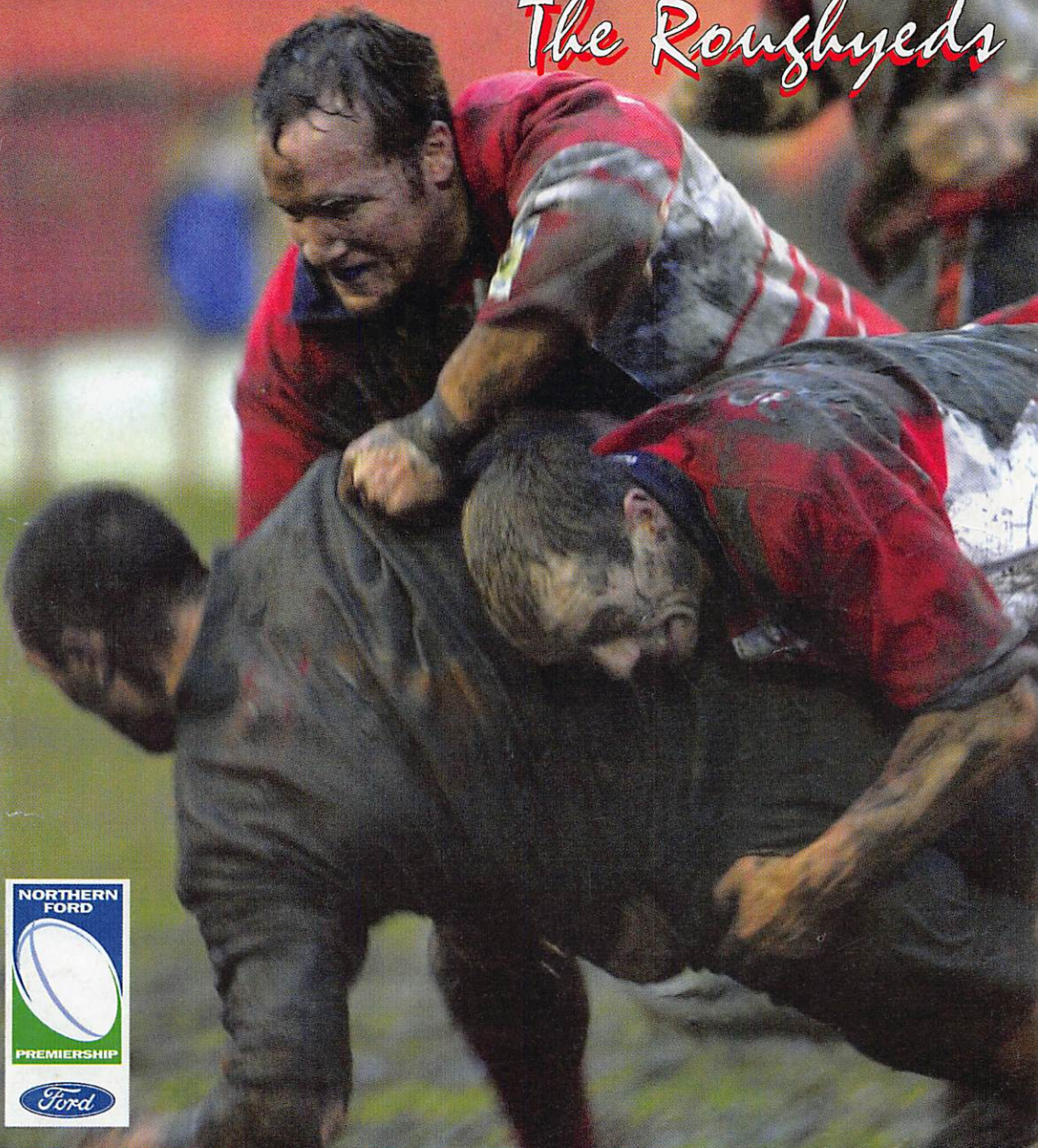


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The Roughyeds



GATESHEAD THUNDER

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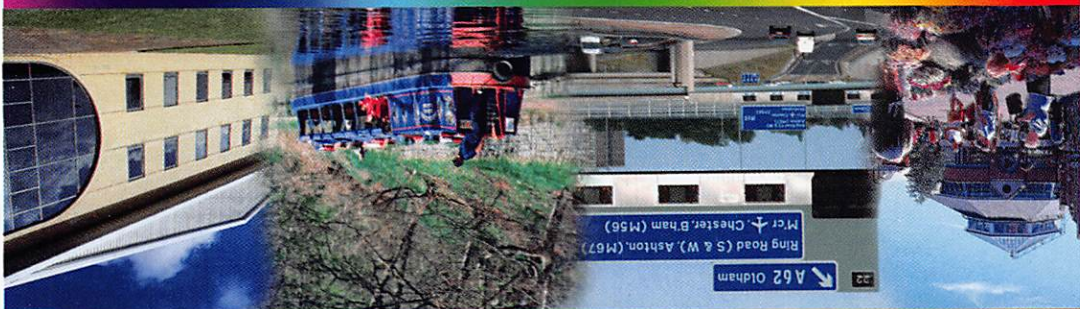
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IN THE HOT SEAT

with
Christopher Hamilton



WELCOME back to Hurst Cross. I'm sure that everybody will agree that last week's performance against St. Helens was a very creditable one and the players acquitted themselves very well. We are obviously hoping that we can take that into today's game and beyond.

John Harbin is settling into his role at the club and I am sure his influence at the club will grow as each week passes.

Today's visitors are a Gateshead team who have had it tough since they started last season and whose problems have been getting steadily worse since they released 15 players and coach Andy Kelly recently.

There has been considerable speculation as to whether or not the club would survive, but they are here today and we hope that their troubles are behind them and that they can start to move forward again with renewed vigour.

It is obviously not going to be easy for them but we wish them well. Perhaps significantly what it does do is highlight the problems that clubs are facing at the moment, particularly in the Northern Ford Premiership as this year is the first one without any News Corporation funding for most clubs.

There is no doubt at all that it is becoming increasingly difficult to balance the books and the problems at Gateshead have to an extent been replicated at Swinton where Chairman and major club benefactor, Malcolm White, has resigned.

Recent crowds have been disappointingly low at most clubs and despite again having a vibrant competition, people are reluctant to make the effort to support their local clubs. I said a long time ago that once the News Corporation money ran out some clubs would struggle to survive and it gives me no pleasure to again re-iterate that statement.

What it does do is again show just how important your individual and collective support is and I hope that you will continue to back our club.

Thank you for going to Stalybridge last week and for the support you gave to the players. Please keep it up this week – we all appreciate it.

Chris



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1964-74, Martin Murphy 1966-82,
Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94.

Front Cover:

*Action from the Kellogg's Nutri-Grain
Challenge Cup victory over West Hull.*

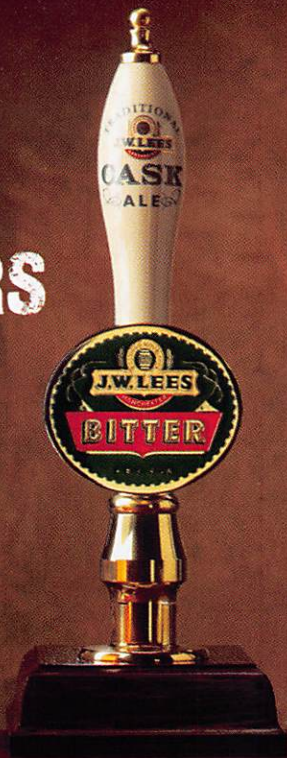
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COACH'S COMMENTS . . . with John Harbin



IF YOU went to the Cup Tie at Stalybridge I am sure you will agree that the team did themselves proud.

The side was very competitive throughout but, inevitably, the heavy pitch and the benefit of St. Helens' full time training told against us at the death. Given that Saints scored 10 points in the last 3 minutes the score ended up not fully reflecting the quality of the Oldham players' effort. Bear in mind that in Super League this coming season Saints will beat some sides by bigger margins than that suffered by Oldham. Our players were determined not to give anything up and Joe McNicholas' chase and tackle on Sean Long summed that up. But, not only that, by the time Long played the ball we had 7 or 8 players back defending and on the next tackle we forced an error. That all showed our 100% commitment and I believe supporters will forgive shortcomings if they can count

on 100% from the players.

There are still areas to work on from the St. Helens game, like our kicking and our overall fitness. I have ideas I want to implement but I need to be patient (which isn't always in my nature!). And it will be nice to have a full squad to choose from. Hopefully, Tommy Hodgkinson and Anthony Gibbons are not far off recovery and that will give us more depth.

Today we welcome Gateshead. We've prepared as usual for the game despite the uncertainty on Tyneside. Having released their Yorkshire based players, three of whom have signed for Dewsbury and two for Hunslet, they're a bit of an unknown quantity. Normally we'd have looked at them on video and compiled some tip sheets but that's not been possible. Anyway we're glad to be playing as we need game time and are in danger of falling behind if we don't get matches in.

I hope you enjoy today's match and give us your backing.

John

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An architectural sketch of a modern building with a curved facade and large windows. The drawing is in a loose, artistic style with some color washes. In the foreground, there are silhouettes of people walking and a tree. The text 'hall needham associates' is written across the bottom of the drawing in a bold, lowercase font. To the right, the word 'architects' is written vertically.

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In Yer Face



THE Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Challenge Cup didn't have too many surprises but my forecasting of results wasn't entirely accurate. The two big upsets were Leeds' defeat of Bradford and Doncaster's victory against Huddersfield.

In common with a lot of people, having watched Bradford overwhelm Newcastle Knights, I thought they'd have no problem in disposing of Leeds. However, on the evidence of the cup tie Leeds are going to be an entirely different proposition this coming Super League season. With Ryan Sheridan recovered from injury and the addition of Ben Walker at stand-off – plus young Rob Burrow waiting in the wings – the Rhinos look to have plenty of craft. Add in Matt Adamson in the second-row and Adrian Vowles (excellent at centre in the cup tie but, surely, destined to be used elsewhere over the course of the season) and you can see there is a lot more steel to the Headingley mens' game this term. And by setting out their stall from the word go the Rhinos showed every other team how to stop the Bulls' big pack from trampling all over them.

In the other televised game Wigan duly accounted for Hull FC. However, I thought the Humbersiders gave a good account of themselves and I see no reason to alter my prediction of them as a top 5 side. With the likes of Jason Smith, Richard Horne, Paul Cooke and Chris Chester they certainly have the playmakers. What they need to go with them are the power players to mix it with the top sides. You can bet that excellent Coach Sean McRae is already on to it.

Doncaster Dragons, meanwhile, were, according to all reports, truly awesome in inflicting Huddersfield Giants' first defeat of the season, a result not anticipated in view of the Giants' record in the NFP so far this season.

Two other results I had wrong were at Spotland and the Lionheart Stadium where I forecast close outcomes but went with home

advantage. In each case the visitors proved me wrong, Leigh defeating Rochdale 24-20 and Hull KR overcoming Featherstone 31-24. Again, both matches were full value earning 5 out of 5 for entertainment from the Rugby Leaguer.

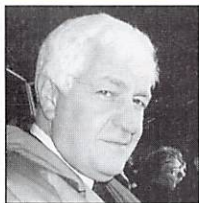
All my other forecasts were correct and I was particularly pleased to have the results right for the French teams. U.T.C. beat Chorley 20-6 and earned themselves a plum draw in the next round against Wigan. I hope the Perpignon public turn out in force to support the game and, even more, would welcome a French victory, though I consider that unlikely.

Villeneuve were less lucky with the draw having to travel to Doncaster after knocking out York Wasps 17-8. I fear this one will be a journey too far for them.

The other Gallic challengers St. Gaudens went down 26-48 against Halifax. They put up a spirited fight, however, and will have been encouraged by an attendance of over 3,500.

The other qualifiers were Warrington, London, Castleford, Workington, St. Helens, Wakefield, Widnes and Whitehaven. Several of these however, will be eliminated next time round reducing the number of 'big guns' to contest the final stages. For instance Warrington will go out against St. Helens who must be favourites, together with Leeds, to reach yet another Final.

London will stage their first game of the season on Brentford FC's ground and will suffer disappointment at the hands of Castleford. Leeds should put paid to Hull KR's hopes at Headingley. But the other ties should all be good value. Widnes against Wakefield looks evenly matched but I suspect the Vikings will shade it. Similarly Leigh v Whitehaven could be close but home advantage will see the Centurions to victory. And, finally, can Workington overturn the Blue Sox at Derwent Park? I expect they'll be giving it a real go but Super League fitness should tell in Halifax's favour.



'THE DON'

ON THIS DAY . . .

Don Yates looks back to February 17th yesteryear

IT was on this day in 1988, Wednesday 17th February, that Oldham signed the giant trialist three-quarter who had made such a big impression when he turned out on the wing the previous Sunday against Carlisle. He was Charlie McAlister, a New Zealander of Scottish descent, who was signed from Bradford & Bingley RUFC. Charlie made 129 appearances for Oldham during two spells with the club and scored 33 tries and 63 goals. He moved on to Sheffield Eagles in March 1992 and then had spells with Whitehaven and Keighley before returning to Oldham in September 1993. McAlister finished his professional career with Rochdale Hornets but then had a short spell as player-coach with Higginshaw, during which time he represented Scotland in the 1995 Emerging Nations World Cup competition.

One of the 33 tries Charlie scored for Oldham came exactly eleven years ago, on Sunday 17th February 1991, when the Roughyeds won 28-6 at Bramley in the first round of the Challenge Cup. Another away win in the Challenge Cup which brought a surge of euphoria to Watersheddings came on Saturday 17th February 1973 when a special train was chartered for the trip to Hull. Oldham won 24-2 at the Boulevard and such were the scenes on the train journey home that ill-informed observers could be forgiven for believing that the Roughyeds had actually lifted the Cup at Wembley.

Alas Oldham never did come to play at Wembley. In 1985 hopes of reaching the twin towers were especially high and after being drawn at home in round one a lengthy cup run seemed assured.

Unfortunately, the match against Castleford could not be played at Watersheddings on Sunday 17th February because the pitch was frozen solid. The tie, therefore, was switched to Boundary Park which, at that time, was equipped with under soil heating. Oldham's initiative in getting the

tie completed was not rewarded with success for Castleford won 14-8 and another Wembley dream ended.



Charlie Winslade

game and, as a result, Wales selected Oldham's Charlie Winslade to fill the problem number 9 shirt. Charlie was an outstanding second-row forward and an asset to any pack but a hooker he certainly was not. Remember, at that time, a hooker was an essential component of any team and without an experienced hooker any side would struggle for possession. France won the first 14 scrums before Charlie was able to even things up a little. Nevertheless scrum possession figures ended up 23-10 in favour of the home side who put that advantage to good use, winning 23-3.

Nine years ago, on Wednesday 17th February 1993, the new main stand was opened at Spotland, Rochdale. To mark the occasion Great Britain met France at under-21 level. Centre Gary Christie was the only Oldham representative in that match which the young Lions won 46-10. The attendance was 2,080 which is exactly the capacity of Oldham's homely headquarters for this season here at Hurst Cross.

Incidentally, 59 years previously, on Wednesday 17th February 1926, Castleford were admitted into the Northern Rugby Football League when a League Management meeting accepted their application.

On Sunday 17th February 1963 Wales met France at Toulouse. At that time there was a dearth of Welsh hooking talent in the

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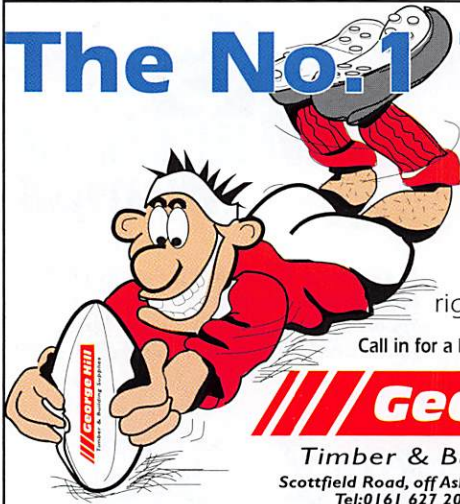
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Alliance & Academy

..... with Shaun Gartland and Mark Knight

OLDHAM'S games in the Alliance Spring Cup (since when was January Spring?) have not yet beaten the weather. However others have and to date the recorded results are, Dewsbury Rams 6 Batley Bulldogs 32; Batley Bulldogs 10 Rochdale Hornets 20; Gateshead Thunder 6 Dewsbury Rams 70.

The competition format sees Batley and Dewsbury play each other home and away as do Oldham and Rochdale and Gateshead and Workington. The other teams meet only once for a total of six fixtures followed by play-offs (1 v 4 and 2 v 3) before a Grand Final in April.

With Rochdale Hornets now using Butterworth Park at Castleton all Oldham's home games will be at Manor Park, the home of Oldham RUFC. Please watch the local press for details of rearranged fixtures.

ALLIANCE UNDER 21 SPRING CUP FIXTURES

Saturday 2nd February	Workington Town (H) at Manor Park 2.30 ko <i>(Postponed, to be re-arranged)</i>
Thursday 14th February	Dewsbury Rams (A) At Ram Stadium 7.30 ko
Wednesday 20th February	Rochdale Hornets (A) at Castleton Gabriels 7.30 ko
Saturday 2nd March	Rochdale Hornets (H) at Manor Park 2.30 ko
Saturday 9th March	Gateshead Thunder (A) at Bullocksteads Sports Ground 1.30 ko
Saturday 16th March	Batley Bulldogs (H) at Manor Park 2.30 ko

Week ending 6th April Play-off 1 v 4 and 2 v 3

Saturday 13th April Final

NORTHERN FORD PREMIERSHIP TABLE 2001-2002

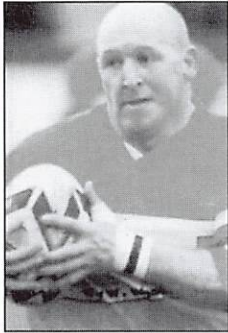
	P	W	D	L	For	Agst	Diff	PTS
Huddersfield Giants	8	7	1	0	287	66	221	15
Workington Town	9	7	0	2	224	149	75	14
Whitehaven	9	6	1	2	220	102	118	13
Hull Kingston Rovers	7	6	0	1	198	92	106	12
Leigh Centurions	6	5	1	0	228	67	161	11
Rochdale Hornets	7	5	1	1	188	103	85	11
Featherstone Rovers	7	4	1	2	161	120	41	9
Sheffield Eagles	8	4	0	4	212	144	68	8
Barrow Raiders	9	4	0	5	221	184	37	8

Batley Bulldogs	8	4	0	4	119	176	-57	8
Doncaster Dragons	6	3	0	3	132	118	14	6
Dewsbury Rams	6	3	0	3	113	118	-5	6
Oldham	6	2	0	4	114	148	-34	4
Chorley Lynx	8	2	0	6	126	204	-78	4
Hunslet Hawks	6	1	0	5	76	246	-170	2
Keighley Cougars	6	1	0	5	78	261	-183	2
Gateshead Thunder	7	0	1	6	62	148	-86	1
Swinton Lions	4	0	0	4	36	115	-79	0
York Wasps	7	0	0	7	52	286	-234	0

NFP Round Up

THE last round of the N.F.P. fixtures produced one major shock (to me at least) when Dewsbury beat Rochdale 25-20. Ram Stadium has been a graveyard for Hornets' hopes previously and a storming Dewsbury second-half performance with sub Jim Leatham well to the fore secured the points in a thrilling contest.

Equally exciting was the Featherstone-Whitehaven clash in which the Rovers edged home 20-19. A last minute try from Jim Carlton stole the points, but equally important earlier in the game were two field goals from Jamie Rooney.



Martin Wood

Elsewhere, if Oldham fans will forgive me, results went to form. The Roughyeds went down 28-20 at Workington in a game dominated by the division's best halfback pairing of Tane Manihera and Martin Wood. Had the fixture fallen in June I might have expected an Oldham win, but a windswept, rain sodden Derwent Park in February definitely favours the home team.

Huddersfield stayed top of the league with an expected easy win over Hunslet 68-6. Chris Thorman, with a try and eight goals, closed up on Leigh's Neil Turley at the top of the pointsoring charts, while three-quarters Hefin O'Hare and Eorl Crabtree and fullback Ben Cooper all advanced their positions in the leading try-scorers list (*see page 30*).

Other big scorers were Sheffield's Gavin Brown (seven goals and two tries) and Craig Brown (three tries) in the Eagles' 34-26 defeat of Barrow.

There were hat-tricks too, for Whetu Taewa as Hull K.R. overcame a spirited Chorley 40-28 and for Anton Garcia as Doncaster powered past Batley 46-10.

In the other game on February 3rd Leigh easily accounted for York 48-6.

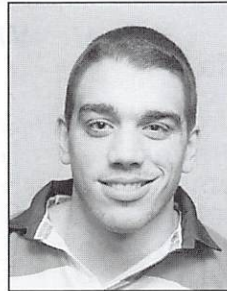
In today's fixtures Featherstone face a

difficult trip to Barrow. The visitors have hit better form after a shaky start to the season, but I still expect the Raiders to secure a home victory.

Batley v Sheffield pitches together two teams with identical records – four wins and four defeats from eight games – the Eagles having the better points difference. It could go either way, but the Mount Pleasant slope should give the Bulldogs the edge.

Hull KR entertain second placed Workington and could leapfrog them in the table if they win. Given that the Cumbrians don't always travel well the Robins should pull it off.

Elsewhere the results are predictable (famous last words!). Dewsbury will put up the best fight but will not be good enough to topple Leigh at Hilton Park. Otherwise, Doncaster will beat Hunslet; Oldham will defeat Gateshead; Rochdale will overcome Chorley; Huddersfield will pulverise strife-torn Swinton and Whitehaven will wallop Keighley.



Pat Rich

On the news front Malcolm White did call time on Swinton and I fear for the future of the Lions without their high profile Chairman. Similarly, today's visitors Gateshead have undertaken a restructuring exercise which will set them back in the short term but, hopefully, will pay dividends in the longer

term, especially as there is a sound youth game in Durham and the North-East capable of producing home grown stars (come back Pat Rich!).

Finally, the major transfer story is the signing of Dane Dorahy the former Rochdale and Wakefield stand-off by Hull K.R. A Murdock-Dorahy halfback partnership behind the Robins' big pack is certainly a mouth-watering prospect and emphasises fourth placed K.R.'s plans to mount a major challenge in this year's N.F.P.

IN **Town** TODAY



GATESHEAD THUNDER

TO say that things have been traumatic on Tyneside the last couple of weeks would be an incredible understatement. With Coach Andy Kelly and all the club's Yorkshire based players released it is impossible to forecast exactly what kind of team Gateshead can field today. We apologise for any lack of accurate information and can only sympathise with the Thunder management for the problems they face and in their efforts to overcome these.

Of course, if any town knows all about battling against the odds it is Oldham and we hope that Gateshead's officials, staff, players and supporters will take encouragement from our experiences here at the Roughyeds. Although it's not, perhaps, our position to criticise it does appear that in its brief life the Gateshead club, in its two incarnations (Super League and N.F.P.) has been shabbily treated. And I cannot agree with the writer in the Rugby Leaguer who would be more upset at the loss of another strife torn club – Swinton – than of Gateshead. In the first instance the loss of ANY club is unacceptable (and where was the outcry over the demise of Bramley?). And in the second place Gateshead is not some far flung outpost of the game, but a club situated in the midst of an enthusiastic following the same as every other member of the N.F.P. and one backed by a strong amateur and youth set up.

At the time of going to press RAY UNSWORTH has taken over as Coach and has had a couple of training sessions with the squad from which he will pick his team today. Ray is the R.F.L.'s and BARLA's Coaching Co-ordinator and Director of Coach Education and has been appointed to run things temporarily. He is a former member of Wigan's successful and outstanding coaching team of the '80s.

On the field the team is difficult to predict and we apologise if the back cover has had to be left blank. However I would expect the following players to feature:-

STEVEN BRADLEY A 20 year old back-row

forward who gave Oldham problems last year with his incisive running. A signing with the original Thunder his registration passed to Hull F.C. on 'merger'. He was, however, released to re-join his hometown club in the N.F.P.

GARETH BARRON Like Bradley a former Gateshead Academy player. Only 19 but big and strong and a real asset at prop forward. 6'4" and 17st. Wales and G.B. Student international.

STEPHEN RUTHERFORD Another local and graduate from the Thunder Academy. A back-row forward who had trials with Sheffield Eagles before opting for Gateshead. Aged 20.

RICHARD SPENCE Another 20 year old from the Academy side. Can play hooker or halfback with equal proficiency.

PAUL THORMAN 19 year old brother of Huddersfield Giants' leading scorer Chris Thorman. Like his brother, Paul plays half back and is equally at home wearing 6 or 7. Last season's leading scorer.

TONY DOHERTY Signed from the Academy after a spell at Castleford Tigers. An Irish student, he was one of five Gateshead players on the G.B. Students' tour of Russia.

CRAIG FIRTH Local lad who represented England students in Russia. Ex-Academy. good, strong tackler.

ROBIN PEERS Also an England students representative in Russia. Utility back who gives value in whichever position he appears.

KEVIN NEIGHBOUR Speedy wingman who has graduated from the Academy. Can also play full-back or centre. Particularly good under the high ball.

DAVID GRIFFITHS Lively three-quarter.

MICKY SPELLS Hard running prop

Others available for selection are **CHRISTOPHER NAYLOR**, **RUSSELL HUGILL**, **PHILIP PITT**, **NEIL RICHARDSON**, **CRAIG IRWIN**, **JOHN COUTTS**, **MICHAEL McDAID**, **IAIN JOHNSTONE**, **ROBERT McGREAL** AND **BEN MAYERS**.

Walkerbout

... with Brian Walker

IRISH EYES STILL SMILE

Ex Irish RU international and Oldham RL wingman Sean Quinlan realised his rugby playing days were up after spending three weeks flat on his back in Cheetham Hill's Jewish Hospital recovering from yet another knee problem, this time a more serious cartilage correction. That was way back in 1961 but had today's technology been available then the 27 year old Cork born speedster's league career would probably have spanned more than just three seasons and only eleven first team appearances.

Quinlan came to and left Oldham with knee problems so just after New Year when I caught up with the ex Blackrock College flyer at his County Dublin home it came as no surprise that he had subsequently suffered bad arthritis but fortunately this had been partially remedied by two successful knee replacement operations.

In 1956 the winger represented Ireland against France, England and Wales and played against the Welsh for a second time in 58, departing Lansdowne Rd and the union scene for the onward flight to the pro code following the final whistle. Unlike the exodus of players from Wales Quinlan was one of only a handful of Irishmen to sell his rugby skills to league and it was no surprise that Sean's departure of the Emerald Isle ruffled a few Irish feathers.

Nevertheless the amiable Quinlan is still acknowledged by the Irish RU and tells me that in recognition of his international status and services rendered he still receives two complimentary tickets to all Ireland's home matches which brought me nicely to the reason I had contacted Sean, to gauge his reaction to the departure from league to the Lansdowne Rd coaching scene of former Oldham head coach Mike Ford.

I must admit that I thought the promotion to head coach of fellow recent Irish international wingman Eddie O'Sullivan with assistance from Munster coaches Declan Kidney and Niall O'Donovan plus Mike Ford with his league experience would sit well with Sean but not one bit of it. His view was that under Warren Gatland season 2001 had proved the most successful for the Irish in sixteen years. The squad, by beating the English, finished level with them at the top of the Six Nations Championship table and saw no reason for dismantling what was a proven and successful coaching combination, Gatland with O'Sullivan as assistant.

Sean said "generally the Irish broadsheets agreed with that but heralded Ford's arrival as the 'capture' from league of a young and ambitious coach with proven ability and pointed to Phil Larder's success as defensive coach being instrumental in England's emergence as a major force in world rugby".

Sean Quinlan would have been at Lansdowne Rd to witness the hammering of the Welsh so may already have had a change of mind about O'Sullivan but when asked his view about the future of both codes he explained "I am an avid Sky viewer of league and whilst union lacks its intensity it has, by decreasing the number of stoppages especially from kicks, increased its overall appeal as a spectator sport but there is a desperate need to do away with the ruck and the raking and stamping associated with it. But they are still two very different sports".

Sean still keeps in touch with the goings on at Oldham and just last summer fellow Roughyeds stalwart Des McKeown was a visitor and the Quinlan family aims to rekindle other friendships when they hope to visit the town this summer. He asks to be remembered to the Oldham supporters and wishes the team and its new coach all the best for the season.



Ireland v Wales '57 Sean Quinlan sat front row far right

Iwa Slateloose



COMING SOON

ROUGHYEDS – THE MOVIE

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'*where's Hurst Cross?*' – *National Geographic*

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John (I'm Free) Inman	as	<i>Maurice Lindsay</i>
Stanley Unwin	as	<i>Eddie Waring</i>
Rolf Harris	as	<i>Greg McCallum</i>
Danny de Vito	as	<i>Chris Hamilton</i>
Tom Cruise	as	<i>Paddy Kirwan</i>
Arnold Schwarzenegger	as	<i>John Hough</i>
Pamela Anderson	as	<i>the Club Physio</i>
The Bolshoi Ballet	as	<i>the Roughyettes</i>
Marlon Brando	as	<i>John Harbin</i>
Victor Meldrew	as	<i>the season-ticket holder whose view is blocked by two walls and a big red girder</i>

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SUPPORTING FEATURE

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John Candy	is	<i>Rodney Walker</i>

And featuring **Julia Roberts** as *Mrs McCallum* and **Brad Pitt** as *Maurice Lindsay*

An Attenborough/Slateloose film

Michael's Match

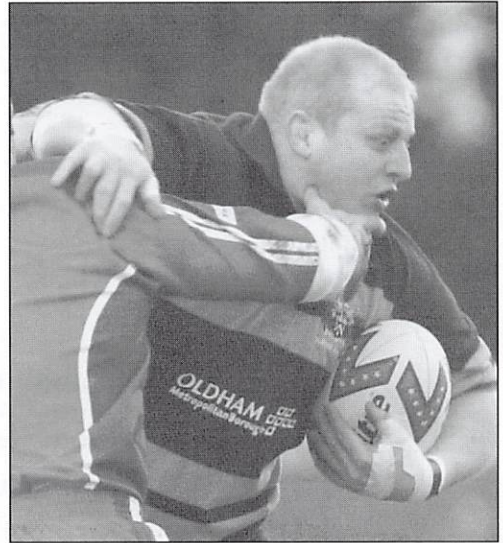
... from the pen of Michael Turner



TODAY we welcome the Players, officials and supporters of the Gateshead Thunder club. With little history of matches between the two clubs, this week's feature goes back just to last season and the visit of the Roughyeds to the North East for their first ever fixture at Gateshead on June 3rd 2001. Oldham were second in the NFP with their opponents likewise second, but from the foot of the table. However, what a fright they gave the Roughyeds in the first half hour when the "Thunderstorm" rocked the visitors with two tries apiece for Leon Williamson and Carl Briggs, two of them converted by the latter.

A feature of the Gateshead game in this period was the strong, straight running of the second row pairing of Jim Carlton and Steven Bradley. It wasn't until the closing minutes of the first half that Oldham got their act together.

came from; Anthony Gibbons (2), Joe McNicholas, Neil Roden and Brian Henare but the biggest cheer of all accompanied a rare touchdown for the ever popular prop forward Jason Clegg. The reliable Pat Rich converted seven of the scores to leave Oldham eventual comfortable winners by fifty points to twenty but, as at Stalybridge last week, the score didn't really reflect what a great effort Gateshead had put into the match.



Tryscorer at Gateshead last season.



Impressive display at Gateshead last season.

The star of the show was Keith Brennan who shone in both attack and defence and was rewarded for his enthusiastic display with a hat trick of tries. Further Oldham tries

The general view of the visiting Oldham supporters was of a "good day out" amongst the vociferous Geordie fans, whose enthusiasm for their club was admirable. Let us hope for their sake that in these troubled times for the club they manage to keep the RL flag flying in the North East.

Oldham Team v Gateshead June 3rd 2001.

M Sibson, J McNicholas, A Gibbons, P Rich, D Lacey, D Gibbons, N Roden, J Clegg, K Brennan, P Norton, P Farrell, B Henare, K Mannion.

Subs: L Doran, L Casey, G Barber, G Johnston.



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A Chance to Meet . . . **WILL COWELL**

with David McGealy, Radio Cavell 1350AM

Where and when were you born and who's in your family?

I was born on 31st December 1979 in Workington, Cumbria and then moved to Whitehaven. Family: I've got Mam, Dad, an older brother and a younger sister.

So, a New Years Eve baby! Must be awkward that, only one set of presents each year?

That's what it is every year, it does my head in, you get to Christmas and that's it.

So a deprived childhood then?

Oh Yes. Terrible really.

What's your first memory of Rugby League?

Having a fight with one of my best mates as he is now. We used to always battle against each other on the field because he was a good player and I was a good player. I think we were only about seven or eight years old and I always used to be fighting with him on the field. He's Paul O'Niell who now plays for Whitehaven as Full Back.

Was that in a proper game?

No that was just in training when we used to play for Kells amateurs when we were at under eights or under nines.

Who did you play for in your first real game of Rugby League?

That was with Kells. I've always played for Kells from a young amateur right until I moved on to Warrington.

So what age did you go there?

I was at Kells at Under 18's, and I was playing for the Open Age team as well. Then I went on tour to Australia

with the BARLA Under 21's. When I came back I moved down to Warrington in '97 when I was 18.

So Kells are a big club in your area?

Yes. There's a lot of people signed from there, especially for Warrington. The likes of Gary Chambers, David Elliott and Chris Rudd. There's a lad called Stephen Kirkbride who eventually moved back to Whitehaven.

So you signed professional for Warrington, how did that come about?

I was playing for Kells against a team called Broughton Red Rose. After the game a man called Jim Reader, the Chief Scout for Warrington came up to me and just said they were interested in signing me and would I mind coming down. I went down to Warrington and things just went from there. I met the coach, who was John Monie at the time and when I eventually went down in 97 it was Darryl van de Velde.

Tell us a little bit about your time there?

It was good. For the first two years I played for the Academy, Alliance type teams then I eventually broke through to the first team. I only played about three games the first season, then a few more the season after and a few more the season after that. But last season I didn't seem to get in to the side so I thought it was time for a move. My contract ended as well, and when the new coach came I didn't seem to fit into his plans. So I eventually got my P45 and left.

So why come to Oldham, surely there were other clubs interested in you

Well last year they got to the

Grand Final and they're a club that's hopefully going places, so hopefully I can 'kick start' my career back here and 'hopefully' go back into Super League, if not with Oldham then with some other team.

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

My dad really. He wasn't a big rugby league fan, he was more rugby union, but he's always backed me with everything. There was also a man called Ian Gainford who coached me from when I was young right through all the amateur ranks and I've always looked up to him as well. I eventually got to play with him as well in the 'Open Age' team even though he was about thirty five.

Could he still do the business?

He can't now he's about forty odd but he was a good bloke and a good player. He went on the BARLA Tours as well but he didn't want to sign professional because he had a good job up there and he'd never move away.

But he talks a good game?

Oh yes. He talks a very good game.

What was your most memorable moment so far in rugby league?

It's probably a bad one really. My first game in Australia when I went with the BARLA Under 21's. In the first half hour of the game I injured myself and couldn't play for the rest of the five week tour. So it's probably a bad one but that's the main memory I've got stuck in my head.

So you know what it's like to miss out. Did you stay with the Party or come home early?

Oh no I stayed out there. I got a holiday out of it. I went around on all the little trips and everything with the Management Team rather than training.

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couldn't train because I'd 'popped' my shoulder so I just enjoyed the trips while the other lads were training.

It must have been sheer Hell for you all that!

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

There's a guy called Lee Rutherford who plays for Kells. He used to play for Whitehaven before he went back to Kells. Every time he was playing he was always joking, he never took a game seriously, he was just joking all the time. He was a big tall fellow, with chubby cheeks and long hair and all the time he was just telling jokes. Even in the scrum! A Prop Forward that keeps telling jokes to the other Prop! He's one that's always tickled me. Even in the changing room he's just telling jokes to everybody and you can't get ready or prepare properly for the game.

I've heard of fists flying in the scrum but never heard of telling jokes to put the other team off!

Oh he could fight as well but he just kept telling jokes.

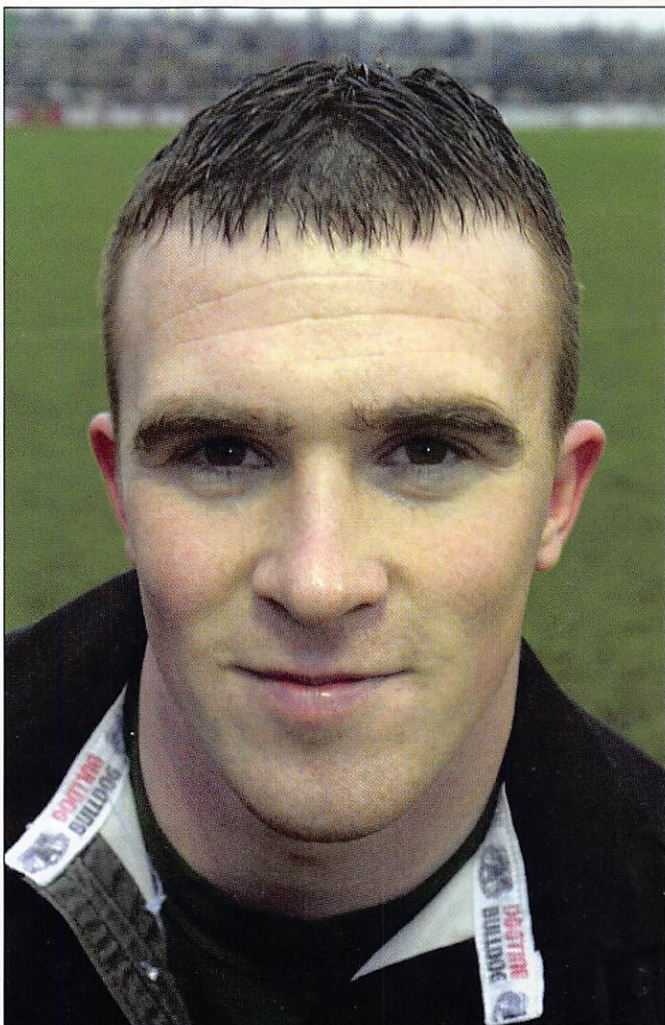
What's your ambition in Rugby League?

Well hopefully go back into Super League. That's what I signed at Warrington for so hopefully I can 'kick start' my career here and then move back up into Super League.

Tell us a secret about one of your team mates at Oldham?

Well Bryan Henare picks his nose a lot!

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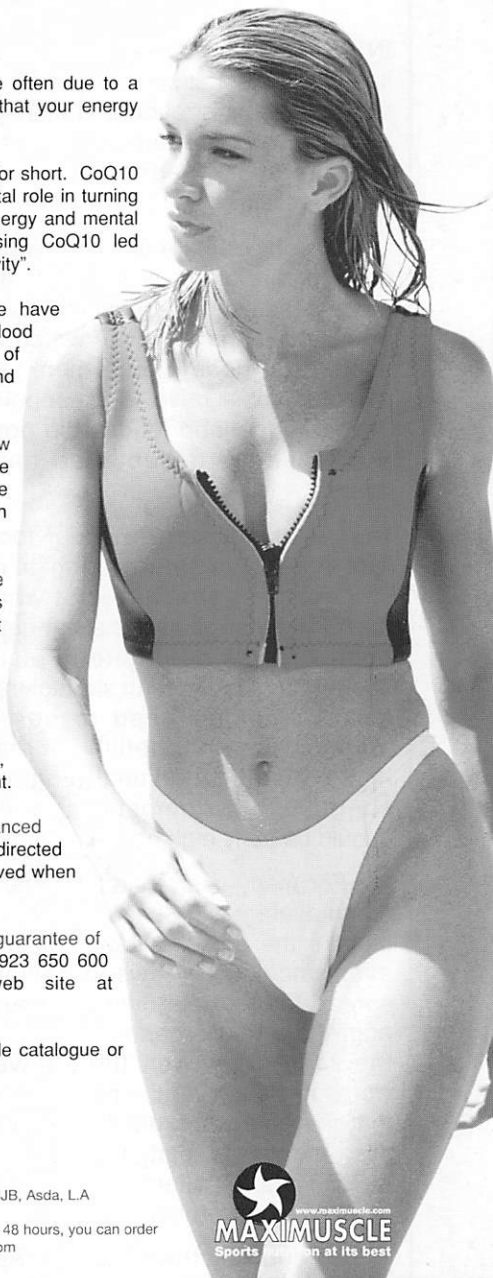
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Wilson's Wisdom

... with Ian Wilson

IN PRINCIPLE, at least, what good news it is that, at last, it seems that the game's top-level administration and management is going to be sorted out. The last few years have been farcical, and embarrassing.

Of course, there is a long way still to go. In particular, the whole of the amateur game needs to be brought into the unified administration, in a way which can be seen to be beneficial to them. And the correct people have to be appointed to the newly-defined leadership positions. But at least a decent start has been made.

Let us not start to cheer too soon, however. It is fine having a decent management structure, but what then matters is that good decisions get made, both in terms of long-term plans and short- and medium-term strategies. And in addition to the need to sort out a structured and hopefully increasingly high-profile international programme, I suggest that domestic attendances should be fairly high on the agenda.

For many years, the total attendance on an average RL Sunday has been, give or take the odd thousand, 55,000. And ever since Sky televised games have spread the fixtures over weekends, the aggregate figure has remained roughly the same. However, there have been worrying signs over the past two seasons that the figure has often dropped below this. And, to me, early signs this season, in NFP and Challenge Cup, have also been very concerning.

Of course, there are exceptions, Bradford is the outstanding one, Leeds continue to attract a large and loyal

following. Cas did very well for a while, and at a lower level, Keighley have done incredibly well at times. But that leaves an awful lot of clubs who, if they are honest, must be extremely disappointed at their inability either to attract any significant new audience or to retrain some of their traditional bedrock support.

What can be done? I think that the first point to make is that a lot of spectators have been lost because of administrative failures by the game as a whole. It follows that improved leadership and a clear vision of where the game is going should themselves contribute to increased popularity, even if it needs to be accepted that this is likely to be a fairly long, slow haul.

But what about more directly-focused "marketing"? I cringe when I hear the game referred to as a "product", and the techniques used to market Persil or credit cards are definitely not directly transferable. But that is not to say that, both at the level of individual clubs and for the game as a whole, there are not lessons which can be learned from management and marketing theory. Number one is the need for well-directed, carefully-thought-out market research amongst the potential 'customers' before taking action. And number two is to make decisions on the "4 P's" - price, product, place, promotion - which take account of the research, and which are consistent with each other.

The strength of the game depends on its attractiveness to supporters, active or passive, in an increasingly competitive leisure market. The new leadership has a huge task on its hands, and a huge responsibility.

Junior Roughyeds



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WELCOME to the Junior Roughyeds page.

First of all the Juniors would like to pass on their congratulations to John, Mark, and all the players for a fantastic performance against St. Helens. Megan asked whether Joe McNicholas had had *three* shredded wheat for his breakfast last Sunday!

On Saturday night John Mitchell telephoned to ask if I could get a team of ball boys/girls together for the St. Helens game and I said I would try. I would like to personally thank Emma Cameron, Megan Hartley, Carl Clare and Richard Cowling for turning up at short notice on Sunday and doing a fine job in abysmal weather conditions. Each one said they enjoyed doing it and would do it again no problem. Well done.

The mascot for today's game is 9 year old Christopher Marshall. Christopher goes to Knowsley Lane Junior School, Springhead. Christopher's favourite player is our Junior Roughyed Player of the Year Jason Clegg.

Christopher loves playing on his bike and computer and also his skateboard. A word of warning though: when I spoke to Christopher's mum she said he was in their garden making a wormery in their barbecue! So if you are ever asked to go to a barbecue at Christopher's house this year don't say I haven't warned you!!

Have a good day Christopher.

Enjoy the game.

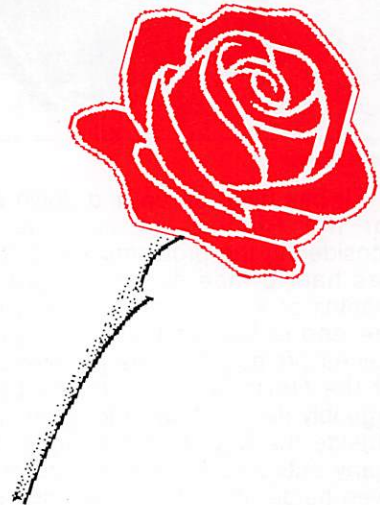
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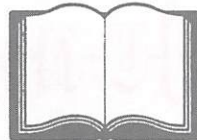
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Amateur Album

.....WITH DON YATES



NEXT Saturday, 23rd February, is a big day for Shaw Rhinos when they meet undefeated Lancashire Cup finalists Rosebridge in an intriguing North West Counties Premier Division League Cup-tie which should attract a bumper gate to George Street.



Iestyn Harris

It has been an up and down season for the Rhinos, no surprise really considering the problems which the club has had to face during the past eight months or so. Everything looked rosy at the end of last season when the club gained promotion to the premier division of the North West Counties League, arguably the most demanding competition outside the Conference League. Indeed many critics consider this division to be even harder than the Conference second division. Shaw were hoping to have over 30 players signed on for what they knew would be a demanding season. However several retirements and the loss of high profile coach Iestyn Harris, who moved to

Cardiff in his quest for Welsh rugby union honours, obviously took some overcoming.

In came new coach Sid Miller ably supported by the ever-reliable David Whitehead and, despite disappointing early results, the club made a reasonable start to the campaign. Between mid-October and Mid-November the Rhinos hit a rich vein of form, winning five matches out of six and indicating that, with luck, they could soon be pressing for honours. Unfortunately that luck never came and injuries plus a poor run of results led to the resignation of Miller. He had done his best, occasionally turning out despite being the wrong side of fifty, but he could do no more and so it was left to Whitehead to steer the ship back on course.

Prop-forward Paul Spencer has been a tower of strength all season. He has been assisted by centre Paul Winrow and fullback Rob Mills whilst goal kicking loose-forward or stand-off Danny Atherton has continued to lead from the front. Earlier this month scrum half cum hooker Dean Hamilton made a comeback after a lengthy lay-off with the knee injury which threatened to end his career during his St. Annes and BARLA Great Britain days. His try scoring return in the 38-16 victory over Ulverston more or less ended Shaw's fears of relegation. Indeed it took them into a respectable mid-table position and with the pressure now off, the Rhinos are expecting a bright finish to the season.

The biggest disappointment of the season so far has been Shaw's lack of progress in cup competitions. They bowed out of both the Lancashire and Standard Cup competitions in the early rounds and so are determined to make up for that by causing a few surprises in the League Cup campaign. Rosebridge will provide formidable opposition but they cannot go on winning forever and the Rhinos are confident of causing an upset.

CLUB CALL

THE SATURDAY YANKEE

The Sat Yankee is a major source of the clubs income and prize money last month reached a record level of £5000 and that was for just £1 weekly stake. If you are not a member of this existing lottery you can help the club and hopefully yourself by filling in a Saturday Yankee form or calling Lorraine at the club on 0161 628 3677. Also we need collectors for most areas around Oldham and we offer good commissions.

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OLDHAM 17 · HULL KR 14

CHALLENGE CUP SEMI-FINAL REPLAY AT SWINTON, APRIL 15TH 1964

REFEREE: D. T. H. DAVIES

THESE two teams had met four days earlier at Headingley before a 25,000 crowd with the final score 5-5, Oldham's score being made up of a try and a late drop goal. Peter Smethurst had powered in for the try and Len McIntyre had scored that very late equalising drop goal.

aid of floodlights.

The score fluctuated, and at 14-14 the game went into extra time when Geoff Robinson plunged over for a try to put Oldham ahead. At this stage Dennis Davies did exactly what he had been told to do – he called time in the gathering gloom, but the Oldham spectators were incensed and it certainly did feel strange to take part in a 'drawn' game when winning 17-14!

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Attendance: 27,000

The second replay was held five days later at Fartown, Huddersfield, and since Oldham had demanded a change of referee, Matt Coates was in charge as Oldham were beaten 12-2.

Although Dennis Davies followed instructions at Station Road, Swinton, he was no stranger to controversy.

Earlier he had been in charge of a Test Match between Great Britain and France, when, after struggling to control the French players at play-the-ball, he felt compelled to dismiss a French forward named Bescos. However, as the player walked toward the touch line, the French officials pushed him back infield. Unable to solve this, Dennis Davies walked off the field to the dressing room, and the situation was only resolved when Bill Fallowfield, fluent in French, persuaded the visitors to return without Bescos.

Dennis Davies had refereed two Wembley finals and was hoping for a third, but this did not materialise and he was convinced that he was being punished for his action at Station Road.

This then, is the story of the replay on a very murky night, not helped by dark clouds and steam from the trains coming and going at Station Road. The referee, Dennis Davies, spoke to the RL Secretary Bill Fallowfield with his concerns about whether the match would finish, but was told in no uncertain terms that his brief was to start the match and come off if he (the referee) had difficulty in seeing in worsening conditions. After all, this game kicked off at 6.45pm without the

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TOPIC OF THE DAY

...THE 100 GREATEST RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYERS - EVER! (Well, 1951 to 2001)

70 KARL HARRISON Current Bradford Bulls' assistant coach Karl Harrison is one of the game's unsung heroes, yet he made eight test appearances against Australia at a time when the Aussies have been THE dominant nation. A leader by example Bramley, Featherstone, Hull and Halifax prop Harrison was always ready to hit the ball up and gain the hard yards. As his elevation to the coaching ranks via Keighley shows he was also a master tactician when captain of his various teams.

69 DES DRUMMOND One of the great sights of the '80s was Leigh and Great Britain wingman Des Drummond in action. Lightning fast, Drummond flying down the wing at Hilton Park was a memory to be treasured. But Drummond could tackle too: a black belt karate dan, when Drummond put his shoulder in your midriff you knew about it. Even the great Mal Meninga felt the force of Drummond's tackle. A star of Leigh's 1981-82 championship side, Oldham once had the chance to sign Drummond. Instead we got his centre partner Terry Bilsbury who made seven appearances in 1982-83 - almost as good a signing as Derek Pyke!



68 COLIN DIXON Halifax, Salford and Britain centre and second-row Colin Dixon was a star of the game for twenty years from 1961 to 1981. He played the game hard and aggressively and asked no quarter. Yorkshire Cup and Championship Final appearances with Halifax were followed - after a world record transfer - by a Wembley appearance with the great Salford

side of the '70s. He earned a testimonial at the Willows and toured in 1974. Unfortunately Colin died at the young age of 49 following a stroke in 1993. He had made a staggering 738 first team appearances, a total surpassed by only four players in the history of the game.

67 PHIL CLARKE Now a Sky TV commentator, Phil Clarke was a massive loss to the game when a serious neck injury sustained playing in Australia forced his early retirement. Clarke was the brainy, ball-handling loose-forward in the dominant Wigan side of the early '90s and was Britain's first choice No. 13 in 1992 and 1994. Who knows what heights he would have gone on to achieve had he stayed injury free? And who knows how Andy Farrell's career would have developed if he had?

66 STEVE NASH Another Salford star of the '70s scrum-half Nash began his career as a star of the Featherstone halfback production line. He racked up 24 Test appearances, his last at the age of 33 against the 1982 Australian Invincibles. He played for Featherstone at Wembley in 1973 when he won the Lance Todd Trophy, and 1974 (one win, one defeat) and was the guiding spirit of the side, having actually been born on Post Office Road. Transferred to Salford in 1975 and immediately won a Championship winners medal. In any list of great scrum-halves Nash would always feature near the top.

65 DAVID WARD Shaw Cross lad Ward signed for Leeds in 1971 and had an outstanding game at 18 years of age in the 1972 Championship Final. Thereafter he was Leeds' first choice hooker for over a decade with a string of honours and medals to his name. A phenomenal workrate, tenacious tackling and a fine pair of hands earned him international honours. He richly deserved his Man of Steel award in 1977 and was a fine and honourable servant of the Leeds club.

64 WILLIE HORNE Think of Barrow, think of Horne. Even the main stand's named after him. Genius is not a word to be used too often, but in Willie Horne's case it's appropriate. He actually represented Britain on the 1946 tour (outside the scope of my time limit) but such was his quality and dominance that he continued into the '50s, and led Barrow to victory at Wembley in 1955. By the time he retired in 1959 he had scored 1818 points in a 16 year career with Barrow encompassing 462 games. He also captained his country to Ashes victory in 1954. He had even made an odd guest appearance in Oldham's colours, as detailed last season by Brian Walker. His career total was 519 games for 2003 points.



63 IKE SOUTHWARD Oldham smashed the world record transfer fee in March 1959 paying Workington £10,650 for the flying wingman, effectively a direct replacement for Dick Cracknell. In 52 appearances for the Roughyeds he notched 54 tries, but his heart lay in Cumbria and he returned to Workington for another record fee of £11,002.10s. At Workington Southward scored a record 274 tries between 1952 and 1968, with seven tries in a match against

Blackpool (17.9.55) and 31 points in a match in the same game also being club records. And, of course, he appeared in the epic 'Prescott's arm' test in Sydney 1958.

62 BILL HOLLIDAY Whitehaven, Hull K.R., Swinton and Rochdale international second-row and prop Holliday was an on-field leader, accomplished goalkicker, ball-handler, time-breaker and mean tackler. He had a habit of winning things with unfashionable sides and was a popular figure with each of the clubs he represented. One of the game's great entertainers.

61 ANDY GREGORY Playing for Wigan Gregory was the man you loved to hate. Playing for Britain you would cheer him to the rafters. A teenage prodigy at Widnes, Gregory had all the cheek, bossiness and aggression you could want from a scrum-half. Although never lost for words, his real craft lay in engineering openings with well-timed passes and craftily disguised movement. A master at switching play Gregory was a star in a team of stars and won every honour in the game open to him. Twice winner of the Lance Todd, 10 Tests against Australia and a string of medals as long as your arm. At his peak there wasn't a club in the land that wouldn't have signed him if they could.

Stat Attack

EVER wondered which referee lets a game flow or which referee is most likely to dish out the penalties? Well, look no further. Below is a current referees' performance chart, based on the penalty counts published in League Express. These figures are average penalties per game refereed.

Bob Connolly	9.5	Karl Kirkpatrick	15.3
Colin Morris	9.6	Ben Thaler	15.5
Steve Nicholson	11.2	Paul Lee	15.5
Mick Dawber	12.4	Ron Laughton	16.4
Julian King	12.5	Peter Taberner	16.6
Ian Smith	12.8	Steve Ganson	17.0
Richard Silverwood	14.0	Rick Oddy	17.8
Stuart Cummings	14.5	Steve Addy	19.5
Stuart Lee	15.0	Russell Smith	22.3

The table is compiled using ONLY games (League and Cup) involving NFP sides. And what does it prove? Well, frankly, not a lot. You can make of it what you will. For example, does Russell Smith enforce the rules better than anyone else? Or is Bob Connolly too lenient? Is it luck that a referee gets a 'clean' match or deliberate policy that certain referees are appointed to potentially 'dirty' matches?

As they say there are lies, damned lies and statistics!

LEADING SCORERS (AS AT 11.2.02) NFP PLAYERS (LEAGUE & CUP)

TRIES			GOALS		
SEEDS	(Whitehaven)	12	TURLEY	(Leigh)	42
LEWTHWAITE	(Workington)	10	O'NEILL	(Whitehaven)	38
THORMAN	(Huddersfield)	9	ROONEY	(Featherstone)	37+6
O'HARE	(Huddersfield)	9	ATKINSON	(Barrow)	34
LOWE	(Featherstone)	8	MANIHERA	(Workington)	33+2
CRABTREE	(Huddersfield)	8	BROWN G.	(Sheffield)	31
TURLEY	(Leigh)	8	THORMAN	(Huddersfield)	30+1
MANSSON	(Doncaster)	7	CHARLES	(Hull KR)	30
COOPER	(Huddersfield)	7	IRVING	(Doncaster)	26
MAYBERRY	(Rochdale)	7	JONES	(Chorley)	21
FLYNN	(Dewsbury)	6	BRADDISH	(Oldham)	20+2
SIBSON	(Oldham)	6			
BROWN C.	(Sheffield)	6			
BEAUMONT	(Workington)	6			
SICE	(Workington)	6			
WOOD S.	(Workington)	6			
POINTS					
TURLEY	(Leigh)	116	BROWN G.	(Sheffield)	74
THORMAN	(Huddersfield)	97	CHARLES	(Hull KR)	72
ROONEY	(Featherstone)	88	ATKINSON	(Barrow)	68
O'NEILL	(Whitehaven)	84	IRVING	(Doncaster)	60
MANIHERA	(Workington)	80	BRADDISH	(Oldham)	54

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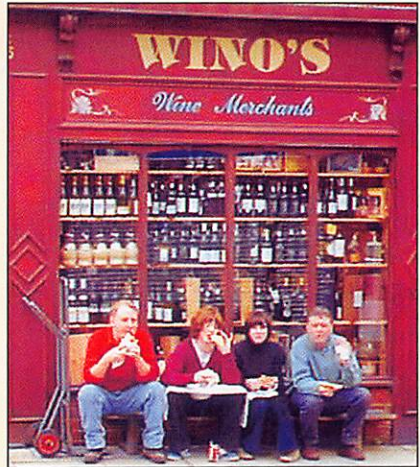
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Date	Opponent	Result	Att
DECEMBER			
2	SWINTON LIONS	F - A P	
16	Hull K.R.	10-26	2032
23	ROCHDALE HORNETS	P	
30	Leigh	12-46	3388
JANUARY			
6	YORK	32-16	1130
13	Dewsbury Rams	6-30	1410
20	CHORLEY LYNX	34-2	1114
27	WEST HULL (3rd Round)H	38-4	1131
FEBRUARY			
3	Workington	20-28	991
10	ST HELENS	6-40	4089
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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9

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