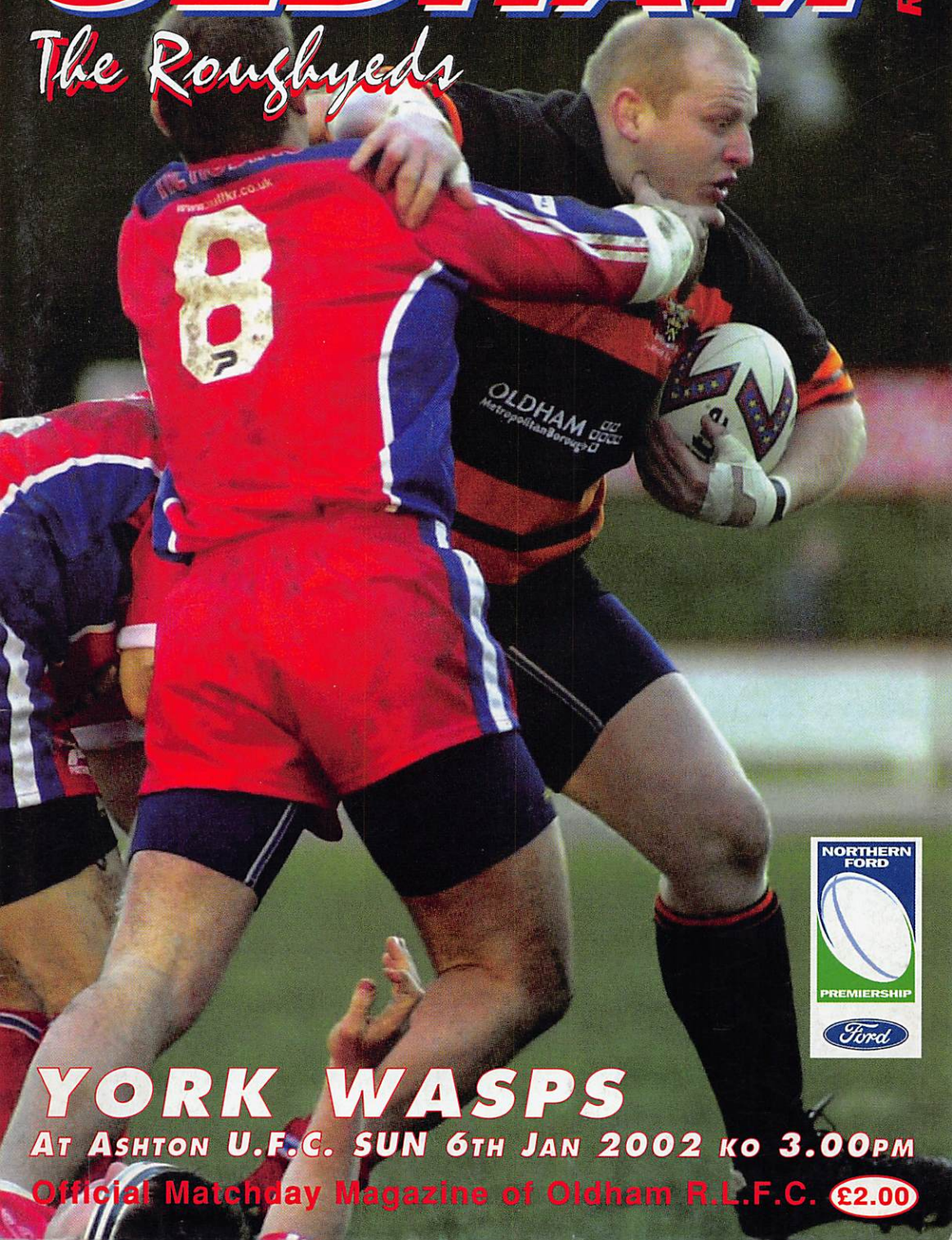


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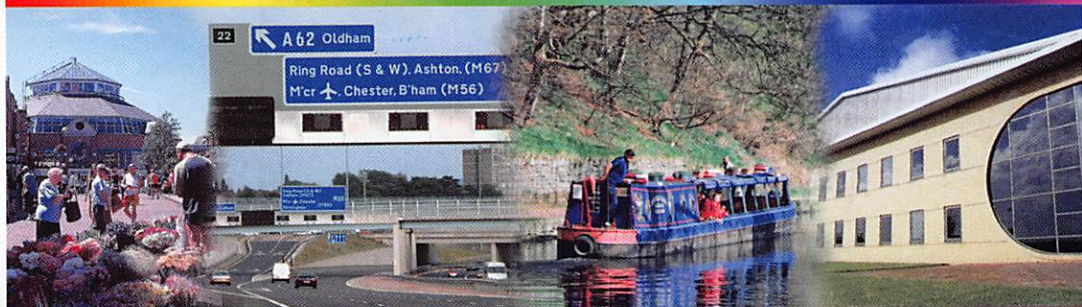
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IN THE HOT SEAT

with
Christopher Hamilton



I HAD already written my notes for this game due to printing deadlines with the New Year Holiday when the story broke about Mike Ford's departure to Rugby Union.

Fortunately I have been able to do a more up to date set for you and needless to say we are as shocked as you are about the situation.

We knew there had been contact with Mike 1 week prior to his departure and he came to see me about it following the postponement of the Rochdale game. When it became obvious that the two jobs could not be combined the Board told Mike accordingly and he appeared to accept the situation. However, after the game at Leigh last week I received a telephone call that advised me that his comments in the post match interview on radio gave a completely different view and when we met after the match he advised me that he was leaving to take up the position with the Irish RFU.

By this time it was a fait accompli and we could do nothing to alter the situation. Mike is ambitious, just as we are, but he feels his chance has come before ours and that is why he has chosen to leave.

We must move on, however, and I am sure that you will all join with me in wishing Mark Knight good luck in his first game in charge. The players have again got to dig deep but, as ever, I'm sure they will respond in the right way. We must also place on record today our thanks to Terry Styring, Chairman of Ashton United F.C., and all his colleagues with whom we have already formed a close working relationship, for their help in getting the ground ready for Rugby League.

Today's opponents, York Wasps, will see this as an ideal opportunity to increase our misery after a dreadful run of luck but we must make sure that we use this game as the chance to kickstart our season. With that in mind your part in the game is as important as ever and your vocal support today will be music to mine and the players ears.

On behalf of myself, the Board and the rest of the club may we take this opportunity to hope you had a merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year. Your continued support in these difficult times is appreciated more than you could imagine and we will continue to work hard to achieve the success we all deserve.

Enjoy the game,

Chris



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Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94.

*Front Cover: Jason Clegg attempts to
break through the Hull K R defence*

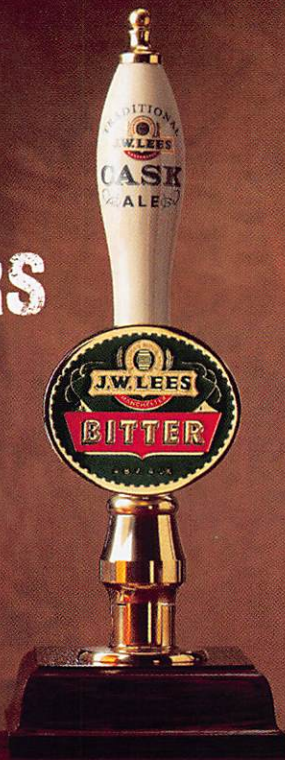
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COACH'S COMMENTS... with Mark Knight



THE week's events have come as a great shock and preparations for today's game have been hectic to say the least. We had a team meeting on Monday at which the coaching situation was explained to the players and at which Mike said his goodbyes. We are all sad to see Mike leave and all of us have great respect for what he has achieved here at Oldham. That said, we are all professionals and we realise these things happen. It is now up to us as a coaching and playing staff to get on with things and focus on the task ahead. I am proud to be asked to head up the coaching team which, fortunately is well established and, although this opportunity has come earlier than I could have expected, I will be giving it my all. Like anyone I am ambitious and have always wanted to be a Head Coach, so it's up to me to make it work.

Despite the weather we have trained well this week and will go into today's game against York Wasps keen to prove that the show must go on. I don't know too

much about York, whose team has changed significantly since last season, but I will have looked at them on video and will be fully prepared for what they have to offer. Let's face it, we can't afford to be complacent.

At Leigh last Sunday the Centurions benefited from our stop-start season. The pitch was fine to play on and we weren't apprehensive about that. (The terraces were probably worse than the pitch in fact). Going in 12-8 up at half time was not too bad especially as we had not played that great. Our completion rate was only about 60 to 70%, so we were looking to build on that in the second period. As you know the wheels came off big time. The penalties against us at play the ball didn't help and when Leo got sin-binned Leigh scored twenty points to put the game out of our reach. Trying to play catch up with only minimal possession, with twelve men for twenty minutes, without match practice and against a side of Leigh 's quality proved too big a task. What we want now is a run of fixtures to build up some momentum and to kick start our season.

Stick with us: it's sure to be eventful.

Happy New Year to everyone,

Mark



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In Yer Face



TODAY we welcome the Directors, players, coaching staff and supporters of York Wasps. To them and to everyone associated with Oldham Roughyeds - especially you the supporters - we wish a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. Here's hoping that, after two 'home' game postponements, you will actually be reading this. If not, of course, we wish you a very happy Spring Bank Holiday or whatever is appropriate to the day you finally read this.



Those who prefer 'summer' rugby will no doubt have been bemoaning the spate of Christmas/New Year postponements. And those who prefer 'winter' rugby will once again point to the liking of Super League clubs for Yuletide 'friendlies' as well as to the excellent attendances at N.F.P. games (o.k. we'll discount Chorley v Batley, then).

So, two points:- 1) when the N.F.P. transfers to a 'summer' season in 2003 how do we replace Boxing Day/New Year's Day attendances?

2) Why can club officials not come to an obvious conclusion about the weather at an early stage? Not only do we have to consider the state of the pitch, but also the safety of the spectators (and possibly even travelling conditions for away fans). Any doubts what so ever and the game should be OFF. There is no excuse for the Hunslet v York situation where the game was postponed half and hour before kick-off. And on the basis of the above Leigh v Oldham should NOT have been played!



And talking of Leigh I was going to commend the catering at Hilton Park because you can actually get CHIPS! (Try that at the McAlpine or the Reebok). However, we were treated to instant inflation when the price went up - even as we queued to be served - from 75p to 85p. And to add insult to injury the young man serving seemed to think $2 \times 85p = £1.90$ till pulled up rather short. What's more the pies HADN'T come. Still, that's Rugby League for you!

The news that there could be TWO bids from France for Super League franchises is much to be welcomed. In my view if the bids from TOULOUSE and PERPIGNAN stack up financially both should be accepted. This would give Super League its optimum size of 14 clubs and 26 fixtures; it would help revive and strengthen the game in France (though neither side should be subject to relegation for at least 5 years); it would give S.L. a genuine European dimension to rival kick and clap; and it would provide British fans with the opportunity of two great weekends away in the south of France. Provided we could avoid the clapped out Aussies seeking gainful employment for stacks of easy dosh the French bids could just be the shot in the arm our game needs.



B.B.C. T.V. viewing figures: Challenge Cup Final 4.5 million - Heineken Cup Final 2.5 million.

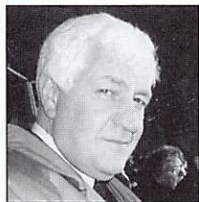
And in Australia: N.R.L. Grand Final 3.6 million - Bledisloe Cup Australia v New Zealand (kick and slap) 2.26 million.

So, who's got the better game?



The end of the year is traditionally a time for looking back and handing out awards and/or brickbats, but I won't bore you with all that save to repeat the QUOTATION OF THE YEAR:-

"Those people who have had discussions with him (Peter Wheeler), no matter who they are, should show the balls to stand up and tell people what they're doing. I don't want to be sitting in the same room as people (who are talking to another code), while we're discussing how to move our game forward. If you don't have Rugby League in your heart, go and form a basketball team, or form a volleyball team, but don't talk to me about forming a hybrid game with rugby union" (Shane Richardson - Chief Executive, Hull F.C.)



'THE DON'

ON THIS DAY . . .

Don Yates looks back to January 6th yesteryear

MATCHES in early January are always subject to doubt because of the weather. In 1951 for instance, Saturday 6th January was a total wash out in this area where all matches in the Oldham amateur league were postponed because of frost and snow. Only seven professional matches kicked off and one of those, Halifax v Dewsbury, was abandoned with the visitors 3-0 in front. Oldham's match at Warrington was completed, although perhaps it would have been better if that event had also fallen foul of the weather. As it was, a strong Roughyeds outfit which included Joe Warham, Billy Mitchell, Alan Davies, Edgar Brooks, Charlie Winslade and Bryn Day were well beaten 34-2. Brian Bevan scored a hat-trick of tries for Warrington whilst the only score Oldham could muster was a penalty from Bryn Goldswain.

There was plenty of activity off the pitch on Monday 6th January 1997 when the Roughyeds visited the transfer market to sign four players, two English and two Australian. Prop-forward Carl Switzer was signed from Eccles but he failed to gain first team recognition. Centre Vince Fawcett's spell with the Roughyeds was plagued with injury and he made only nine first team appearances following his £28,000 transfer from Workington Town. He then moved on to Warrington. Both Australian captures came from the Perth Western Reds club. Utility back Luke Goodwin scored ninety points from 26 appearances and later enjoyed a spell with London Broncos before heading back 'down under'. Prop-forward Brett Goldspink, on the other hand, is still in England and frequently comes along to Oldham matches. He made 21 appearances and a big impression before moving on to St. Helens, then Wigan before joining his current club, Halifax.

Ten years ago Joe Faimalo was attempting to establish a playing career in England. During the 1991/92 season he spent three short trial periods with Workington Town, Oldham and Swinton in that order. Joe made his Swinton debut on Monday 6th January 1992 in a televised First Division match at Hull Kingston Rovers where the Lions lost 18-6. All three



Joe Faimalo

clubs declined to sign Faimalo permanently but it was a much different story when he returned to Britain in September 1994. He joined Oldham on a more permanent basis that month and became a popular member of the Roughyeds' squad.

It was on this day in 1973, Saturday 6th January, that Gary Hetherington made his senior rugby league debut as hooker in the

Wakefield Trinity team which defeated Doncaster 57-5. He landed four goals in that match but made only one more first team appearance for Trinity before moving on to York in December 1994. Hetherington has since played for Leeds, Wigan, Hunslet, Huddersfield, Kent Invicta and Sheffield Eagles before moving into management, first at Sheffield Eagles and now at Leeds, with a spell at Red Hall thrown in for good measure.

On the same afternoon that Hetherington was making his debut, Saturday 6th January 1973, former Oldham junior Iain MacCorquodale was running riot up at Workington. Blackpool Borough were beaten 55-13 at Derwent Park that day when winger MacCorquodale crossed for a hat trick of tries as well as landing eleven goals, at that time a Workington club record for goals landed in any one match.

Seven years ago, on Friday 6th January 1995, three other former Oldham juniors, all products of the St. Anne's club, suffered less happy experiences. Leo Casey, Steve Molloy and Matt Calland were members of the Featherstone Rovers' team which entertained Hull in a Super League match. Rovers were leading 20-11 with ten minutes remaining but then the Airlie Birds ran in three tries to snatch a sensational 29-26 victory.

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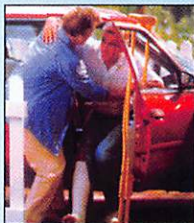
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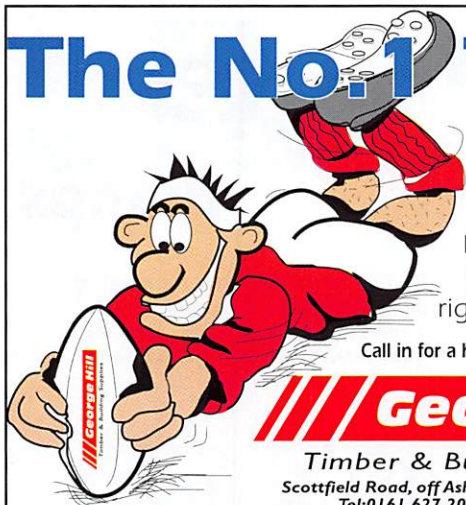
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Review of the Academy Season 2001

FIRST DIVISION FINAL LEAGUE TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Leigh Centurions	18	16	0	2	704	230	474	32
Workington Town	18	15	0	3	494	312	182	30
Featherstone Rovers	18	12	1	5	660	266	394	25
Barrow Raiders	18	11	0	7	555	407	148	22
Dewsbury Rams	18	11	0	7	470	371	99	22
Oldham	18	7	3	8	488	534	-46	17
Doncaster Dragons	18	6	1	11	354	570	-216	13
York	18	5	0	13	403	515	-112	10
Gateshead Thunder	18	4	1	13	425	553	-128	9
Chorley Lynx	18	0	0	18	161	956	-795	0

ACADEMY CHAMPIONS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Wigan Warriors	22	18	1	3	725	437	288	37
Hull F.C.	22	18	0	4	711	366	345	36
Bradford Bulls	22	15	2	5	709	374	335	32
Leeds Rhinos	22	13	3	6	764	434	330	29
St. Helens	22	14	0	8	677	534	243	28
Halifax Blue Sox	22	12	2	8	522	440	82	26
Huddersfield Giants	22	11	0	11	594	531	63	22
Wakefield Trinity	22	10	0	12	434	533	99	20
Castleford Tigers	22	8	0	14	455	587	-132	16
Salford City Reds	22	7	1	14	509	736	-227	15
Hull Kingston Rovers	22	6	1	15	388	591	-203	13
Warrington Wolves	22	5	0	17	346	712	-366	10
London Broncos	22	1	0	21	327	886	-559	2

PLAY OFFS

Elimination Play-Off:			
Barrow	58	Dewsbury	14
Qualification Play-Off:			
Workington	13	Featherstone	38
Elimination Semi-Final:			
Workington	18	Barrow	21
Qualification Semi-Final:			
Leigh	28	Featherstone	14
Final Eliminator:			
Featherstone	35	Barrow	20
GRAND FINAL:			
Leigh	17	Featherstone	20

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT With thanks to League Express

NFP Round Up

PLENTY of activity over the festive period, not least the loss of Oldham Coach Mike Ford to another code. Yet another talent nurtured in R.L. off to pastures new but, then, we poached from them for 100 years, so I suppose it's a testament to the quality of our players and coaches that they're so much in demand.

On the playing front Swinton lost new recruit from Widnes Steve Gee to job commitments following promotion: a big loss for the Lions this. Jamie Benn has returned to today's opponents York Wasps - AGAIN. York have also snapped up winger Neil Bennett from Doncaster. Gateshead Thunder, meanwhile, have signed Batley second-row Gary Shillabeer. And Barrow will shortly give a debut to Kiwi stand-off Cliff Beverley.

There were several cock ups surrounding fixtures in the bad weather with Hunslet v York, Batley v Dewsbury and Featherstone v Huddersfield all creating controversy (two late postponements and one hasty re-arrangement). However, some games did get the go-ahead. Barrow scored an expected win against Chorley (22-6), although conditions were apparently atrocious. Sheffield had a good win at home to Doncaster (36-14). Chorley then failed again, Batley gaining an expected 26-14 win at Victory Park with Bulldogs winger Paul Gleadhill notching a hat-trick.

After Chorley had beaten Whitehaven I expected Workington to come out on top in the Cumbrian derby. How wrong can you be? 'Haven overturned a 14-8 half time deficit to run up 20 unanswered second half points. Best part of the contest was a 3,690 attendance. Wins by Leigh (46-12 v Oldham) and Rochdale (24-20 v Hull K.R.) took the two big guns to first and second in the league. Neil Turley had 3 tries and 9 goals for the Centurions and Sean Cooper a hat trick for Hornets. Meanwhile Huddersfield edged home 21-20 against a Featherstone side not yet firing on all cylinders. And they followed up with a 66-0 walloping Keighley to go joint top.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The outstanding fixture today is undoubtedly Hull K.R. v Leigh. While the Robins are a formidable side at home, I nevertheless



Sean Cooper

expect the powerful Centurions to return to Lancashire with the spoils.

Quite a few other matches could also go either way. For example can Workington overcome the Mount Pleasant slope and a revived Batley Bulldogs to cement their place in the table? I will be bold and say a Molloy/Cass inspired pack with Lawford and Tomlinson pulling the strings behind will be good

enough to deny the Cumbrians.

Featherstone and Sheffield is also a tough one to call. Always a fiery encounter this could be a penalty riddled affair with the better disciplined side emerging on top. I have a sneaking feeling that the Eagles will secure an away win in this one, as a post Peter Roe Rovers don't look as impressive to me as once they were.

Keighley v Doncaster is also a well matched pairing. On paper the Dragons are the stronger side, but I suspect the Cougars' knowledge of and ability on their own awkward pitch will be enough for them to triumph.

At Gigg Lane I expect Swinton to defeat Dewsbury. Barring injuries both sides should improve as the season progresses after completely re-vamping their squad. In particular, I think the Lions have recruited well, so I forecast a home win here.

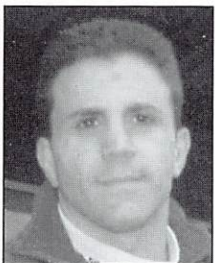
Huddersfield go to the Recreation Ground for a game which should be a classic. If Whitehaven can field a full strength side they will run the Giants close but Rob Purdham will probably have departed by now which will leave a big hole. An away win for me then, though not by much.

Of the remaining games I expect Oldham to account for York and Barrow to overcome Gateshead, both enjoying home advantage. That leaves Chorley visiting Hunslet: how about a rare Lynx away win?



YORK WASPS

AFTER the trauma of season 2000-2001 York Wasps will be hoping for better things this time around, although with a significantly re-designed team it will take time for things to fall into place.



Leo Epifania

York's new Head Coach is Australian LEO EPIFANIA a 36 year old former fullback with over 100 ARL appearances between 1984 and 1992 for Western Suburbs and Illawarra. He also played in France for Cahors. Returning to Australia Leo became Assistant Coach at Guildford in the New South Wales competition.

He was also running a personal fitness business in Sydney and was involved in the personal training programmes for Australian athletes and swimmers at the 2000 Olympics.

Barring injuries picked up in the holiday fixtures, I expect the Wasps to line up today something like this:

Fullback – GAVIN MOLLOY. Starting with Beverley in the National Conference he signed for Hull KR in 1998 as an Academy player. Made his Rovers' debut against Bramley in 1999. Came to York in May 2001 on loan, a deal now made permanent.

Right Wing – MATTHEW MULHOLLAND. A former Hillsborough Hawks and Sheffield Eagles Academy player Mulholland made his debut for York at the end of 2000. Now on a two year contract the 20 year old can play anywhere in the back division.

Right Centre – SHAUN AUSTERFIELD. At 31 Austerfield is an experienced performer with proven try-scoring ability. He signed for York from Dewsbury in 1998 but has also seen service with Bradford and leading French club Villaneuve.

Left Centre – CARL HALL. A well travelled former Kiwi international, the abrasive Hall is a quality centre. He signs for York after appearing with Doncaster in three spells, Bradford, Leeds and Featherstone.

Left Wing – LEIGH DEAKIN. This is Deakin's third spell with the Wasps after recovery from injury. Top flight experience with Hull and Leeds. Deakin was York's leading try scorer in 1998 and joint leading try scorer in 1999.

Stand Off – JONNY LIDDELL. After starting with York Acorn Liddell was snapped up by Leeds Rhinos. Like many players in this year's NFP he has stepped down following the abandonment of

Alliance football. At 19 Liddell hopes to take one step back (if back it be) to take several steps forward before too long.

Scrum Half – MARK CAIN. Experienced playmaker Cain left York to play for Dewsbury last term. Following a change of regime at Ram Stadium he now returns to Jockey Lane where he will resume his role as the linchpin of the side.

Open Side Prop – ANDY PRECIOUS. After breaking an ankle in the first match last season Precious was sorely missed. Now fully recovered former York amateur and Hunslet professional the lines up for his ninth season with the Wasps.

Hooker – PETER EDWARDS. Now in his second spell with York, Edwards is a former Kiwi international who has also played at Auckland Warriors, Salford and Doncaster. A big favourite with the fans.

Blind Side Prop – MICHAEL DOCHERTY. A new recruit from Super League club Hull FC. Docherty is a goal-kicking prop whose strong running marks him out as a player of developing talent.

Second Row – NATHAN PINCHER. Came on trial from Castleford last year but was sufficiently impressive for York to offer him a two year contract. At 21 has time on his side.

Second Row – DARREN CRAKE. A graduate from local amateur side York Acorn, Crake signed professional forms in August and at 31 finally gets to prove himself in the pro ranks.

Loose Forward – MICK RAMSDEN. First signed for York in 1991. Ramsden subsequently went to Wakefield in 1996 before returning to Huntington Stadium in 1998. Has been unlucky with injuries in recent seasons.

Other players in the running for places include: MICHAEL GRADY. Only 20 ex-Widnes Tigers' man Grady has already done the rounds having played anywhere in the backs for Lancashire Lynx, Warrington, Whitehaven and French club Albi.

Prop CHARLES HOGGARD is aged 20 and has played Academy football at York and Alliance football at Hull.

Half-back RITCHIE HUNTER hails from Hull playing amateur at Myton Warriors and Hull Dockers before joining York's Academy side.

Utility back DANNY WAITE joins the Wasps from Castleford's Alliance team.

And, finally, that old warhorse ALAN PALLISTER, having just completed a testimonial season, fronts up yet again against the best the NFP has to offer. Darting runs from play-the-ball and one-on-one ball stealing are his trademarks. You have been warned!

Walkerbout

... with Brian Walker



CONGRATULATIONS to George Piggins and all concerned with the South Sydney club in forcing the issue and succeeding in getting the Rabbitohs back where they belong – in the NRL. A superb crew with tons of tenacity! At the time of writing it was planned that Oscar winning Russell Crowe, a lifelong Souths fan, would belt out a few tunes with his band, 'Thirty Odd Foot of Grunts' at a 'Thank The Fans' day held in sunny Sydney. Glad he didn't make last season's curtain raiser although the Roughyettes probably wouldn't agree!



Kevin Fitzpatrick

Expect a call from Saddleworth Rangers and ex-Roughyeds half back Kevin Fitzpatrick! The young journalist is currently putting together a Roughyeds memories CD surrounding the clubs' Hall of Fame. As well as interviewing lots of fans I understand he has had the mike in front of the likes of Alan Davies, John Etty, Frank Stirrup, Martin Murphy, Andy Goodway and Bernard Ganley. The CD is targeted for release late next spring and I'm sure we'll be kept posted.



Oldham Sixth Form College pride themselves in the success rate achieved by students taking their 'A' level PE course. 70% of the course work is theory and one of the six areas that students are expected to study surrounds the history of

sport. Oldham Rugby League Heritage Trust ensures that students are encouraged to include rugby league in this section by providing permanent display boards within the sports hall area.



Sixth Form College students Ryan Bailey and Chris Tickle (Warrington RL Academy) study the history of league.



Winner of the Belle Vue tracks inaugural Oldham Roughyeds Stakes was speedy right winger Bally Currane Boy. Sponsored by Oldham fan Mick Harrop the number two dog romped home and can be seen here receiving its just award from Roughyed's Jenny and Sarah Turner (both far right).



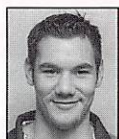
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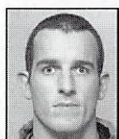
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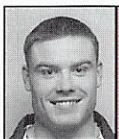
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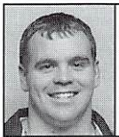
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Michael's Match

... from the pen of Michael Turner



TODAY we offer a warm welcome to the players, officials and supporters of the York Wasps club. Although they joined the league in 1901, it wasn't until the 1923-24 season that the Roughyeds first entertained the men from the Minster city. In that campaign the honours were shared with both clubs winning their home fixture.

This was also the case forty years ago and today we look back at the visit of York to Watersheddings in the 1961-62 season. The match was played on Monday evening August 28th 1961 with a 6.15pm kick off and was the second in a sequence of four wins in ten days for the Watersheddings men. A good crowd of over seven thousand gathered for the game when the score favoured the home side by thirty points to twelve with the major damage to the York defence caused by the home left wing partnership of John Noon in the centre and Mike Bird on the wing. Welshman, Bird

scored a hat trick in this his home debut while "Noony" weighed in with two tries on his way to finishing the season at the top of the try list with 23 touchdowns. The other Oldham try went to stand off Alan Kellett with full back Geoff Sims adding six goals. For York there was a try each for Sullivan and Stevenson with three goals from the reliable boot of the aptly named prop forward Vic Yorke.

York won the return fixture at Clarence Street in October by thirty points to fifteen.

The Teams Oldham v York,
August 28th 1961.

OLDHAM: G Sims, W Patterson, V Nestor, J Noon, M Bird, A Kellett, F Pitchford
W Payne, L McIntyre, C Winslade, G Robinson, J Rae, D Parker.

YORK: Hargreaves, Foster, Hunter, Sullivan, Flannery, Stevenson, Jackson, Yorke, Milner, Pratt, Kidd, Fowler, Ward.

Attendance: 7,024



Vince Nestor, the Oldham centre, in action against York in August 1961.



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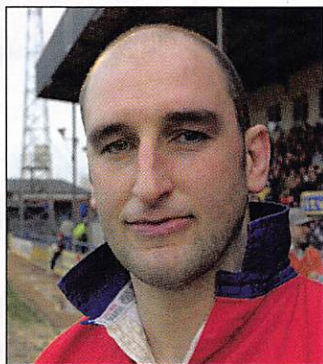
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A Chance to Meet SIMON KNOX

with David McGealy, Radio Cavell 1350AM



Born in Whitehaven, Cumbria on 14th October 1972. But a lot of people think I was born after this because I look so young.

What about your family?

My family's all from Whitehaven. I've got a wife and two kids, brother, mam, dad and I've got a cat as well.

What's your first memory of Rugby League?

My first memory was watching Whitehaven Rugby League, the likes of Vince Gribbin, Jimmy Dalton, Geoff Simpson, people of that calibre. They were my boyhood heroes and I used to watch them every week when I was about six, seven or eight.

So you were one of these little kids who runs round the outside of the pitch occasionally watching the match?

That's it. I used to go to the game with my friends and my dad, get an oxo, probably a pie and then run on the pitch at half time and kick a ball about and the same again at full time. It was just a fantastic experience for a kid at that age.

Where and with who did you first play

Rugby League?

I started off as a kid, eight years old, with Hensingham ARL Club. I played there until I was eighteen when I signed professional for Carlisle. From Carlisle I moved on to Bradford.

I suppose up in northern Cumbria there's not a huge choice of professional clubs to sign for?

Well you've got Whitehaven, Carlisle, Workington and a bit further south Barrow, but there's a lot of competition to be the best team. One of the main reasons I went to Carlisle was they had people like Cameron Bell, Clayton Friend, Hitro Okesene, so they had a good calibre of player there and I thought I'd fit in really well. Fortunately for myself I did.

The Cumbrian game is rugged and built around the forwards, did that suit you?

It does, yes. I'm not the biggest of forwards but I like to think I've got a bit of speed off the mark for the first couple of yards. It's a good, physical game and that's how I've always played it, and how I always will.

Why did you come to Oldham?

I had the chance to stop at Widnes and go full time, but I've got a really good job as a Business Financial Manager down in the Stoke and Stafford area, so it's late nights and early mornings and I'd have to turn my back on an awful lot. I'm a young looking twenty nine year old and I've got a family to look after. I've got a mortgage, earning good money from my job and enjoying my work and I enjoy playing part time. If I was a few years younger I'd jump at the chance but I had a long hard think for eight weeks and was still unsure. But when I came to Oldham and saw the way Mike Ford operates his troops, and I knew some of the players already, I was quite impressed with the club and what Mike's got to offer

to myself.

Who's been the greatest influence on you in Rugby League?

Probably my dad. He's not from a rugby background but if ever I needed any advice, he was there. Also an ex-Oldham player, Alan McCurrie. I used to go to school with his son Stephen. If there was anything I needed to talk about to do with rugby he would always be there for me and to help me on.

What was your greatest achievement in rugby league?

When I played at Wembley with Bradford Bulls in '96 and '97. Even though we got beat by St. Helens it was a very memorable game. It was something that every child wants to do and there I was playing at Wembley in front of a packed house. It was fantastic. I know winning the Super League was a real good achievement but I think it has to be the Challenge Cup Final.

They say on a first visit to Wembley you don't take it all in. Did you?

It is a very, very big occasion. The build up starts almost from when you win the semi-final and you've got a couple of weeks to prepare. You go and get your hair cut, or in my case you don't. You go down on the Wednesday and stop over Thursday, Friday, play Saturday and come back Sunday and it's just THE most memorable occasion. Fortunately I've got a lot of it on video, with the players and that, so it will stick in my mind forever.

You've not worn the video out yet then?

Not yet, but the kids keep watching it every now and then. But it's a bit of a video nasty, so they shouldn't.

Talking of video nasties, what about your low point?

My low point was when I left Bradford. I went from being at one of the world's best teams to the worst - Workington. I had six unhappy months at Workington. I didn't like it one bit. I had to travel up there three nights a week and stop over the weekend. The players were good, but unfortunately I couldn't get on with the Directors up there. I asked Andy Platt if I could leave and Andy said he was leaving himself, so we both left at the same time which was a bit of bad news for Workington.

RUGBY
League Express

For the bes
Ford Pre

What's the most amusing thing you've ever seen on a rugby field?

One of them was when I was playing against Huddersfield a few years ago and a friend of mine, Garry Charlton, got a stray boot in 'the groin area'. He was in agony. I ran up to him and asked how he was and he told me his situation. I just said "listen Garry if you stand on one leg, hold your left ear and jump up and down it'll be alright." So he did!!! I was quite amused that he took it in and I've got that on video so I laugh every time I see it.

Who's the biggest character you've come across in the game, excluding yourself?

There's two really and I think one learnt off the other. It's got to be Paul Forber. He's a, aa practical joker with a wicked sense of humour and Paul Loughlin. When they were both at St. Helens it must have been murder for the coaches like Alex Murphy, Eric Hughes and the likes. I've played with both and I was quite surprised at the attitude they've got.

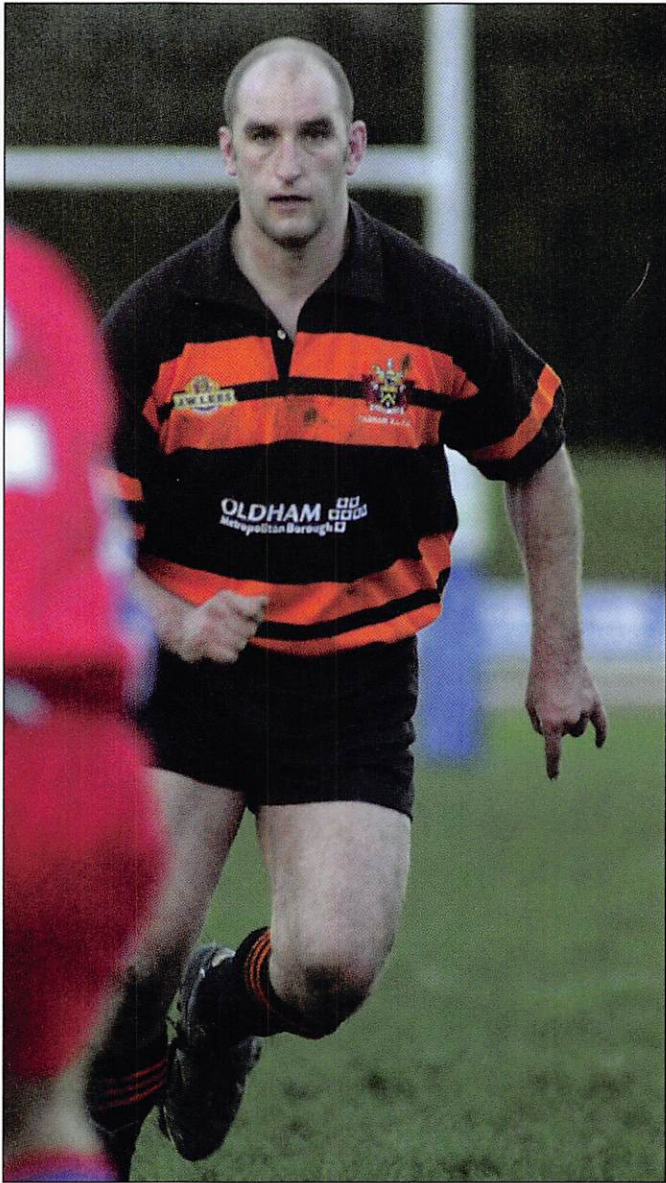
What's your ambition in Rugby League?

I just want to play to the best of my ability. But the main thing is just to enjoy it. If I can stop injury free then that's a bonus. But I enjoy coming to training with the players and socialising with them. It's like a bit of a family you've got at a club. Everyone knows exactly what each other is personally doing and if you're stuck they'll come and help you.

Tell us a secret about one of your team mates at Oldham or any other club?

I can't really give any of them secrets away. (This bit is edited in the written format - but not on the audio). But I'll tell you about the son of a former Oldham winger who has the dirtiest toe nails ever. They're like crows feet, long pointy thing and the most disgusting, horriddest things I've ever seen. I suppose that's the best I can let out at this moment in time.

This interview will be broadcast in full on Radio Cavell - 1350AM next Friday during 'Sports Preview' between 5.00 and 6.00pm.



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HIGGS SAYS OF COURSE IT ISN'T.



GRIGGS SAYS OF COURSE IT IS.



MIGGS SAYS HE'S NOT NOTICED IT HIMSELF.



SPRIGGS SAYS HE'S NOTICED IT FREQUENTLY.



TRIGGS SAYS THE GAME'S NEVER BEEN CLEANER.



FIGGS SAYS THAT IT'S DIRTIER THAN IT'S EVER BEEN.



BRIGGS SAYS THAT THE FINEST TRADITIONS OF THE GAME ARE BEING NOBLY UPHELD.



WIGGS SAYS THAT IT'S CEASING TO BE A GAME AT ALL.



RIGGS SAYS THAT IT'S ALL ABSOLUTE ROT—



AND JIGGS SAYS THAT IT'S ALL ABSOLUTELY TRUE—



WHILE QUIGGS, INTERVIEWED THE SATURDAY BEFORE LAST (WHEN THEY WON BY 39-3), SAID THAT NOTHING COULD BE FINER THAN THE SPORTING SPIRIT INVARIABLY SHOWN IN THE GAME AS NOW PLAYED—



AND BEING ASKED FOR HIS VIEWS LAST SATURDAY (WHEN THEY HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO LOSE BY THREE PENALTY GOALS TO NOTHING) GAVE IT AS HIS OPINION THAT NOWADAYS THE GAME WAS INFESTED BY A CLASS OF PLAYER WHO STUCK AT NOTHING TO GAIN HIS ENDS.

Wilson's Wisdom

... with Ian Wilson

WHAT on earth is Dave Whelan playing at? And what is happening at Wigan? They are no favourites of mine, I should add very quickly, but even I have to admit that a healthy Rugby League needs a healthy Wigan (as well, I suggest, as a healthy Hull, Leeds and London – not to mention Sheffield, South Wales, Ireland, Roulouse, Paris etc. etc. – but that is another story!)

Whelan was quoted just before Christmas as saying that he was willing to pour further millions into "his club", but this time this meant the fallen-from-grace Rugby Union club, Orrell. This should be re-named Wigan-Orrell, so as to take advantage of the best brand name in world rugby (in his view). And his aim is to see the new club atop the R.U. Premiership. And – again his statement – this, too, is the objective of Maurice Lindsay.

This so-called story was, of course, written up in some of the national press as yet another indicator of the imminent demise of RL. What a load of rubbish!

I am not suggesting that all is healthy in the world of RL, of course, or that there are no threats from RU. Certainly not. I think, for example, that the Leeds situation is definitely worrying, largely because of Gary Hetherington's record of looking for the gimmicky, quick-fix solution to problems. But Wigan as Champions of English RU? Never!

Of course, Dave Whelan used to be a

soccer man and he came out with similar aspirations when he took over Wigan Athletic; and there is not a lot of evidence of major change there, either in crowds or in league status, in spite of the millions he has thrown at them. And I would humbly suggest that the same will be the case for "Wigan-Orrell".

Perhaps Mr Whelan should have a word with some of the other sugar-daddies who have already used up several of their millions in bankrolling not very good professional RU players over the past few years? Alternatively, perhaps a look at some of the recent attendances at top RU games might make him pause a little? (I have recently seen figures of 2,000 or so at Sale, Saracens and Newcastle, and 1300 at Orrell v Leeds in a cup-tie).

As for Wigan RL, it is also reported that they are due to report a sizeable financial loss for last season. But there must be simple causes for that – lack of Cup success, in particular, as well as very expensive overseas players come to mind – and, anyway, the loss is trivial in comparison to those being made, at least pre-Sky TV bonanza, by top RU clubs.

And Maurice? Now he is back into the inner circle of RL and busy 'implementing' whatever it is his committee is going to implement, can you really see him preferring to hob-knob with those nice chaps who run Harlequins and Wasps rather than with the Salfords and Halifaxes of this world? Then, again ...!



I saw this



and thought of you

Junior Roughyeds



sponsored by **Oldham Advertiser**

HAPPY NEW YEAR to all the Junior Roughyeds and also to the Directors, players and supporters of York.



Jessica Fullalove

The mascot for today's game is 5 year old **Jessica Fullalove** - Jessica goes to Thorpe Farm Primary School and Jessica is a girl of many talents. She loves swimming, dancing and gymnastics but most of all she loves playing Rugby. Jessica's favourite player is Gavin Dodd.

Matthew Tamaszewski is the mascot for our away game against



Matthew Tamaszewski

Dewsbury Rams. Matthew goes to Our Lady's Comprehensive School, and his hobbies are music and playing the piano. Matthew's favourite player is David Gibbons.

The next Junior Roughyed Meeting will be at the end of January and further details will be sent to you in a few weeks.

If anyone would like to become a Junior Roughyed please contact the club for further details.

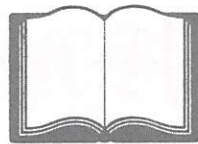
Adele Knowles

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	P	W	D	L	For	Agst	Diff	PTS
Leigh Centurions	4	4	0	0	166	47	119	8
Rochdale Hornets	4	4	0	0	100	64	36	8
Hull Kingston Rovers	4	3	0	1	124	46	78	6
Barrow Raiders	4	3	0	1	131	57	74	6
Whitehaven	4	3	0	1	113	40	73	6
Huddersfield Giants	3	3	0	0	71	34	37	6
Workington Town	4	3	0	1	102	73	29	6
Sheffield Eagles	4	2	0	2	90	58	32	4
Batley Bulldogs	4	2	0	2	75	80	-5	4
<hr/>								
Featherstone Rovers	4	1	1	2	77	67	10	3
Doncaster Dragons	3	1	0	2	44	74	-30	2
Dewsbury Rams	3	1	0	2	48	80	-32	2
Keighley Cougars	3	1	0	2	62	99	-37	2
Chorley Lynx	5	1	0	4	72	116	-44	2
Gateshead Thunder	3	0	1	2	32	72	-40	1
Swinton Lions	2	0	0	2	16	50	-34	0
Oldham	2	0	0	2	22	72	-50	0
Hunslet Hawks	3	0	0	3	38	146	-108	0
York Wasps	3	0	0	3	22	130	-108	0

Amateur Album

.....WITH DON YATES



'THE standard of rugby played in the Oldham junior league at such places as Saddleworth, St. Anne's, Waterhead and Royton is absolutely phenomenal, really superb.' So says Adrian Alexander, former Harlequins and Barbarians rugby union wing forward or number eight who turned professional with Oldham in December 1979. When his professional career was over Alexander coached unofficially at a few rugby union clubs before being reinstated by the Rugby Football Union which enabled him to coach officially at Richmond.



Adrian Alexander

He then returned to Oldham because his locally born wife Eugenia was homesick and since then he has become involved coaching rugby league at under-16 and under-18 level, first at Saddleworth and currently at St. Anne's.

Along with Bing Findlater, Alexander has set about transforming the under-18s

at St. Anne's. The pair have obtained excellent sponsorship from Kingsway Autos of Rochdale and from John Igoe of the Tommyfield pub, Henshaw Street. St. Anne's are now confident that a regular supply of quality rugby players will soon be filtering through to the open age section at Higginshaw Road. What Adrian is particularly concerned about is the 'drop out' rate of league talent in the 16-20 age group throughout the town. "We need some finance from somewhere so that we can get into the schools and develop talent from a young age, nurture it, and keep the young lads playing through to open age level."

Adrian Alexander's knowledge and enthusiasm for rugby, both codes and at every level, is vast and infectious. He has a wide experience in every aspect of the sport. His successful playing career has been well documented and, I suspect, his talent at developing young players will soon have many admirers. Apart from that Alexander has involved himself in other diverse aspects of the game. He was, for example associated with the production of the feature film "The First Kangaroos" starring Denis Waterman and covering that historic event. He set up the stunts during the filming of the playing sequences of the film.

Additionally, and in order to further his rugby education, Alexander has spent some time at Salford with Ray Hill studying the commercial side of the game and, once Peter Deakin recovers full health, he hopes to do the same at Sale RUFC. Clearly, Alexander would be an asset at any club, professional or amateur, and surely will eventually achieve his ambition, which is to manage a rugby club, be it union or league, at as high a level as possible.

Until then he will continue working with the youth at St. Anne's, instilling good practice, both on and off the pitch, thereby ensuring that a steady stream of rich rugby talent continues to flow through to open age level at St. Anne's and other clubs in Oldham and district.

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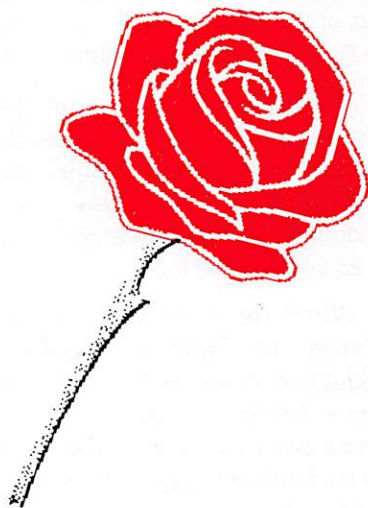
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The Whistle Blower

..... With Sam Shepherd

Sam Shepherd, perhaps Oldham's most famous International Rugby League referee and assessor, is a new columnist for the matchday magazine.

MY FIRST two articles for the Roughyeds programme, yet unseen because of postponements, have been concerned with games and incidents in the past. I thought it might be interesting to speak about one of the recent innovations in our game, the video referee. And who better to unravel the mysteries of the video referee, than the man himself, Oldhamer, Gerry Kershaw.

Gerry was born in Oldham, just 400 yards from the ground at Watersheddings and was a pupil of mine at Counthill Grammar School. He showed an interest in becoming a referee at the age of 16 and I took him to one of our local society meetings. This familiarised him with the laws of the game and he successfully took the Rugby League examination at 18.

By the time he was 24 he was a senior referee and he served 25 years at the highest level in the game, including officiating at Wembley in 1981. Incidentally, no other referee has survived for 25 years at the top level.

When he is on duty as the video referee, he is in a Sky Television production van outside the ground with about fifteen other people. He is surrounded by as many screens as there are cameras in the ground. He sits behind Director, Neville Smith, another ex Rugby League referee from Australia who is fully conversant with all the laws of the game.

The match referee is allowed to call on the video referee when he is uncertain

about a drop goal, where a kick is taken from and where it goes into touch under the 40-20 rule and, by far the most important, whether a try has been scored. The video referee, however, cannot be called on to decide whether a pass is forward.

When the video referee studies the many screens, he makes his decision and then conveys this to a guy in the opposite corner of the van who puts it up on the big screen. If it is a try, it is straightforward enough, if not, the match referee must be informed how the game is to be re-started. There are 15 or 16 different restarts, so the video referee must convey a precise phrase to the operator, and that also appears on the big screen.

There is no doubt that when the video referee is called upon to make any decision there is an air of expectation in the crowd and when it is a crucial decision he must be under great pressure. He cannot make the decision in haste, as his decision is being watched not only by the crowd in the ground, but also thousands of television viewers and, of course, the ever critical Sky commentators.

Gerry Kershaw and the other referees I speak to often wonder, without the benefit of cameras, how many tries they gave that wouldn't have been, or how many that were not given actually should have been?

(And so say all of us!!)

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TOPIC OF THE DAY

...ATTENDANCES

AN ANALYSIS of attendances in 2000-2001 shows that Widnes were easily the best supported team in the N.F.P. with over 1000 spectators per home game

more than Leigh. Surprisingly, however, only two clubs had their best home attendance when Widnes were the visitors, these being Hunslet and Leigh. Six clubs had their best attendances when Leigh were the visitors suggesting that the Centurions had a bigger travelling support than the Vikings or that their table-topping exploits made them more attractive opponents. Oldham drew the biggest gate of the season to Barrow, Rochdale and Hull K.R.

Least attractive visitors were Chorley with seven clubs suffering their worst gates of the season when the Lynx were the visitors. Interestingly, York drew the season's lowest attendance at only one ground, namely Widnes, but the crowd of 2941 who saw that match was the highest gate York played before all season.

Whitehaven and Workington each had their best home attendances when their local rivals were the visitors.

Playing away from home thirteen of the fourteen clubs which faced Widnes at the Autoquest played before their biggest gate of the season, Chorley being the only exception. Conversely 10 of Chorley's 14 home games produced their opponents' worst gates of the season.

As regards 'winter' v. 'summer' rugby Barrow, Batley, Chorley, Dewsbury, Doncaster, Featherstone, Gateshead, Hull K.R., Hunslet, Keighley, Oldham, Whitehaven, Workington and York all had better average gates in the early part of the season largely before the start of the Super League season, although by late season league positions are fairly well established and the stragglers struggle to draw support when alternative summer activities beckon.

Nevertheless, as the N.F.P. contemplates falling into line with the Super League season it is worth considering how many top flight clubs now play on Sunday afternoons. Many, of course, now favour Friday night with Saturday and Sunday night games also on the agenda, a recognition perhaps that summer weekends draw people to alternative pastimes.

N. F. P. ATTENDANCES 2000-01

HOME		AWAY	
TEAM	AV. GATE	TEAM	AV. GATE
WIDNES	3749	LEIGH	2547
LEIGH	2555	WIDNES	1996
KEIGHLEY	2285	OLDHAM	1870
OLDHAM	2066	HULL KR	1718
FEATHERSTONE	1912	FEATHERSTONE	1703
HULL KR	1842	SWINTON	1659
DEWSBURY	1605	KEIGHLEY	1567
DONCASTER	1519	DONCASTER	1511
ROCHDALE	1401	DEWSBURY	1480
WORKINGTON	1211	WORKINGTON	1441
SHEFFIELD	1185	ROCHDALE	1407
WHITEHAVEN	972	WHITEHAVEN	1363
HUNSLET	957	BATLEY	1362
BARROW	955	HUNSLET	1266
SWINTON	901	SHEFFIELD	1202
BATLEY	888	BARROW	1190
GATESHEAD	783	YORK	1133
YORK	631	GATESHEAD	1032
CHORLEY	533	CHORLEY	918

2001/2002 Attendances

AWAY
Barrow
Batley
Chorley
Dewsbury
Doncaster
Featherstone
Gateshead
Huddersfield
Hull KR
Hunslet
Keighley
Leigh
OLDHAM
Rochdale
Sheffield
Swinton
Whitehaven
Workington
York

AWAY
Barrow
Batley
Chorley
Dewsbury
Doncaster
Featherstone
Gateshead
Huddersfield
Hull KR
Hunslet
Keighley
Leigh
OLDHAM
Rochdale
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OLDHAM RLFC

Heritage Trust



Albert Brough's
1927 Challenge Cup
Winners Medal



Billy Dixon's
1904/5
Championship Medal



Billy Dixon's
1907/8 Lancs League
Winners Medal



Billy Dixon's
1907 Challenge Cup
Runners Up Medal



Billy Dixon's
Cumberland County
Representative 1911/12

HELP PLUG THE DRAIN !!!

Oldham Rugby Heritage Trust, formed to preserve the heritage of Oldham RLFC not just for the benefit of the club's fans but on behalf of all sports enthusiasts in the town, boasts the most comprehensive rugby league club collection of trophies, medals, international caps and jerseys in the world.

The Trust relies on the vast percentage of its collection being donated but from time to time finds it necessary to enter the hurly burly world of the auction house in its quest to secure Oldham RLFC related memorabilia which otherwise would probably end up being displayed in Australian, South African and American sports bars!

Just last week a Shropshire auctioneer offered Albert Brough's 1927 Challenge Cup Winners medal to the highest bidder and a couple of weeks before that a collection of four Billy Dixon medals went under the hammer up in Cumbria. Brough, 1924 Tourist and Ashes winner, was one of only four Oldham players who played in the four consecutive Challenge Cup finals in the late twenties, a feat not surpassed until Wigan dominated the tournament in the 1990's. And Dixon, a club star from the early twentieth century, when the Roughyeds had arguably its best ever side, was Oldham's second most prolific trophy winner.

Most sports minded people would want

to see those trophies returned to town and that's just what the Trust ensured but not before parting with a four figure sum.

Last season I wrote in the programme about the frustration in not being able to afford to secure the future of vintage Oldham star Sam Lees' representative caps which ended up in the hands of a Cape Town dealer and proclaimed that this should never be allowed to happen again. At least the Brough and Dixon medals are now back, but not without the help of significant club backed fund raising and a generous contribution from the Independent Supporters Club. The cost of obtaining rugby memorabilia has spiralled and insurance, restoration and security costs don't come cheap.

So may be if you are interested in helping the future efforts of the Trust please contact one of the Trustees named below.

Also, if you have any item related to Oldham RLFC's history we would be pleased to discuss that too.

Trustees

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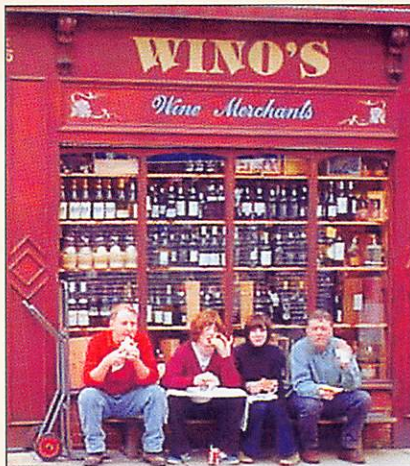
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Fixtures

Date Opponent Result Att

DECEMBER			
2	SWINTON LIONS	F - A	
		P	
16	Hull K.R.	10-26	2032
23	ROCHDALE HORNETS	P	
30	Leigh	12-46	3388

JANUARY

6	YORK	H	
13	Dewsbury Rams	A	
20	CHORLEY LYNX	H	
27	Kellogg's Challenge Cup (3rd Round)		

FEBRUARY

3	Workington	A	
10	Kellogg's Challenge Cup (4th Round)		
17	GATESHEAD	H	
24	Kellogg's Challenge Cup (5th Round)		

MARCH

3	Huddersfield	A	
10	DONCASTER DRAGONS	H	
15	Sheffield Eagles	A	
24	FEATHERSTONE	H	
29	Rochdale Hornets	A (Nat Cup)	

APRIL

1	DEWSBURY RAMS	H (Nat Cup)	
7	Huddersfield	A (Nat Cup)	
14	KEIGHLEY	H (Nat Cup)	
21	Hunslet Hawks	A (Nat Cup)	

MAY

5	BATLEY BULLDOGS	H (Nat Cup)	
12	National Cup Quarter Finals		
19	National Cup Semi Finals		
26	National Cup Final		

JUNE

2	Keighley Cougars	A	
9	WHITEHAVEN	H	
16	Barrow	A	
23	BATLEY BULLDOGS	H	
30	Hunslet Hawks	A	

JULY

7	LEIGH	H	
14	Chorley Lynx	A	
21	Whitehaven	A	
28	HUDDERSFIELD	H	

AUGUST

4	HUNSLET HAWKS	H	
11	Batley Bulldogs	A	
18	Rochdale Hornets	A	
25	WORKINGTON	H	

SEPTEMBER

1	York	A	
8	KEIGHLEY COUGARS	H	

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2

Dave GIBBONS

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Jon GODDARD

4

Joe McNICHOLAS

5

John BRADDISH

6

Neil RODEN

7

Simon KNOX

8

John HOUGH

9

Jason CLEGG

10

Phil FARRELL

11

Bryan HENARE

12

Lee DORAN

13

Gareth BARBER

14

Danny GUEST

15

Will COWELL

16

Leo CASEY

17

YORK WASPS

Leo EPIFANIA

Ben SORBELLO

Matt MULHOLLAND

Shaun AUSTERFIELD

Carl HALL

Gavin MOLLOY

Jonny LIDDELL

Mark CAIN

Andy PRECIOUS

Peter EDWARDS

Michael DOCHERTY

Leigh DEAKIN

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