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FRIDAY 24 JANUARY 2003

Chorley Lynx v Leigh Miners Rangers
Oulton Raiders v Sheffield Eagles
at South Leeds Stadium



Wath Brow Hornets v Workington Town
at Recreation Ground, Whitehaven

SATURDAY 25 JANUARY 2003

Leigh Centurions v Locomotiv Moscow



SUNDAY 26 JANUARY 2003

Barrow Raiders v Embassy
Doncaster Dragons v Redhill
Featherstone Rovers v U.S. Villeneuve
Gateshead Thunder v UT Catalan
Halton Simms Cross v London Skolars
at The Halton Stadium, Widnes

Hull Kingston Rovers v Siddal
Hunslet Hawks v Pia XIII
Keighley Cougars v Thornhill Trojans
Oldham v East Hull
Oldham St Annes v Rochdale Hornets
at Spotland Stadium, Rochdale

Salford City Reds v Toulouse Spacers
Skirlaugh v York City Knights
at The Boulevard, Hull

Swinton Lions v Shaw Cross Sharks
West Bowling v Batley Bulldogs
at Mount Pleasant, Batley

Whitehaven v Cottingham Tigers
Woolston Rovers v Dewsbury Rams
at Wilderspool Stadium



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The Roughyeds



EAST HULL

CHALLENGE CUP RND 3 AT BOUNDARY PARK

SUNDAY 26TH JANUARY 2003 KO 3.00PM

OLDHAM

at the very heart of the North West

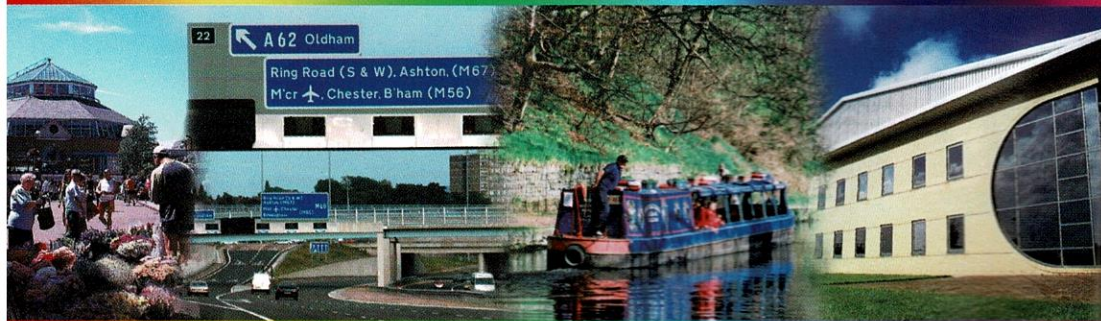
Oldham continues to take significant strides to be THE desirable place to live, work or visit in the North West.

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Businesses are benefiting from the M60 motorway, which now puts Oldham less than 25 minutes away from Manchester Airport. The arrival of the Metrolink tram system possibly by 2006 and the continued development of the Cultural Quarter and south Union Street areas of the town centre will further strengthen the appeal of the Borough for investment and new opportunities.

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Enquiries to the Marketing and Communications Unit, PO Box 160, Civic Centre, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1UG. Telephone 0161 911 4707, Fax 0161 911 4936. E-mail ce.presspr@oldham.gov.uk, or visit our website at www.oldham.gov.uk or www.visitoldham.co.uk



oldham together
the outlook's bright

OLDHAM
Metropolitan Borough



The Roughyeds
Oldham Rugby League Football
Club (1997) Limited

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Derek Turner 1955-59
Bob Irving 1964-74
Martin Murphy 1966-82
Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94

IN THE HOT SEAT

Christopher Hamilton

WELCOME back to Boundary Park.

Words which many people thought would never be said again by Oldham RLFC.

As I have said many times before the only thing to expect with the club is the unexpected!

It is obviously a great boost to the club to be back in Oldham for what we are hoping will be a successful season. A lot of hard work has gone on behind the scenes to achieve that aim which was undoubtedly helped by Oldham Athletics well documented financial problems.

Nevertheless we are back and for the first time in our club's short history we have security which will help us to plan our future.

There are a number of exciting developments currently happening behind the scenes which I will keep you informed about over the course of the next few weeks.

On the playing side we are pleased to welcome to the club our seven new signings:- Simon Svabic, Martin McLoughlin, Chris Morley, Chris Irwin, Paul Anderson, Iain Marsh and Darren Shaw and wish them well in their careers at Oldham.

We were all disappointed following the result at Leigh last week when without a doubt we under achieved, make no mistake, however, that the players will do what is required to improve and not many sides will take points away from the "Coliseum" (!!).

It is important to remember that we have had more changes in playing staff during this close season than ever before and it will take time for things to fall into place.

Your support and encouragement over the last few weeks has been heartening and we hope that crowds this season will be significantly up to reflect the hard work and commitment that the club has shown. As I have said many times before - we can't do it without you.

Our opponents today, East Hull, will be no push over and it is important that we are professional in our approach to the game. We welcome the fans, players and officials of East Hull to Oldham and hope they enjoy their day out.

The TXU Energy Challenge Cup can be a great boost for clubs, players and fans - let's hope today is the start of a long run!

As ever please get behind the team as loud as you can. Enjoy the game.

Chris

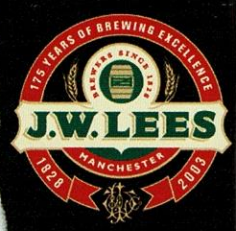


THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS MATCHDAY MAGAZINE DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF OLDHAM RLFC (1997) LTD.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE & RUGBY LEAGUE EXPRESS FOR THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

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JOHN WILLIE**



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TO HIS MATES.**

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Molloy's Message



I WOULD first and foremost like to Welcome everybody back to Boundary Park in what we must consider as our first victory of the season.

I would like to go on record and thank Chris Hamilton for all his hard work. I think a successful Oldham R.L. side has to play in it's own backyard. Today's opposition are a little bit of an enigma to me. I tried to watch them last week only to have their game called off. I know they got to the Yorkshire Cup Final but no one seems to have a tape but I know what a hotbed of Rugby League the Hull area is and how competitive today will be.

After all the expectation of the off season, last week was the start of the Arriva Cup, our division, the so called Group of Death, saw us at the re-named Coliseum, and back to earth with a bump. Because we've recruited well and are back at Boundary Park doesn't give us a divine right to win games.

I thought that we didn't control the ball well enough in the first place and when we got the scores all square at 8 apiece I feel we didn't have any thing left in the tanks, after their off-field troubles I feel Leigh will be a force again, especially at the Coliseum. The fortunate thing about being in that group is that when the League season starts we will be well and truly battle hardened.

On a closing note I hope everybody is very vocal today and next week against Rochdale. Bring a friend and we will get Boundary Park rocking again.

Enjoy the game,

Steve

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**IN TOWN
 Today EAST HULL**

Jason Abdul - Fullback/Utility: The former Hull FC Academy player has been turning in some outstanding performances at number one this season.

Danny Lakeman - Fullback/Winger: Danny is another former Hull FC Academy player who has just joined the Open Age team after starring for East at youth level. A player with good pace and an eye for the line.

Gary Noble - Centre/Utility: Another player who has just re-joined the club from a professional side after progressing through the youth ranks and then signed for Hull FC and then Hull KR. Has done really well this season in an unfamiliar role of centre.

John McCracken - Winger/Centre: John is the current captain of the team and has led them to all their recent successes. He is a player who is equally adept in attack or defence and has plied his trade in the pro game with York and Hull.

Graham Clark - Winger: Graham is a stalwart of the team and played in the side when the club were going through hard times. Has come on in leaps and bounds since Easts' turnaround and is constantly taking the strain off the forwards with his powerful running. A player with a big future.

Jordan Precious - Stand Off/Centre: 'Sam Dingle' has really made the problem number six spot his own this season with a series of great displays. Another former Hull FC Academy player who has great balance and an astute kicking game.

Gary Blanchard - Halfback: The current East Hull Man of Steel is a terrific competitor who possesses a brilliant pair of hands. Another player who has stuck with Easts through hard times when he could have gone elsewhere.

James Aramayo - Prop: A larger than life character who is really starting to find his true form once again. A great Britain international at all levels and a player who never takes a backward step as well as producing some big hits on the opposition.

Gary Weymes - Hooker: A sublimely talented player who can simply cut through the opposition as if they were not there. He has won many a game for East Hull and his gamebreaking ability has recently won him a place in the County Championship winning Yorkshire side.

Lee Brown - Prop: The current Player of the Year and probably the fittest at the club. An 80 minute man who goes forward with purpose and hits with real meaning. Gets the man of the match most weeks and never has a bad game.

Mark Woodcock - Second Row/Loose Forward: An outstanding junior who signed for Leeds Rhinos

from school. Things went badly wrong for Mark with injuries, but he is now hitting the heights he is capable of with some brilliant performances.

Paul Roberts - Second row: Paul has been a revelation since signing from rivals West Hull earlier in the season. A real 100% player who really gets stuck in. Yet again, another former Hull FC Academy player.

Michael Docherty - Loose Forward: According to some, Docky actually originates from Germany. However, he is also a great rugby league player. This time two years ago he was starring in Super League for Hull FC but is now an essential part of East Hull's side.

Dale Davidson - Prop/Second Row: Dale is an extremely tough customer who plays with his heart rather than his head. Another player who is starting to look the part since the East Hull transformation. A bright future looms for this no-nonsense forward.

Lee Roberts - Prop/Second Row: Brother of Paul and another Ex Hull Academy lad, who also joined the club from West Hull. Just like his brother he really gets stuck in and loves being in the heart of the action.

Chris Windas - Halfback: This extrovert character signed for Leeds Rhinos from school along with Mark Woodcock. An extremely talented ball player who can turn the game in a split second. Has recently signed for the club from Hull Ionians.

Phil Batty - Stand-off/Full-back: Another Great Britain international. Phil signed recently from Conference club Ideal Isberg and has put in some good performances since his arrival. A really good support player who always comes up with important touchdowns.

Rich Longley - Prop: A recent signing from local rivals Bilton Sullys. Rich has settled down well at East Hull and has added even more size and aggression to the pack and goes forward well.

Phil Colclough - Winger/Centre: Phil is a former Hull KR Academy player who is equally adept in either defence or attack. Has great balance and good defence.

Wayne Foster - Prop: Wayne has come into the game from Rugby Union and over the past year has acclimatised well. Is now well accustomed to League and can cause major problems to the opposition defenses with his sheer size.

Dean Cox - Full-back/Winger: Dean has been with the club for six years. Made 26 first team appearances last season but has been dogged with a back injury so far this season. A very reliable fullback and a good attacking winger – a real favourite with all the players.

A Potted History of East Hull. by Don Yates

The Roughyeds return to Boundary Park this afternoon with a visit from East Hull, reigning champions of the CMS Yorkshire League and current holders of the Yorkshire Cup.

The East Hull club was founded in 1974 as Mysons, joining the Hull Works Sports League. They quickly became one of the strongest teams on Humberside and enjoyed considerable success especially during the 1980s when they won both the Yorkshire Cup and the National Cup. Their National Cup win came in 1986 when they defeated Millom 17-8 in the final which was staged before a Headingley crowd of 3,000. Stand-off Stuart Sawyers won the man-of-the-match award after scoring a try, two goals and a dropped goal. In 1996, when Myson Heating moved out of Hull, the club was renamed East Hull. The change of name has not affected performances on the field with the club currently enjoying a superb campaign. They are undefeated so far, having won the Yorkshire Cup, have a 100% league record and, next Saturday, face an intriguing National Cup-tie against West Hull at the Boulevard.

This afternoon's match will be the first time East Hull have met professional opposition in the Challenge Cup. Nevertheless they are not unfamiliar with this type of big occasion because they were involved in a series of matches against professional clubs during the late 1980s and early 1990s when amateur clubs competed in the John Player Trophy competition. Mysons were involved in five matches during that period and only suffered one heavy defeat. That was in 1993 when they were defeated 62-4 at Doncaster. Earlier, in 1984, they were far from disgraced when, despite heavy rain, they attracted a crowd of 1,572 to the Boulevard for the visit of Dewsbury. The

professionals were mightily relieved to leave Humberside after scraping through a preliminary round tie 8-2. Current Widnes coach Neil Kelly scored the only try of that match.

Twelve months later Mysons pulled off arguably the best victory in the club's history when they visited Batley and won 8-2. Stand-off Stuart Sawyers was again the Mysons hero. After landing an early penalty, it was his kick which led to a try by scrum-half Mark Powley which Sawyers improved. In the first round Mysons were drawn at home to Swinton, a match which the amateurs switched to Craven Park, the Hull Kingston Rovers ground. Another big crowd, 1,648, were attracted to that tie and, once again, the amateurs did themselves proud. Although defeated, Mysons provided Swinton with stiff opposition and they, too, were a much-relieved team as they headed back along the M62 after pulling off a narrow 18-11 victory. At half time Mysons led 7-6 and this against a team which went on to gain promotion and win the Second Division Premiership. Two former Oldham juniors were included in the Swinton pack for that match against Mysons, hooker Gary Ainsworth and loose-forward Mark Rowbottom.

Mysons last tilt at professional opposition came in 1994 when the club was called upon to visit Bramley. From a financial point of view the match was a disaster, attracting just 302 spectators, and to make matters worse Mysons were beaten 40-14. Three former Oldham juniors were amongst the Bramley point scorers that afternoon, Paul Garrett, ex-Saddleworth Rangers, scored two tries, Brian Quinlan, ex-St. Annes, grabbed another whilst the Waterhead play-maker Jon Perks landed six goals.

Don Yates

From The Pen Of

.Michael Turner



Of Roughyeds And Amateurs East Hull

I AM SURE it is with keen anticipation, despite last week's set-back at Leigh, that all the Roughyeds fans look forward to this coming 2003 season. It is good news that the team is once again playing back in the "borough" and for our first fixture back in town we have the pleasure of welcoming the amateurs of East Hull for this afternoon's Challenge Cup 3rd round tie.

The first time the club entertained non-league opposition in this the most famous of all rugby cup competitions was way back in

1899 when the Goole club came to Watersheddings to finish on the end of a 63 - 0 thrashing. On that day it was the Oldham wingers that did the damage with Sam Williams crossing for five tries and Tom Fletcher scoring four. Arguably, the best performance by an amateur team against the Roughyeds came in 1905 when a star-studded Oldham outfit, that were at the time the reigning Northern Union champions, were held to a 16 - 3 scoreline by Normanton, and at Watersheddings too.

The only time a local side has had a crack at their professional neighbours came in 1936 when Higginshaw, who were very much the premier amateur side of the time, eventually succumbed to a 38 - 2 defeat after taking an early lead much to the delight of the Watersheddings crowd. Some of our older supporters may recall the visit of Walney Central from Barrow in 1960. A game which saw Oldham comfortable winners by 55 - 4, the highlight of which was the six tries scored by international winger Ike Southward. In more recent times the "Ace" team from Hull gave a good account of themselves in 1979 before going down 23 - 5. This much postponed match finally being played at Salford, as Watersheddings lay frost bound for several weeks.

Since the formation of the new club, the Roughyeds have always started the competition with a match against an amateur club and for the record the sequence goes like this:

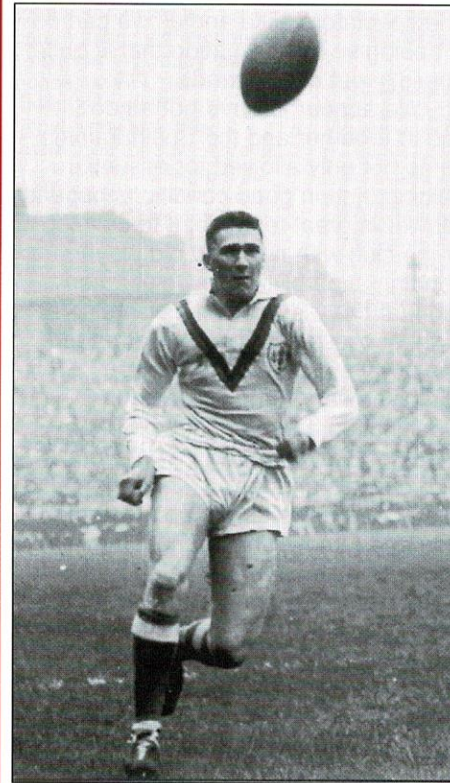
January 18th 1998:
Oldham 38 Heworth 14

February 1st 1999:
Oldham 26 Eccles 7

February 8th 2000:
Oldham 44 Wigan St Judes 0

January 28th 2001:
Oldham 64 Queensbury 0

January 27th 2002:



Cumbrian winger Ike Southward who scored six tries against Walney Central in 1960.

Well here we are back at Boundary Park, back, thank goodness, in Oldham. There appears to be a buzz back in the town amongst the rugby league fraternity and the knockers have retreated into the woodwork. What is even more pleasing is that a relatively poor display at Leigh last weekend hasn't brought them back out of the woodwork. Everybody seems to realise that there have been big changes and this was just the first match of a very, very long season.

The results last weekend show just how competitive both National League 1 and National League 2 are going to be and it really looks as if the Arriva Trains Competition could be equally competitive, especially in Oldham's group which coach Steve Molloy has rightly seen as a perfect preparation for the League programme to begin in March.

The Cup certainly started with a bang last weekend with three games getting over 3000 spectators including the first home game of the new York club against Hull K R. Most games were closely fought and Keighley Cougars showed that the gap between National League Division 1 and Division 2 is not that great. In fact the Division 2 clubs really seem to have grasped the nettle and have far stronger squads than those they had last season. Locally Swinton and Chorley seem to have made some excellent signings and should be challenging for honours in their Division this season. It will be interesting if Round 4 of the Challenge Cup throws up some Division 1 versus Division 2 challenges they could prove very interesting and very close run

affairs.

London Skolars, the other newcomers, have also done well, not only on the field but also off it and I'm sure all genuine Rugby League fans wish them well in this their inaugural year in Rugby League. It will be a difficult year especially with all the travelling they will be forced to undertake.

Here at Oldham preparations have gone well the only real black spot being the non arrival of the new replica shirts ~this has been frustrating for both club and spectators alike and all we can do is apologise for a situation that is quite honestly out of our hands.

We appear to have got a good squad together and the Spain training camp not only allowed for essential training time in good conditions but also allowed a great team spirit to develop at the club with new and old players bonding superbly. The Celebration Night at the Clayton Arms was also a great success and superbly attended. It is always nice to have so many complimentary remarks about the organisation and presentation of an evening enjoyed equally by players, club officials and fans. There has also been good news on the sponsorship side and I know Christopher Hamilton hopes to have some more good news in this respect for you in the very near future.

Let's hope the fans really get behind the club this season and attendances at Boundary Park exceed all expectations and the club's desire for a great season on the playing front comes to fruition.

NM

Walkerbout

with
Brian Walker

IT SHOULDN'T have taken much working out that the pint sized inspirational scrum half that led Auckland Warriors to last seasons NRL Grand Final would be favourite by a Maori mile to lift the inaugural George Smith Medal.

Stacey Jones, these days the best rugby league play maker in the world, did not allow the bookies a killing, and walked away with the newly struck medal confirming the unstoppable Kiwi as the worthy winner of the player of the series award in last Autumn's Don't Drink Drive Test Matches.

The introduction of the two new awards into the Lion/Kiwi series, the Albert Baskerville Trophy for the tournament winners and the George Smith Medal provided ideal topics for the media and perfect targets for camera lenses.

I thought, too, that the series went a long way to repair the damage surrounding last summers 'disaster in Sydney' and for once the RFL marketing team can afford to take a bow in the way they managed the Kiwi matches.

The word from head office is that at last major rugby league events are becoming easier to sell to the corporate market but the marketing team must now concentrate on cramming to the rafters the three test match stadiums selected for this Autumn's first full scale Ashes tour since 1994.

I was proud that following proposals from the Oldham Rugby League Heritage Trust the proposal of the George Smith Medal was accepted by the RFL particularly as it is to be awarded in perpetuity and ensuring an Oldham connection in all future Kiwi Test Match played both the and New Zealand.

The Ashes are soon to be up for grabs and again a trophy for the player of the series is a must. But this time named after and won by an Englishman please!



Stacey Jones winner of the George Smith Medal

Just who was George Smith?

The naming of the trophy is in recognition of the man who brought the very first touring Rugby League side to these shores - the 1907 New Zealand 'All Blacks'. The young and enterprising Albert Baskerville was the force behind the organisation of the tour but without the input of one George W Smith a wing-threequarter who had previously toured here with the 1905 New Zealand union side, the venture would never have got off the ground. Smith had seen first hand the new code played by paid footballers under the rules of the Northern Union, and had swiftly identified the profit that could be made in returning with a tour party of 'professional' rugby players. Smith's influence and a potential pot of gold was what fuelled Baskerville's interest and it was his silver tongue that persuaded many of the players to take a chance with the tour.

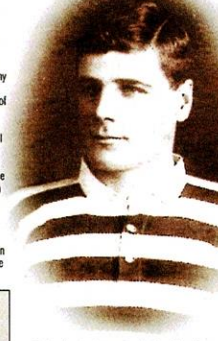
The 1907/8 tour made an impact on the then still struggling Northern Union greater than any following incoming tour, Kiwi or Kangaroo. It also played a major influence in the forming of the 1908 Australian tour and with that the future of International Rugby League. Fellow 1905 tourists Duncan McGregor, Bill Mackrell and Messa Johnston along with other New Zealand internationals Tom Cross, Jim Turfitt, Edgar Wrigley and Eric Walters gave credence to a venture, for which a £50 investment from each of the trail-blazers was a prior requisite, with a share of the tour profits the carrot.

The tour, managed by HJ Palmer, was a resounding success. Playing many matches in front of capacity crowds the All Blacks won the

The George Smith Medal will be awarded to the outstanding player in the 'Don't Drink Drive' Test series'. And the Albert Baskerville Trophy is the new trophy that has been created by the Rugby Football League to be awarded to the winning side of the three-match series.



George Smith's daughter Edna with the medal named after her father

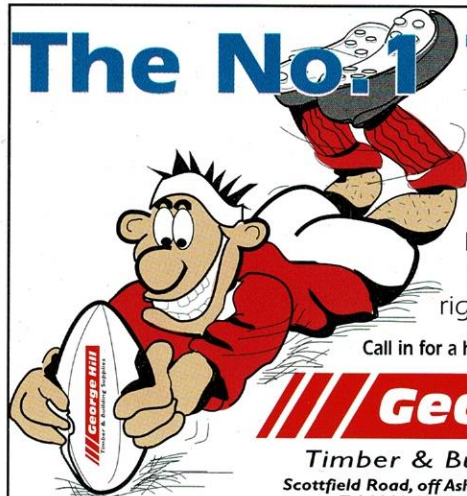


Test series two to one, producing a handsome tour profit of £5,000. George Smith - as vice-captain - played in 24 of the 35 matches, including all three Tests. At the end of the tour several noted players, including Smith and Lance Todd, signed for British clubs. Both would spend the rest of their lives over here. George Smith became the first overseas player to sign for Oldham in February 1908. He made his Oldham debut in a 7-5 victory over Wigan at Central Park on 19th February and over 25,000 people turned out to see the game, which also involved Lance Todd in his first game for Wigan.

He was already 30 years of age when he joined Oldham, but was still a very effective winger and finished top try-scorer for the club in three seasons, and scored a try in the 13-7 Championship Final win over Wigan in 1910, finishing the season with 37 tries. Smith played his last senior game for Oldham, scoring a try in the 19-0 win over Leigh at Watersheddings on March 7th, 1914. In all he had made 173 appearances for Oldham, scoring an amazing 100 tries. Prior to his Rugby League achievements, George Smith had a rich, varied and successful sporting career in New Zealand. The New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame says of George Smith: "For ability and versatility, George Smith is perhaps the most remarkable sportsman ever produced by New Zealand. "There weren't many sports at which George Smith didn't excel. Initially he made his mark as a jockey, riding a horse called Impulse to victory in the New Zealand Cup in 1894. Then he took up athletics and won a succession of national sprints and hurdles titles, and set a world 440-yard hurdles record of 58.5 seconds. With his great natural speed, Smith made a brilliant rugby union winger who represented New Zealand for nearly a decade. He was a member of the famous Originals team which toured Britain in 1905, scoring 19 tries in 19 matches, including eight in the first three matches. But Smith found a home in this country, and for almost 20 years played for and managed the most successful ever Oldham side. He died in Oldham in 1954 at the age of 80. His daughter Edna, now in her nineties, still lives in the town.



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Back On The Terraces

..... With Simon Winnard

I HAVEN'T seen as much enthusiasm generated about a Roughyeds season in a long time. There is a real buzz surrounding the club this year and it's great to see. Last years exile, coupled with the disruption caused by changes in coaching staff and the stop-start on the field progress in a badly constructed season, meant that the last campaign was always going to be nothing but extremely difficult.

Therefore, it's fairly obvious why people are enjoying a feeling of both relief and renewed optimism. The Houdini like achievements of Steve Molloy's men in the latter stages of the NFP campaign not only turned the season around, they effectively rescued the club.

As a result, we have seen our much celebrated return to the town and a significant investment made in the playing staff that gives cause for enthusiastic yet cautious optimism.

A few players have left the club over the closed season and we sincerely thank them for their service. Most have made a significant contribution over the last few years. Indeed, we have them to thank for our recent play off adventures, not least the two great play off wins against our fiercest of rivals along the way. Notably, the Gibbons twins have contributed much over the last couple of years and, along with Mark Sibson, they sure to add some spice to our encounters with the Bulldogs of Batley this year.

Also gone but not forgotten is Hurst Cross.

There is no doubting that the place was a godsend last year and I would like to express my personal thanks to all involved at Ashton United where we were always made to feel extremely welcome. The tight ground, when filled, was conducive to a great atmosphere and many of the die hard supporters who turned up week in week out really identified with a place that was similar in many respects to our beloved Watersheddings.

However, times have moved on and the coach and chairman have clearly demonstrated their ambitions for the club. Indeed, as they prepare to make an assault on the new National Cup and National League 1, a coveted place in Super League looks once again like a realistic possibility. It won't be easy, but the closed season signings look to have significantly improved the standard of the squad and a definite steel has been added for this season's campaign.

My first thoughts about the new National League format turned to the 91-92 season when we played in the 8 team, quadruple round robin, Division 2. The teams knew each other like the back of their hand and to say it became stale

would be somewhat of an understatement. However, there are key differences this time around which I believe will make this format a success.

In many respects the formation of National League Divisions 1 and 2 has actually seen common sense prevail. Two divisions of 10 teams with a simple home and away fixture programme will finally see a truly representative league table come September. Also, moving the National League Cup to the beginning of the season will give the competition more prestige, ensure no mid season league break and is clearly a decision blessed with logic.

The play off system, culminating in the Grand Final has proved to be a real success in RL despite some initial reservations. However, I also believe that the decision to have an additional play off game between the 9th placed Div 1 side and the losing Div 2 Grand Finalists, is a great idea. Also, the formation of NL3 is a fantastic move and is the perfect way of building on the success of the Summer Conference and achieving sustainable expansion.

Are we therefore actually in danger of finally getting things right I ask? The report card reads not bad, but could do better.

I firmly believe that promotion and relegation from all divisions should be consistent. Since this column was last in print, Super League has finally relented and re-introduced relegation. As a result we have seen both of our neighbours Huddersfield and Salford face the drop and, parachute payment issues aside, this makes absolute sense.

However, why don't we apply the same principles to the team finishing next to bottom in Super League and the losing NL1 Grand Finalists? Couldn't the same system also be extended to link NL2 and NL3 and why not even NL3 and the conference? I have long been an admirer of the pyramid system in Football. This allows the possibility of clubs doing a Wimbledon and means that expansion of the game is not solely dependant on TV money funding unstructured SL franchises like the French experiment.

Finally, on a personal note, due to work and family commitments today will see me bring down the curtain on 10 years of reporting on Oldham games for various publications. I will miss the banter of the press box, particularly Roger Halstead's outlandish half time predictions and Ian Wilson's unflinching faith in our sliding defence. However, I am looking forward to reclaiming my place amongst the Roughyed faithful and soaking up the atmosphere back on the terraces.

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Iva Slateloose



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Iva wants to know:-

If Andy Proctor's polo shirt says Head Trainer just whose heads are they that need training?

If Leigh Centurions now play at the Colosseum why is their mascot a pig? Iva's history lessons don't recall the Roman Empire being built by pigs. Unless, of course, Hadrian's Wall was defended by the XIV porcine legion.

How can Joe McNicholas fail to have a brilliant season if, as the Rochdale Law Cup programme asserts, he is 'fast off the mark with "god on his feet"?'

Why can't the R.F.L. take a leaf out of the book of Kazan Arrows in Tartarstan? To boost crowds they give free beer to pensioners. Now that's what Iva calls marketing!

If 13 players make a team how many water carriers make a coach?

How many B.A.R.L.A. officials does it take to reach a decision?

How many Roughyeds make a Hornet?



Iva notes that Batley have new sponsors. So this year their shirts will say Kozee Sleep on their frontside and Cadbury's on the backside. Would you like a Bulldog's backside?

League Express had a list of the exotic training camps Super League clubs are going to. Under Halifax it said: 'nothing arranged yet.' My spies say an afternoon at Eureka is scheduled if they can find their way there from the Shay.

Talking of sponsorship have you noticed how everything is up for grabs. Well, not jock straps obviously. Oldham want Armitage Shanks to sponsor the visitors dressing room so they can p.s on the opposition.

Today's tip: don't rush to get to an Arriva Train Cup match, they're never on time anyway.

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Tracey's Tittle Tattle

WELL, GIRLS, Me (Tracey) and my friend, Shaz, are well naffed off with these so-called super pin ups. "Pin-ups?" They're more like "Propped-ups". And what's with all this pulling their shirts up? Are we supposed to freak out over their six packs? (Pass me the microscope). They're more like those piles of battered tin cans you throw at the fairground, only it's easier to knock the footballers over.

Anyway, thank goodness rugby's here again, so, come on girls, eyes down, look in, and let's see some real beef now!



GARETH BARBER

"Well" said Shaz, "Gareth Barber, is he fit or what?" "What?" I said, "Did you you say "Fit OR What," or "Fit FOR What?" "Same thing", she winked. I told her my brother

remembered him dancing round the Maypole when he was at Springhead Infants. "The only thing he dances round now is the opposition," I said. "Oh, you geek," she groaned. Then I told her my

brother got him up on that "Friends Re-united" on the Internet, when he was at Saddleworth School. he said that he and that 'Sinny' called themselves the 'Bum Boys' I asked my grandad what this meant, and he went a bit pale, and muttered it must have changed its meaning a bit since his day, and it probably meant now that they did nothing all day - just bummed around. So I don't know really.

"Anyway, where does he play?" Shaz asked "Boundary Park," I said. "No, you puddin! what is he?" "Oh, he's a stand off" I said, "But he stands in, sometimes at centre" "What?" she asked. "He's a stand off? He stand in? At centre? How can he be in 3 places at once?" "Cos he's good," I said. "except for kicking goals," she retorted. "Pat Rich could kick 'em with his eyes shut. He can't kick 'em with his open" "Yeh," I said, "But he has to kick a lot that aren't from his best side." "Oh, I don't know" as a wistful look came over her face, "he looks alright from both sides to me." What's she like!

Love & Kisses,
Tracey

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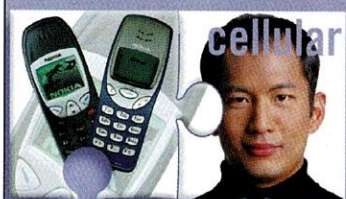


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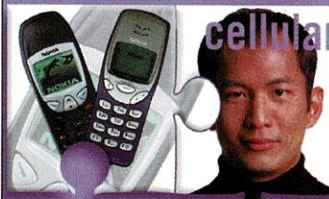
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Profile of Gareth Barber



- Born Oldham 15th December 1980
- First Club: Waterhead (Oldham Juniors)
- Turned pro for Warrington aged 14
- Played two seasons for England Schoolboys (Under 16s)
- Left Warrington with a year of his contract still remaining, to join the Roughyeds in September 2000.
- Ex-pupil of Oldham Sixth-Form College with a degree in Sports Science from Edge Hill College, Ormskirk.
- Currently working full time for Oldham MBC on Sports Development in the Borough

- 2001 Season: 7 appearances (including 3 as substitute), 1 try – 4 pts
- 2002 Season: 38 appearances from a possible 39, 80 goals, 1 DG, 17 Tries – 229 points (top points scorer, top goalscorer and third in try-scoring behind Neil Roden (2nd) and Mark Sibson (19).
- Kicked seven goals and scored 3 tries v Dewsbury at Hirst Cross on April 2, 2002 to amass 26 points – a Roughyeds' record for most points scored in one match by an individual player.
- Signed a new Oldham deal in October, 2002 and is contracted to the Club until November 30, 2003.

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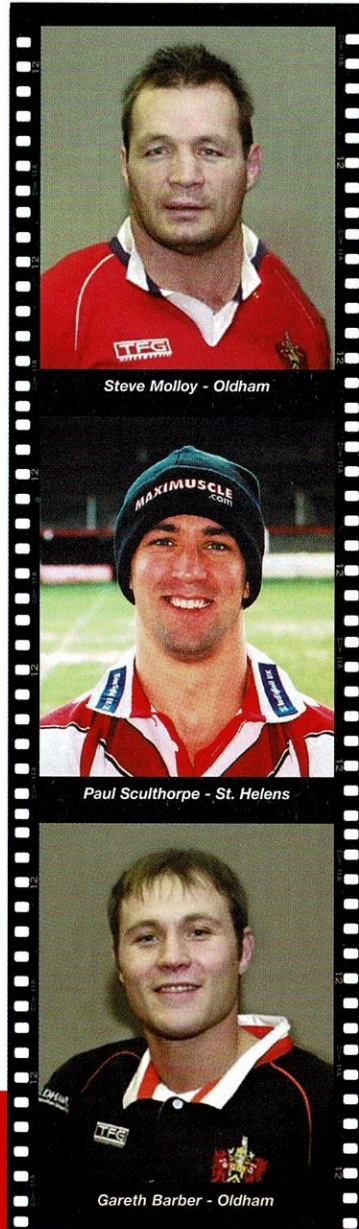
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Steve Molloy - Oldham

Paul Sculthorpe - St. Helens

Gareth Barber - Oldham

Does the kit fit?



Gareth Barber

WE ASKED Gareth about matchdays and he told us he gets up at about 9.30, has a bowl of porridge followed by toast - 2 hours before kick off beans or spaghetti on toast.

On the coach he usually sits with Ratty (Neil Roden), Faz or Cleggy - good atmosphere - Cleggy's so loud and I'm so quiet (oh yeah - since when).

Always packs his own kit bag and always takes boots out first, followed by a mirror and a comb. Not as superstitious as he used to be but likes to wear same t-shirt under his rugby shirt. He always washes his gum shield just prior to going onto the field and leaves it partially in his mouth.

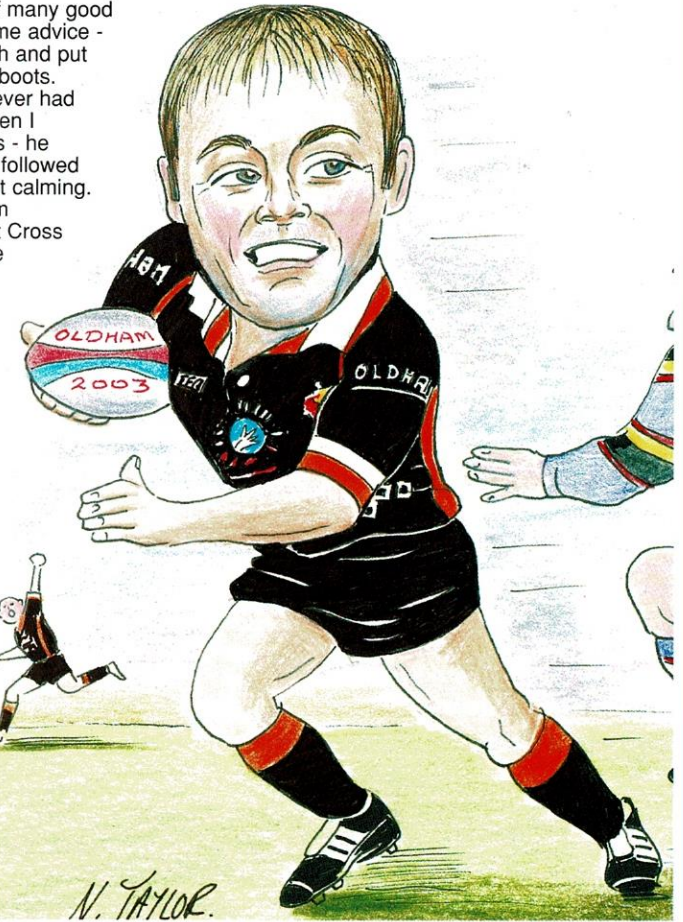
Has had the benefit of many good coaches - usually have same advice - self belief & confidence - oh and put your socks on before your boots.

The best prep talks I ever had were from Dan Preston when I played for England Schools - he would play Nessian Dorma followed by Jerusalem - inspiring yet calming. Best/Worst Changing Room Best Wembley, worst Hurst Cross Best/Worst Playing Surface Best Leeds, worst Batley Best/Worst After Match Food Best Huddersfield, worst Dewsbury

When asked if he looked like anybody famous he said someone once said he looked like a young Bruce Forsyth (whoever he is) "Alright my love".

He sees Doran, Neil Roden & Faz as the players to look out for this season - and I'd better mention Daddy otherwise he will only whinge.

Finally we asked him why he changed his kicking style - "Because I like to stick my bum out and wiggle it at all the ladies, if you've got it flaunt it."



Best wishes to Oldham Rugby League this season.

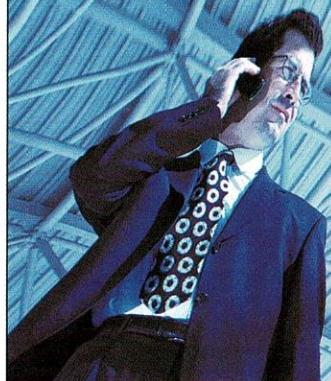
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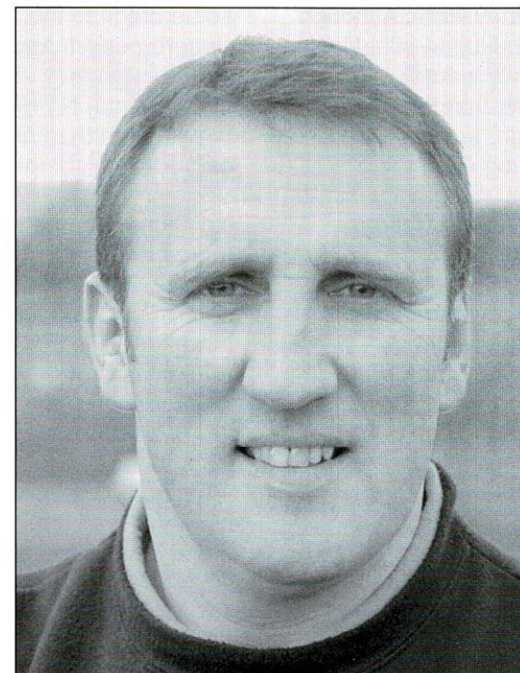
Senior Academy

THIS season the **SENIOR ACADEMY** will be structured into two divisions **CHAMPIONSHIP** and **FIRST DIVISION** with Oldham entering a side into the nine team First Division.

The contest will be an U24 affair with each of the First Division sides able to play three players overage (with no restrictions). The Championship division will allow only two players to be overage.

Whilst the fixture list has not yet been formalised it is planned to commence league matches the first week of March with Oldham's home games again scheduled for Manor Park.

There will be no Alliance action.



Sean Gartland, Academy Coach

Words of Wilson

... by Ian Wilson

IT SEEMS a long time since we lost to Batley to bring last season to an end, for us at least. To be precise, it was 29th September, 2002! I will begin my contribution this season, as last year, with some diary extracts:

NFP

- Shouted as loud as I could for Batley in the final eliminator, but Leigh just squeezed through. How can anyone have regarded Watersheddings as being unacceptable, when Hilton Park is deemed fit for Super League?
- Delighted to see Huddersfield stuff Leigh in the Grand Final, in spite of Leigh's rather pathetic efforts to show how tough they were. Although we lost at home to Huddersfield last season I felt that we were competitive against them - certainly more so than Leigh, anyway! It would be good to be even more competitive against relegated Salford this year and actually beat them.

Super League

- Followed the Australian play-offs via the excellent Sky coverage. Newcastle and Parramatta very disappointing: 2 great sides, with Roosters/Easts and the Warriors just going through at the expense of Brisbane and Cronulla: and a great effort in the Grand Final by the Warriors, though Roosters were too good in the end. Morley was impressive - but so were the New Zealanders with the tests to come.
- In England, fairly limp exit by Cas, Hull and Leeds. Good win by Bradford at Knowsley Road, but

always likely that Wigan weren't good enough to cope with pressure. So the Grand Final was between the 2 best sides - and what an amazing result in that game! Saints shouldn't have had a look-in, really, but they do manage to find some amazing ways to win games.

Test Series

- Miserable at Blackburn. No real atmosphere, made worse by the awful M.C. - a brass band would have been much better. GB clearly second best from beginning to end.
- Probably a fair result eventually at Huddersfield, even though we should have won it at the death, much better atmosphere - have to give some credit to the Yorkshire fans.
- Superb performance by GB at the JJB, though they should have won by 20 points. No more enamoured of the stadium than on previous visits but GBs win compensated.

Xmas

- No Oldham game on Boxing Day, so forced to go to Sheffield Wednesday v Notts. Forest with son, daughter & son-in-law. Probably a good idea to go to the occasional soccer game: it reinforces how much better is RL, £15 for poor seats too!

So, to today's game. No doubt East Hull will compete bravely, but presumably we should reach the 4th round again. A bit of a cup run would make a handy start to the season. So a home draw, against a non-Super League side, would be good - although an early February trip to the South of France would have its attractions too!

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Going like a Train

Express

By GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS

THE Arriva Trains Cup, in the words of the advertising campaign, begun its journey last weekend, and it was a start littered with encouraging signals.

First of all there was the performances on the field of the National League's two new clubs - London Skolars and York City Knights. Both went down to defeat, but produced highly-promising performances against higher division opposition and will find much to be positive about.

The Skolars were actually ahead against Dewsbury with 35 minutes on the clock, before three tries in a seven-minute burst by the Rams helped them to a 22-10 victory. But, with the crowd of 820 made up predominantly of localsupport, they can look forward to the rest of 2003 with renewed optimism.

As can the Knights, who pushed Hull Kingston Rovers all the way before going down to a creditable 26-3 defeat. They saw over 3,000 flock to the Huntington Stadium for that game, the highest crowd for a Rugby League fixture in York since October 1990.

So much to be positive about for both new clubs, though they will be acutely aware of the need to record a victory as early as possible to maintain interest among their support. This weekend's TXU Energi Challenge Cup fixtures - with York taking on Skirlaugh and the Skolars travelling to Halton Simms Cross - will provide them with the opportunity to do that, though neither will have it all their own way.

Elsewhere last weekend, Salford and Leigh both hosted 3,000 plus crowds, against Swinton and Oldham respectively, while the first major shock of the competition came with Keighley Cougars' defeat of NL1 side Doncaster.

This weekend the focus turns to the Challenge Cup Third Round, and there are several intriguing ties to consider.

The most notable ones include those with a foreign side involved. French teams Villeneuve,

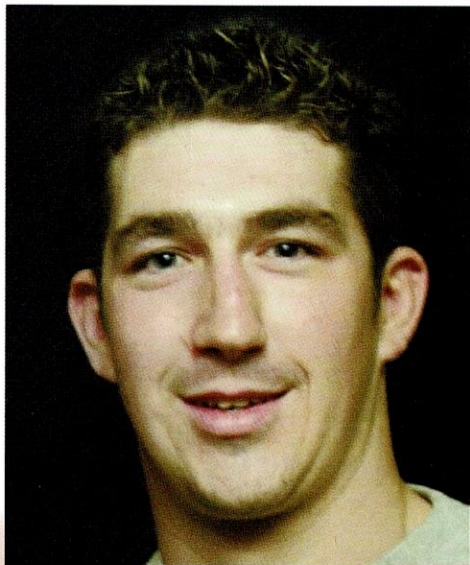
Toulouse, Pia and Union Treiziste Catalane take on Featherstone, Salford, Hunslet and Gateshead respectively, while Leigh entertain Russian visitors Locomotiv Moscow at the surreally-renamed Coliseum.

Of those games, UTC's trip to Gateshead looks to be the tie with the most scope for a fairytale Cup shock, but there will certainly be plenty of interest surrounding all the invasions of teams from abroad.

Elsewhere, a humdinger of a tie looks set to take place at the Recreation Ground on Friday night, when Wath Brow Hornets take on Cumbrian neighbours Workington Town.

And there are other 'derby' games scattered around, including Chorley Lynx versus Leigh Miners Rangers, Oldham St Annes against Rochdale Hornets and Doncaster's clash with Redhill.

So another round of terrific Rugby League action to look forward to then. Let's hope those turnstiles continue clicking throughout the coming year.



Paul Anderson
Man of the Match V Leigh

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the long term future of Oldham Rugby League. So as a reward for all your loyalty we are giving our fully paid up members the opportunity, just before Christmas 2003, of winning a cash prize of £10,000. We know you wont be able to retire, but it is going to bring more than just a smile to someone's face.

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In Yer Face

I LISTENED to the excellent Jack Dearden on BBC GMR on the way back from Leigh and, as usual, there were some rivetting talking points. Unfortunately, as usual, there were plenty of guests or callers who missed the point. I find it unbelievable that so many people oppose every move designed to expand our game. If U.T.C. of Perpignon are admitted to Super League in 2005 have no doubt that this will be a POSITIVE and UNRESERVED BENEFIT for Rugby League. We cannot, for example, argue for more and better television coverage if all we have to offer is the same old Wigan v St Helens six or seven times a season, however good the quality of the play. It is the European dimensions which currently attracts the best viewing figures for soccer and the other code of rugby. Indeed, I am on record as being in favour of admitting a second French side, be it Toulouse or Villeneuve, but would concede to a franchise in South Wales if this were the better option. This would put Super League up to the optimum number of clubs (14) to provide 26 league fixtures without creating artificial games to pad out the season. With new T.V. rights up for negotiation for 2004 and buoyant viewing figures we ought to be able to negotiate a new package which will give every club at least the same money as they now receive, plus sufficient funds to support two new entrants.

As to playing standards, the argument that a French side should be composed entirely of Frenchmen is a non-starter unless of course all British sides are composed solely of Brits. Yes, it was wrong that Paris ran a team of Australians but remember that in their first season Paris S. G. were essentially a completely French team handicapped by the expectation that their players were expected to play both in the French League and Super League and, further, had to fit in international duties as well. The Lesson is obvious: That you cannot have a competitive team if unreasonable demands are made of the players. At a time when British sides have a quota of overseas players plus as many as qualify by residence or, as Mike Ford rightly put it, by virtue of a Scottish grandmother it would be churlish to deny the U.T.C. the assistance of as many overseas stars as British clubs are allowed to recruit.

The argument that Leigh's new chairman put forward about lack of away support if we admit a French side is also flawed. Away support has already been decimated by the

kick off times used to satisfy Sky T.V. and any analysis of British fixtures gives the lie to just how sizeable is travelling support. For example just how many Leigh fans, or more to the point Swinton or Chorley fans, travel to Workington, Barrow or Hull K.R.? I hardly think it makes a dramatic impact on the revenues of the home club. Why else has the Arriva Trains Cup been organised on a regional basis in an effort to maximise derby fixtures? Unfortunately, the logic of this argument is that Leigh would be better served by playing against revived teams in Astley, Tyldesley and Atherton. Somehow I think not!

Mr Beaumont also seemed to think that we should develop the game in our own backyard first before encouraging the French - I despair. We have had 107 years to develop the game in our own backyard: surely that is long enough to put down fine foundations? Apparently not. Last Sunday newcomers London Skolars recorded a gate 820. This was more than Batley (801), Barrow (817) and Rochdale (778), all established clubs. Own backyard my a-se as a certain Mr Royle might say!

Of course the real nub of the argument is that Leigh, and no doubt many other clubs, do not want the gangway to Super League closed off now that the principle of relegation and promotion has been re-established. Well, my answer to that would be that U.T.C. and any other club admitted to Super League should be guaranteed their status no matter where they finish for, say, three seasons BUT the lowest placed British team should be relegated and the National League One Grand Final winners promoted in their place, meaning that Leigh, Oldham, Rochdale or whoever still had the possibility of entry to Super League on merit.

And, finally, the presence of one or more French clubs in Super League operating on a fully professional basis should raise the standard of the French game and the international side. Nothing would benefit British Rugby League more than competitive international fixtures with our nearest neighbours. Just look what New Zealand Warriors have achieved for Kiwi League since their inception. And just for the record the Warriors have just two Australians, their Coach Daniel Anderson and stand-off or hooker (and not necessarily first choice) P. J. March. Allez la France!

G.C.

ON THIS DAY

... with Don Yates



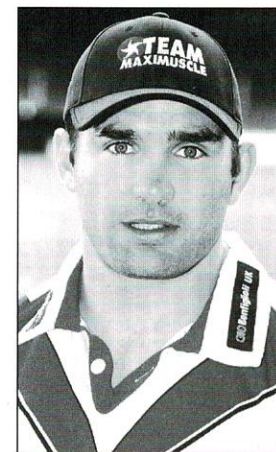
Exactly eighteen years ago, on Saturday 26th January 1985, East Hull, then playing under the name of Mysons, met Oldham opposition in the opening round of the National Cup. Fitton Hill were those Oldham representatives and they travelled over to Humberside more in hope than in the expectancy of victory. Nevertheless they gave of their all against the club who were the competition favourites. Defences were on top on a snow-covered pitch and with eight minutes remaining the match was still scoreless. At that point each side dropped a goal. Fitton Hill then thought they had snatched a famous victory with another dropped goal but it was ruled that a defender had touched the ball in flight and, in those days, that meant that the goal was disallowed. Mysons hit back and in the closing minute Ricky Hewland landed a penalty to give the Humbersiders a rather fortunate 3-1 victory. Fitton Hills disappointment was tempered somewhat when, despite their defeat, they were awarded the team-of-the-round prize for their magnificent performance.

It was on this day in 1996, Friday 26th January, that a Humberside club knocked professional opposition out of the Challenge Cup. That club was West Hull who entertained York in blizzard conditions before a crowd of 2,000 at the Boulevard. York led 6-4 at half time but the amateurs recovered to win 10-6. The first West Hull try that evening was scored by second-rower Scott Fletcher who joined the recently revived York club earlier this month.

Exactly twelve months later, on Sunday 26th January 1997, York were again the unwilling victims of an amateur club in the Challenge Cup. Dudley Hill beat them on that occasion by 21-14, this time at the Ryedale Stadium. Dudley Hill agreed that the big difference between the teams was the fact that the amateurs were midway through their season whilst

the professionals were just starting theirs. It is a problem which adds spice to the occasion but one which Oldham will have to be wary of this afternoon.

Two years ago, on Friday 26th January 2001, British rugby league received a huge fillip when St.Helens won the World Club Challenge with a 20-18 victory over Australian champions Brisbane Broncos. The Australian visitors led 18-6 early in the second half before St.Helens staged an exciting revival to



Chris Joynt

snatch a memorable victory. Former Oldham junior Paul Sculthorpe was outstanding for St.Helens that evening, scoring a try and a decisive late dropped goal whilst former Oldham player Chris Joynt also scored a try and skippered St.Helens to that historic victory.

Another former Oldham player to hit the headlines in cup football was full-back Derek Whitehead. On Saturday 26th January 1974 he landed the two first half penalties which enabled Warrington to defeat Featherstone Rovers 4-0 in the final of the Captain Morgan Trophy. This was a knockout competition involving first round winners in the earlier county cup competitions. It was not exactly the most invigorating competition ever staged by the Rugby Football League and this final at Salford was a rather dreary affair watched by a disappointing crowd of 5,259. Not surprisingly that inaugural tournament also turned out to be the last.

Roughyeds Kids

WELCOME to a new season which we hope will be an exciting one. Congratulations to Steve Molloy for winning the Junior Roughyed's Player of the Year and here are a few words that each Junior Roughyed said about him.



"He's my hero"

"He never left us when he could have"

"No.8 is my favourite shirt number"

and

"He is a leader and the best player - my hero".

Just a note of thanks to Andy Pemberton for drawing the "trophy" for Steve. Thank you.

The Junior Roughyeds hope to be announcing something special for forthcoming games so watch this space and the Oldham Chronicle for further details.

Enjoy the game.

Adele

It's his 150th!!

From all at the Junior Roughyeds to **John Hough** who today plays his 150th first team match for Oldham

Congratulations!!



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AT THE HEART OF SPORT




IN THE HEART OF


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TEAMS



OLDHAM

EAST HULL

Coach: Steve MOLLOY

Coaches: Lee RADFORD
& Keith POLLARD

Gavin DODD	1	Jason ABDUL
Chris CAMPBELL	2	Graham CLARK
Paul ANDERSON	3	Gary NOBLE
Jon GODDARD	4	John McCRACKEN
Joe McNICHOLAS	5	Danny LAKEMAN
Gareth BARBER	6	Jordan PRECIOUS
Neil RODEN	7	Chris WINDAS
Steve MOLLOY	8	Lee BROWN
John HOUGH	9	Gary WEYMES
Martin McLOUGHLIN	10	James ARAMAYO
Chris MORLEY	11	Paul ROBERTS
Lee DORAN	12	Mark WOODCOCK
Phil FARRELL	13	Mike DOCHERTY
Simon SVABIC	14	Phil BATTY
Anthony MURRAY	15	Gary BLANCHARD
Ryan STAZIKER	16	Lee ROBERTS
Danny GUEST	17	Lee CATOR

TODAY'S OFFICIALS

REFEREE: MR T. ALBERT
MR A. SMITH 4th

MR T. BEECH
MR P. SMITH



TXU ENERGI CHALLENGE CUP 3RD ROUND

FRIDAY 24 JANUARY 2003

Chorley Lynx v Leigh Miners Rangers
Oulton Raiders v Sheffield Eagles
at South Leeds Stadium



Wath Brow Hornets v Workington Town
at Recreation Ground, Whitehaven

SATURDAY 25 JANUARY 2003

Leigh Centurions v Locomotiv Moscow

SUNDAY 26 JANUARY 2003

Barrow Raiders v Embassy
Doncaster Dragons v Redhill
Featherstone Rovers v U.S. Villeneuve
Gateshead Thunder v UT Catalan
Halton Simms Cross v London Skolars
at The Halton Stadium, Widnes

Hull Kingston Rovers v Siddal
Hunslet Hawks v Pia XIII
Keighley Cougars v Thornhill Trojans
Oldham v East Hull
Oldham St Annes v Rochdale Hornets
at Spotland Stadium, Rochdale

Salford City Reds v Toulouse Spacers
Skirlaugh v York City Knights
at The Boulevard, Hull

Swinton Lions v Shaw Cross Sharks
West Bowling v Batley Bulldogs
at Mount Pleasant, Batley

Whitehaven v Cottingham Tigers
Woolston Rovers v Dewsbury Rams
at Wilderspool Stadium

