Att**

**DECEMBER F - A**

3 Barrow 28 - 16 1,294

17 Workington 22 - 6 1,295

24 Rochdale 10 - 6 3,402

**JANUARY**

1 WIDNES 20 - 12 3,471

7

14 LEIGH 18 - 44 4,747

28 QUEENSBURY (SCCC R3) 64 - 0 1,559

30 CHORLEY 56 - 2 1,210

**FEBRUARY**

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 10 - 38 2,398

16 Widnes 16 - 34 4,072

22 Batley 9 - 8 962

25 DONCASTER H

29 KEIGHLEY H

**MAY**

2 Swinton A

6 BARROW H

13 Chorley A

20 WORKINGTON H

**JUNE**

3 Gateshead A

10 SWINTON H

17 Whitehaven A

24 Keighley A

**JULY**

1 Hull KR A

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## ACADEMY TEAM FIXTURES

**April**

Monday 23 Featherstone A

**May**

**SATURDAY 5 BARROW H**

Sunday 13 Chorley A

Saturday 19 Dewsbury A

**SATURDAY 26 DONCASTER H**

**June**

Sunday 3 Gateshead A

**SATURDAY 9 FEATHERSTONE H**

**SATURDAY 16 LEIGH H**

Sunday 24 York A

Saturday 30 Barrow A

**July**

**SATURDAY 7 WORKINGTON H**

Saturday 14 Leigh A

**SATURDAY 21 DEWSBURY H**

**SATURDAY 28 CHORLEY H**

**August**

**SATURDAY 4 GATESHEAD H**

Saturday 11 Doncaster A

**SATURDAY 18 YORK H**

Saturday 25 Workington A

**September**

Saturday 8 Play Offs - First Round

Saturday 29 Play Offs - Grand Final

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*Oldham Broadway Business Park*

# Oldham - a leading player at the heart of the North West

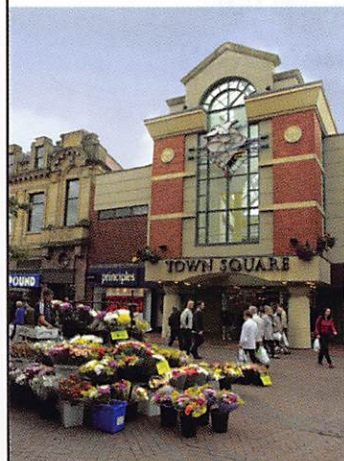
Take a look around the Oldham of the 21st century and you won't fail to be impressed with what's been achieved. There are now huge efforts taking place to ensure that the Borough remains in its rightful place at the hub of the North West region.

Two hundred million pounds and more has been invested in turning the town centre into a modern and vibrant place to shop and work. Money has also been spent regenerating and renewing areas like Westwood, Glodwick, Fitton Hill and Hathershaw, and building 23 new schools in just 20 years. An exciting new town centre Cultural Quarter is taking shape; new industry, new investment and more tourists are coming to the Borough and a state-of-the-art Business Management School is now open.

Oldham is already at the heart of the motorway network and now also benefits from the new M60 orbital route. Metrolink is also coming to the town, and the brand new £3.4 million central bus station has opened this year.



*The M60 Motorway*



*Town Centre Shopping*

There are many other reasons which make Oldham a desirable place to live, work and visit - its reputation for hard work, commitment and down to earth friendliness are just some of them.

Put them all together and they make Oldham a leading player at the heart of the North West.

Enquiries about projects being undertaken by the Council, or any of its policies, to the Marketing and Communications Unit, PO Box 160, Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham OL1 1UG,

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 or visit our website at [www.oldham.gov.uk](http://www.oldham.gov.uk)

**OLDHAM**   
 Metropolitan Borough 





# TODAY'S TEAMS



## OLDHAM

**Coach: Mike FORD**

## DONCASTER DRAGONS

**Coach: St John ELLIS**

<b>Gavin DODD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Lee MAHER</b>
<b>Joey HAYES</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Mick COULT</b>
<b>Anthony GIBBONS</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Anton GARCIA</b>
<b>Pat RICH</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Simon IRVING</b>
<b>Daryl LACEY</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Jon WOODCOCK</b>
<b>Neil RODEN</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Craig WESTON</b>
<b>Mike FORD</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Paddy HANDLEY</b>
<b>Andy PROCTOR</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Tony FELLA</b>
<b>Keith BRENNAN</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Peter EDWARDS</b>
<b>Jason CLEGG</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Maea DAVID</b>
<b>Phil FARRELL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Tony MILLER</b>
<b>Ian SINFIELD</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Craig LAWTON</b>
<b>David GIBBONS</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Paul MANSSON</b>
<b>Lee DORAN</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Peter GREEN</b>
<b>Kevin MANNION</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Tony ATTER</b>
<b>Chris FARRELL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Phil WHITE</b>
<b>Danny GUEST</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Alan LANGHAM</b>

### TODAY'S

### OFFICIALS

**A. PERRIS**

**REFEREE:**

**G. ROBERTS**

**STEVE**

**M. SEDDON**

**4th**

**GANSON**