



# The Roughyeds

Arriva Trains Cup  
West Group Match v Leigh Centurions

## OLDHAM

# V

## LEIGH CENTURIONS

Gavin Dodd	1	Neil Turley
Will Cowell	2	Steve Madden
James Bunyan	3	Dan Potter
Jon Goddard	4	Danny Halliwell
Nick Johnson	5	Damien Munro
Simon Svabic	6	John Duffy
Ian Watson	7	Tommy Martyn
Steve Molloy	8	Simon Knox
Keith Brennan	9	Paul Rowley
Dane Morgan	10	Heath Cruickshank
Lee Doran	11	Dave Larder
Iain Marsh	12	Oliver Wilkes
Lee Marsh	13	Ian Knott
Gareth Barber	14	Dave Alstead
Neil Roden	15	Dave McConnell
Martin McLoughlin	16	Andy Isherwood
Paul Southern	17	Paul Norman

### Match Officials:

**REFEREE:** M Dawber

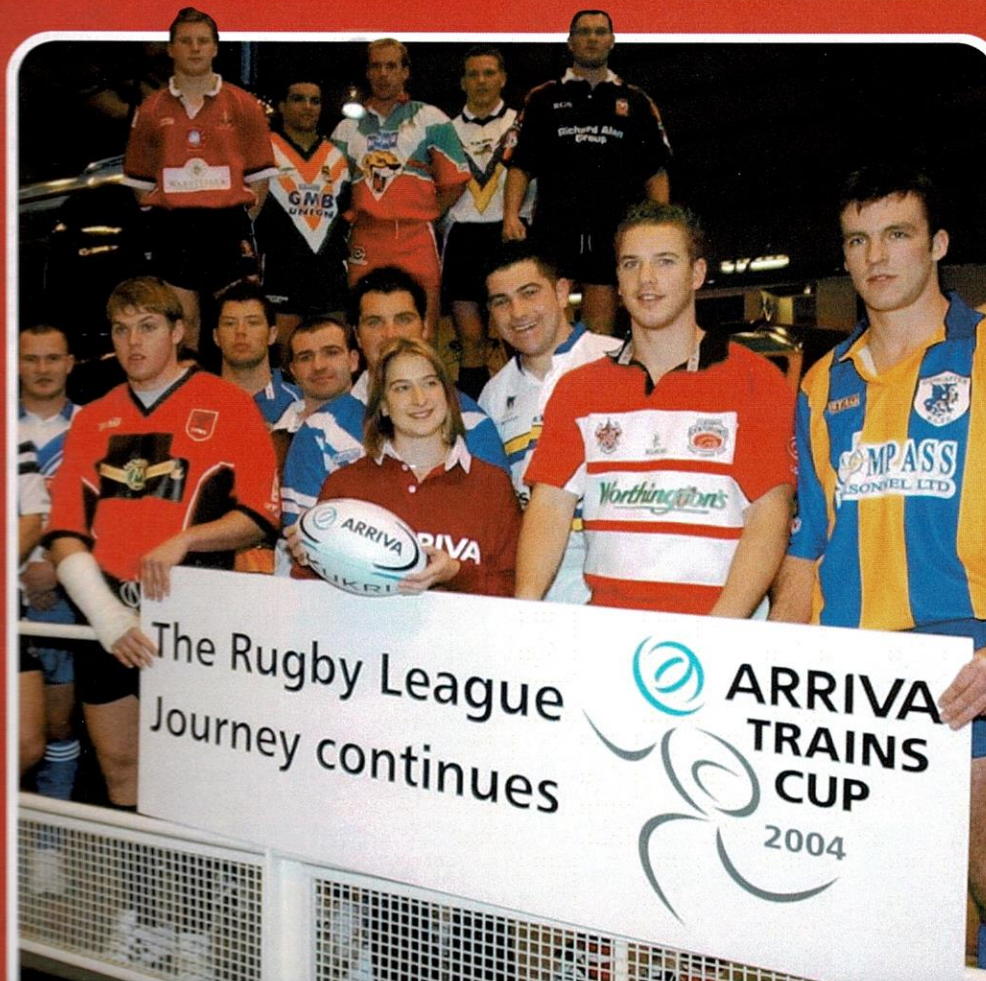
**TOUCH JUDGES:** D Winstanley & K Leyland

**4TH OFFICIAL:** A T Smith



# The Roughyeds

Arriva Trains Cup  
West Group Match v Leigh Centurions



Match sponsored by **T.T.X.** (T.T Express (Oldham) Ltd)



**BOUNDARY PARK**  
**SUNDAY 7TH MARCH 2004**  
**KICK OFF 3.00pm**





## The Roughyeds

**Oldham Rugby League  
Football Club (1997) Limited**

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Oldham OL1 1SQ

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### CHAIRMAN

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### DIRECTORS

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Steve Molloy

### ASSISTANT COACH

Andy Proctor

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### CLUB CAPTAIN

Phil Farrell

### PHYSIOTHERAPISTS

Nic Walker & Clare Gross

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John Eddy 1954-56

Derek Turner 1955-59

Bob Irving 1964-74

Martin Murphy 1966-82

Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94



## ARRIVA TRAINS CUP FORMAT

The competition includes all 20 National League clubs.

It commences Sunday 1st February with 5 groups of 4 teams. They are North, West, East, Pennine and Yorkshire. The West group includes Leigh Centurions, Swinton Lions, Chorley Lynx and Oldham Roughyeds. Each club plays the other three home and away plus one other team home and away from one of the other groups. In Oldham's case this is Rochdale Hornets.

To qualify automatically for one of the eight quarter final positions a club must finish top of its group. The other three qualifiers will be decided by the five group runners-up plus the best third placed club (based on points/points difference) entering a free draw. The draw will produce three matches, the winner of each will provide the other three quarter finalists.

The quarter finals and semi finals will be 'out of the hat' with the first team out having home advantage.

The final is scheduled for Sunday 18th July with the venue to be decided.

The previous winners are Huddersfield Giants and Salford City Reds.

## 1998-2003

### Trans-Penine Cup

Finalists - 1998

### Northern Ford Premiership

Club of the Year - 2000

Grand Finalists - 2001

**MOST APPEARANCES:** John Hough, 175 - Jan 1998 - September 2003

**CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES:** Phil Farrell, 67 - \*April 2nd 2000 - March 15th 2002

\*John Hough was on the team for every match February 1st 1999 - April 16th 2001 (82)

**TRIES IN A SEASON:** Mark Sibson, 23 - 1999-2000

**GOALS IN A SEASON:** Pat Rich, 146 - 2000-2001

**POINTS IN A SEASON:** Pat Rich, 320 - 2000-2001

**DROP GOALS IN A SEASON:** Neil Roden, 7 - 2001-2002

**TRIES IN A CAREER:** Mark Sibson, 60 - 1999-2002

**GOALS IN A CAREER:** Pat Rich, 254 - 1999-2001

**POINTS IN A CAREER:** Pat Rich, 576 - 1999-2001

**DROP GOALS IN A CAREER:** Neil Roden, 18 - 2000-2003

**TRIES IN MATCH:** Mark Sibson v Wigan St. Judes, 4 - Feb 8th 2000 at Boundary Park

Mark Sibson v Queensbury, 4 - Jan 28th 2001 at Boundary Park

David Gibbons v Chorley Lynx, 4 - Jan 30th 2001 at Boundary Park

**GOALS IN A MATCH:** Simon Svabic v Swinton Lions, 10 - Apr 6th 2003 at Boundary Park

**POINTS IN A MATCH:** Gareth Barber v Dewsbury Rams, 26 - Apr 2nd 2002 at Hurst Cross

(7 goals, 3 tries)

**DROP GOALS IN A MATCH:** Neil Roden v Workington Town, 2 - Dec 17th 2000 at

Derwent Park

John Braddish v Hull KR, 2 - Dec 16th 2001 at New

Craven Park

**HIGHEST SCORE/WINNING MARGIN:** v Yorks Wasps, 70-6 - Apr 1st 2001

at Huntington Stadium

v Queensbury (amts), 64-0 - Jan 28th 2001

RLCC 3rd Rnd at Boundary Park



## IN THE CHAIRMAN'S OPINION

with **CHRIS HAMILTON**

By the time you are reading this we will know if we are through to play Warrington in the fifth round of the Powergen Challenge Cup or are destined, like our opponents today, to concentrate on one less cup!!

It is always a shame when notes have to be written without a prior result being known but unfortunately the English weather beat us again last weekend and what was more disappointing was the fact that we were the only postponement of the day.

When myself, Steve Molloy and Ian Smith(Super League Referee)inspected the pitch at 9.30 on Sunday morning there was no chance whatsoever of playing the game that day - the pitch was bone hard - even where the sun can get to the pitch and where, in front of the main stand it cant, it was still frozen and covered in snow.

The forecast for the next few days was more of the same and this was borne out with the postponement of the soccer clubs home game on the Tuesday night.

There is no point however worrying about things we cannot control and so we are here today with a big game against a Leigh side who beat us only 3 weeks ago to give themselves the lead in our Arriva Cup group.

Leigh are everybody's favourites to win promotion to Super League this year with the absence of any full time sides, unlike in previous years, and they have certainly assembled a large squad.

Their results so far suggest that the pundits will not be far wrong and today will be an opportunity for our side to show what we are capable of.

There is one thing for sure, our defence will have to be a lot better than it was 3 weeks ago and we should be aiming for a mean points against average if we want to achieve anything this season - something which is not lost on the coaching staff and players.

Games like todays are what the season is all about, where you are tested in every aspect and the players work

towards being at their best for the "big" games and we will hopefully see a big crowd as Leigh are sure to bring with them a large following.

We have had mixed news recently on the injury front with Phil Farrell being given the go ahead to step up his training following his shoulder injury and we will certainly be a tighter outfit when he returns but John Hough's news is not so promising with the verdict that he may still need an operation. Craig Farrimond is due to see a specialist shortly and fingers are crossed that he will avoid the need to have surgery. With Gavin Johnson back in full training we will hopefully soon see more competition for places.

The Academy side will have also hopefully started their grading phase this week although Tuesday's game at Halifax was postponed and again there is no doubt that to qualify for the Academy Championship, which starts in April, the lads will have to be on top form as we have a difficult group which will see at least three of our opponents playing mainly with full time players in their sides.

Although it will be extremely tough again it will be a good yardstick and if you ask the lads they will all say they would prefer to play better players and lose more games than to play weak teams but win every week.

There is a saying that you learn more from a defeat than a victory and the Academy set up is all about making sure lads progress to the First Team rather than winning every game.

Back to today and once again thank you for your support - please get behind the team and be as loud as you can.

Enjoy the game.

**CHRIS HAMILTON**

"Games like  
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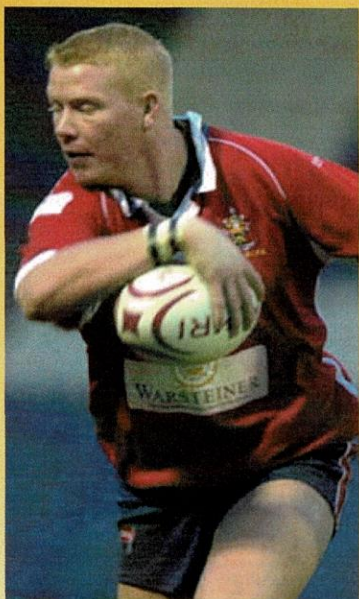
The views expressed in this matchday magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the management and staff of Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd.

We would like to express our thanks to the Oldham Evening Chronicle, League Publications Ltd, Phil Burdge and all concerned for the use of photographs.

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## COACHLINES

with **STEVE MOLLOY**

Welcome to everybody from Leigh Centurions in our return Arriva Trains Cup fixture. There is no doubt this should be an interesting encounter after Leigh took the spoils only three weeks ago at The Coliseum. Let's hope that the support at the game reflects what should be the tie of the round.

Our mid-week re-arranged fixture in the Powergen Challenge Cup has not been resolved as we go to press so I cannot comment on that, but I know it's going to be a tough week for the whole squad having to play on Wednesday and then again the following Sunday against Leigh, the high flyers of the group. The joys of summer rugby, eh?

Like I said last week it's vital that we, as a group of players, learn and improve from our exploits over the last couple of

weeks. We must remain focussed for the duration of each half because against Leigh and Swinton we had crucial periods of 10 minutes or so that cost us dearly.

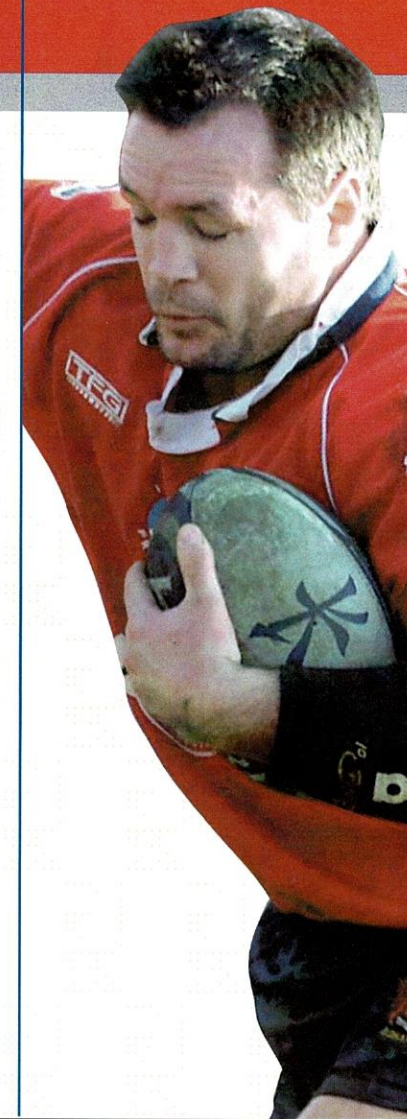
There's a big local connection in the Centurion's squad with Coach Darren Abrams and Assistant Player Coach, Tommy Martyn both having played for Oldham Bears and Dan Potter and Ian Percival both played for us briefly last season as did Simon Knox, the season before. Damien Munro and Ian Knott both hail from the Oldham area so I am sure all these players will want to perform well.

A committed and focussed display is needed by everyone in an Oldham shirt today and let's hope we can emulate last season's heroics against Leigh at home which would put us on the same points as the Centurions.

Talking of everyone wearing an Oldham shirt I hope you all like the new, long awaited strip, as much as we do. By the time you read this I believe all the replicas should be in stock at the club shop so let's all wear them with pride.

Enjoy the game,  
**Steve**

**" A committed  
and focussed  
display is  
needed by  
everyone in an  
Oldham shirt  
today "**



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## IN THE CAPTAIN'S CORNER

with PHIL FARRELL

Welcome once again to my Captain's column.

As I am writing this, the game against Sharlston should have been and gone (weather permitting) and hopefully we should now be looking forward to a home game against either Rochdale Hornets or Warrington Wolves.

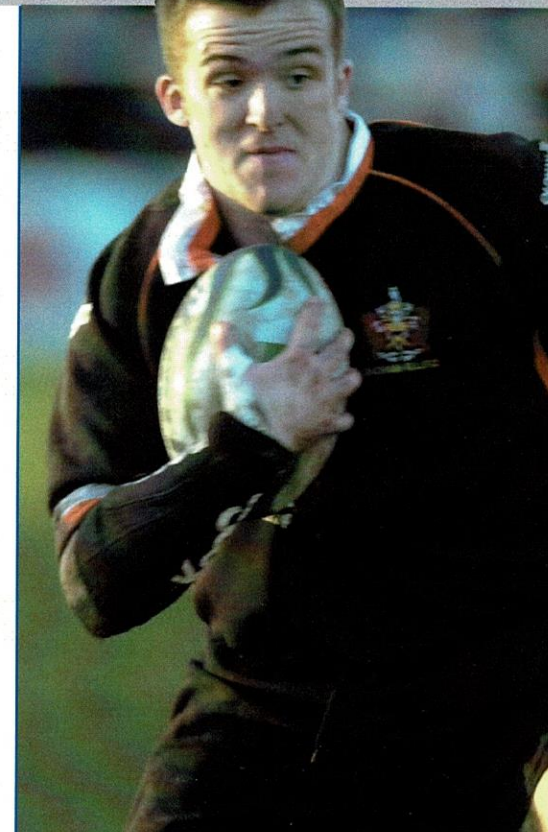
Today's game against Leigh is a very interesting one, as both sides will be looking forward to a big clash between two rival teams in the ATC competition. As we have already played each other once, a few weeks ago, I'm sure both teams will know each other inside out. I know the Oldham lads will be ready to try and avenge the defeat and ensure we are battling to gain top spot in the ATC competition.

I'm sure I can count on you to get behind the lads today and make yourselves as vocal as possible in our quest to beat Leigh.

Away from the pitch we had a team get together at 'The Belle Vue Dogtrack' and all the lads had a great time trying to win some money on the dogs. Our coach Steve 'The Hustler' Molloy thought he had won a substantial amount of money when three of the dogs he'd chosen came in 1,2,3. All the lads convinced him that it was at least a couple of hundred quid. Declaring to the lady at the 'Tote', "I think you'd better ring for Securicor to come and deliver my winnings!" The lady replied with a wry smile "I think I can cope with paying out £37! How would you like it?" As you can imagine his face was a picture, the thought of spending the couple of hundred quid on hair products had quickly gone in a flash!

Enjoy the game.

Faz



" Today's game  
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**THWAITES**  
BEERS

# in yer face

with Geoff Cooke

The news that the R.F.L. has signed an £38.5m deal with the B.B.C. for coverage of the Challenge Cup and highlights of the Super League programme is very good news. Even though this means re-scheduling the Powergen Challenge Cup to a different time of year with a Final in August the deal has to be a good thing.

There will, of course be those who object because August is a peak holiday month but this is no different to playing league fixtures in the same month. Any deal which maximises exposure of the game is to be commended and exposure on the B.B.C. reaches a wider audience than Sky.

However two considerations arise : firstly, the B.B.C.'s presentation comes up to scratch, with the game being shown as the thrilling, dynamic contest between two teams of athletes that it is with an articulate, informed commentary to match; and secondly, that a satisfactory amount of money percolates down to the clubs at National League and Amateur level. If those conditions can be met the potential for tapping into other revenue streams and sponsorship is enormous. Here's hoping the transition goes smoothly. Certainly a move away from the Challenge Cup being treated as some kind of warm-up to the Super League season is to be welcomed. Whatever anyone thinks there is still a great deal of prestige attached to being winners of the Cup and 20 realistically more clubs have a chance of picking up this piece of silverware than have of winning the Super League Grand Final. For once it's well done the R.F.L.

The postponement of Oldham's cup tie with Sharlston provided the opportunity to view the B.B.C.'s coverage of last week's two outstanding ties between Wigan and Widnes and between Bradford and St. Helens. I found the match presentation excellent. Steve Ryder and, in particular, Clare Balding, who appears to have a genuine love of the game, are two articulate and interesting interviewers and the studio guests were well chosen in that David Waite and Robbie Paul are intelligent, well spoken individuals who are enlightening and present an image of the game a million miles away from the old flat cap image so beloved of the B.B.C. of not that long ago.

Other contributors, such as Andy Farrell, Ian Millward, Brian Noble, and Neil Kelly also add to the game's image establishing in the minds of the neutral viewer the idea that here is a serious sport populated by shrewd and committed people who know their business. Of the two commentary teams I thought that Dave Woods and Martin Offiah shaded it over Ray French and Jonathan Davies. I particularly enjoyed listening to Martin Offiah who was as big a hit with microphone in hand as he was with ball in hand going for the try line. For once Ray French did not irritate me and did not rack up his usual catalogue of mistakes. All in all, therefore, it was a thoroughly entertaining afternoon with some excellent rugby especially from the two winners.

Wigan's second half turnaround was a delight, the club's youngsters demonstrating once again what a bright future the team has: at this moment in time Wigan are a joy to watch and although they racked up the points in the second half, it was the intensity of their tackling which threw Widnes off their stride. The way the whole team positively flew into the tackle was an object lesson in how to pressurize the opposition. Meanwhile over at Odsal we were treated to as fine an example of a well executed game plan as you are ever likely to see. Ian Millward obviously knew just what it takes to overcome the Bradford juggernaut: quick play the ball, rapid ball movement, territorial advantage and pinpoint kicking game all contributed to the Saints' superiority. To be rewarded with a tie against Leeds is rough justice but as they say if you're going to win it you have to beat the best sometime.

In the meantime Oldham were given every incentive to defeat Sharlston in their re-arranged tie last Wednesday with a home draw against Warrington. This provides the opportunity to bring in some much needed revenue and enables the players to test themselves against fully professional opposition. It promises to be a wonderful occasion and it is to be hoped it galvanizes the Oldham public to turn out in numbers.

Before that, however, there is the little matter of today's fixture against one of Oldham's keenest rivals in our visitors from Leigh. In welcoming Leigh to Boundary Park I feel I must make special mention of Alex Murphy who we had the pleasure of sitting behind at the Coliseum. Alex welcomed us on arrival, made conversation during the game and shook us all warmly by the hand at the end. I am lucky enough to have met Alex before at a Sportsman's dinner and can attest that he is a true gentleman and a fine ambassador for the game. Despite that I am hoping that Leigh return home today pointless so that Oldham can stake a claim to top spot in this most competitive Arriva Trains Cup group.

Geoff Cooke



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# TODAY'S OPPONENTS LEIGH CENTURIONS

**Neil Turley.** Most probably Leigh's most lethal attacking weapon. Despite carrying niggling injuries all season Neil returned with another strong haul of tries to add to the points scored with the boot. Has made the no1 shirt his own in 3 seasons at Leigh. Can also fill in at number 6.

**Dave Alstead.** Another ex Warrington player. Dave has a solid start to his Leigh career but lost a little when he started a new job. Played full back and on the wing for Leigh, strong under the kick added to a good turn of pace and sound defence. Will be looking to start more games this year.

**Mark McCulley.** Mark McCulley followed Darren Abram out of Leigh and now he has followed him back. Mark lacks natural pace but makes up for it with a brilliant step and great offloading in the tackle. Is also an accomplished goal kicker.

**Damian Munro.** Leigh picked up Damian after he was released by Widnes. and made an immediate impact on the Leigh fans. One of the fastest players around in the NL. A great eye for the interception as well.

**Dale Cardoza.** Dale has made an outstanding start to his Leigh career. One of the most explosive 3/4 around when his head is switched on. Does have a tendency to get involved with the niggling side. but definitely a player you want on your side and not the opposition side. Bit strong and very fast Dale will again be a major player for Leigh in 2004.

**Danny Halliwell.** Danny joined his hometown team after spells with Halifax and a loan spell at Warrington. A good turn of speed and a great rugby brain. Will be a stand out player in the NL.

**Dan Potter.** Destroyed Leigh last season while at Oldham on loan from Widnes. Can play 2nd row or Centre. Will be looking to grab the shirt left by Alan Hadcroft's departure.

**Chris Percival.** Another signing from Widnes. Chris is another back with pace to burn and brings valuable SL experience to the Leigh side.

**Tommy Martyn.** Joined his hometown team late last season after a highly successful spell with Saint Helens. One of the greats of the game. Won numerous awards and titles at Saints and will be hoping that winning mentality rubs off at Leigh. Also assisting with the coaching.

**John Duffy.** John is in his second spell at Leigh after spending 6 months with the Chorley Lynx. Had a highly influential season last year and has certainly cemented the scrum half role. Inventive with the ball in hands John has vastly improved his kicking game as well. Was recognised with a call up to the Scotland squad. Has had previous spells at Warrington and Salford.

**Steve Madden.** Steve joins Leigh after failing to break through at Saints. A speedy centre Steve showed immense talent at Warrington until a broken leg ruled him out. Will be looking to get his career back on track.

**Heath Cruickshank.** Heath is back at Leigh after being forced to leave Leigh when the NL quota was cut. Heath has bulked up since at Leigh and has moved from the 2nd row to the front row. A great tackler and strong runner.

**Richard Marshall.** Another local lad who is coming to play for his hometown team. Has played for Huddersfield and London in SL. Prop/2nd row.

**Simon Knox.** Now in his 2nd spell after a hugely disappointing 1st spell. Simon was in outstanding form for Swinton last season and nearly beat Leigh on his own in the Arriva Trains Cup. Was a member of Widnes's grand final winning team as well.

**Paul Norman.** Has recovered well from surgery on his knee. Takes the ball in hard and is a strong tackler. What he lacks in size he more than makes up in heart. A real crowd favourite at Hilton Park.

**Oli Wilkes.** Oli joins Leigh after impressing for Keighley last season. A young and enthusiastic 2nd Rower. Tackles well above his weight. Another Scottish international at Leigh.

**Ian Knott.** Ian steps down a division to join Leigh after highly successful spells with Warrington and Wakefield. An accomplished 2nd rower or loose forward, Ian was a regular try scorer in SL along with a dependable kicker. Will be looking to replace Adam Bristow in the no13 shirt.

**Paul Rowley.** Outstanding last season and Leigh fans will be expecting more of the same this year. Paul ended last season after copping a ban which meant he missed the Grand Final against Salford. He will be looking to put one over on his ex club Halifax this year.

**Dave McConnell.** Dave left Saints last season for Chorley where he spent a few months before being snapped up by London. A dependable player who can slot in at loose forward or Hooker.

**Anthony Blackwood.** Ant never got a look in at Leigh last season and was loaned out to Chorley. Played a few highly impressive games for Leigh the year before. Plays in the 2nd Row but can also fill in at centre.

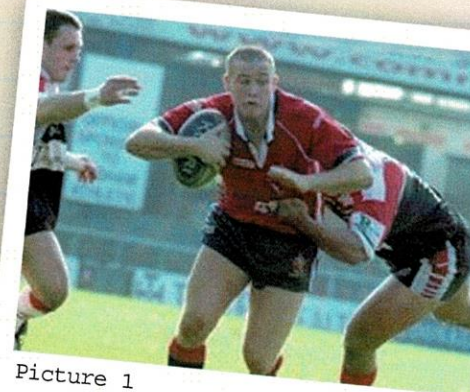
**Adam Bibey.** Adam is of course brother to Ricky who was at Leigh last year. But is rated as a far better prospect. Massive for a young lad will be looking to break into the 1st team this season as his only 1st team experience was 18th man at Hull Kr.



## FROM THE PEN OF MICHAEL TURNER

*Picture 1.* This photo was taken at the corresponding Arriva Trains Cup fixture at Boundary Park last season. The action shows Gavin Dodd attempting to escape the clutches of two Leigh defenders. Gavin scored a try in the match but Leigh emerged the victors by 31 - 26. The attendance was 1,945.

*Picture 2.* This image comes from the Roughyeds' championship winning season of 1956-57 and features the match against Leigh at Watersheddings on August 28th 1956. Don Vines is seen driving into a posse of Leigh players. Don, like Gavin in the other photo, also scored a try in the match but this time Oldham registered a 20 - 0 victory in front of a 9,000 crowd.



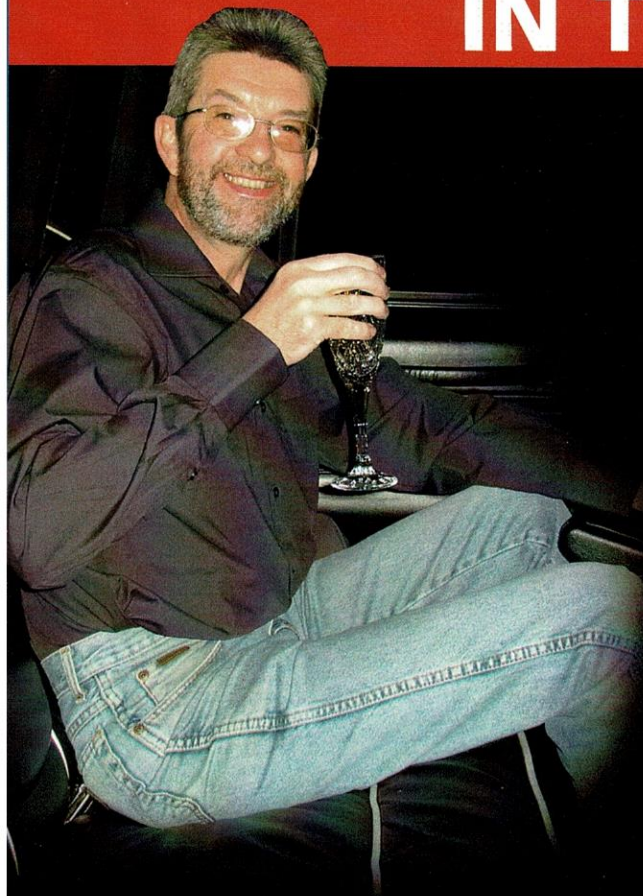
Picture 1



Picture 2



# IN THE NEWS



What a week it has been, all in all, at the club, with the £10,000 draw last Friday at the Social Club, the postponement of the Sharlston Rovers game on Sunday, its re-arrangement for Wednesday (which at the time of going to press is still in doubt), and the draw for the next round made on Monday night with a draw against Rochdale or Warrington – if we beat Sharlston of course.

With so much still up in the air I thought I would tell you about the great night we had at the Grand Draw on Friday – what a night it turned out to be!

Dave Bradshaw, the Commercial Manager, had set up a computer run on the Big Screen in the Concert Lounge and from 7.00pm onwards all the 175,546 names scrolled across the screen continuously. Revolution Radio ran their Friday evening's entertainment from the club and there was cabaret as well. At around 9.00pm the main raffle was drawn for a colour television and the lucky winner was Linda Mills who also won the right to press the button to stop the scroll of names and choose the lucky £10,000 winner.

At exactly three minutes past ten the count down began and, with every digit crossed, it all worked to perfection – the lucky winner Mr D Stott and his address in Royton appeared on the screen. If you only knew what a relief that was for the organisers – who had dreaded a winner from Penzance, New Zealand or South Africa – Yes we do have lottery members in these places. At least he was local BUT would he be on the phone and would he be in. The plan was to arrive at his house in a stretch limo – generously provided free of charge by Lady Jayne Limousines of Royton – which was waiting outside, and drive him to the club to be presented with his £10,000 cheque.

The relief quickly turned to mild panic as Directory Enquiries told us there was no phone number for that name and address and there was nothing in the phone book – to make matters worse the lottery agent was out and wasn't answering his mobile – there was only one answer. Into the 'limo' and off to Royton armed with digital cameras, video cameras and of course all the paraphernalia involved with live radio.

Revolution arrived first and when the 'limo' pulled up on the winner's street we were told by their sound engineer that there was no such street number as the one that had appeared on the screen. They stopped at 49 and ours was a higher number – yet another panic – but no need to worry a resident explained to us the complicated numbering system on the street and the correct house was found.

As Mr Stott opened the door in shorts and T-shirt he was obviously gob smacked to see a hairy



Mr D Stott and family enjoy the luxury of the 'limo'



microphone stuck in his face, Chris Hamilton standing at his door, a stretch 'limo' at the bottom of the drive and cameras flashing in his eyes. He couldn't have looked more frightened and suspicious if it had been the bailiffs arriving. Chris finally got out of him that he was indeed Mr D Stott of the correct address and was a member of our lottery – then live on air the Revolution presenter told him he had won £10,000 in the Oldham RLFC Club Cash Lottery. By this time the 'limo' had caught the attention of the neighbours, one of whom entertained us, through her window, by raising her blouse and showing us her considerable assets – ah well it takes all sorts!

A quick pause for live interview, photos and then Mr Stott, his wife and youngest son quickly changed their clothes in preparation for their journey to the Social Club in the 'limo' – champagne provided of course. Here they were greeted by the press – more photos and interviews – and then into the Concert Room to the cheers of the 200 plus supporters and lottery members to receive the cheque for £10,000 from Roughyed Chairman Christopher Hamilton and then enjoy the rest of the evening at the club.

Just before midnight their stretch limo arrived to whisk the still dumbfounded trio back to their Royton abode – I bet there was very little sleep in that house that night.

Oh, by the way, it was decided that same night that the Development Fund would once again donate £10,000 for the draw next year – so if you fancy a night like the Stotts had – you know what to do – JOIN THE ROUGHYEDS CLUB CASH LOTTERY.



Mr D Stott receives the surprise news



# Unrivalled coverage of Oldham Rugby League spanning 3 centuries!

## Joe Ferguson

1899 to 1923

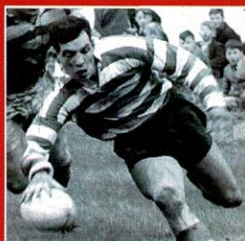
Arguably the greatest ever Oldham player, Joe made a record 627 appearances for the club. But for the First World War his appearances may have crept up to 700, a fantastic record



## Alan Davies

1950 to 1961

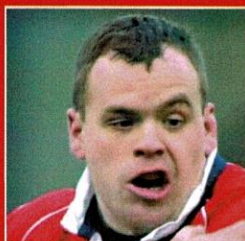
Of all the big-name players who graced Watersheddings in the "Fabulous Fifties", Alan Davies was king. One of the greatest centres the sport has ever produced, Davies was the complete rugby league player



## John Hough

1998 to present

John, a local lad, made Oldham RL history on December 2, 1997, when he became the new Roughyeds club's first signing. With 180 appearances, he is now contracted for 2004 and looking forward to his 7th season as a Roughyed



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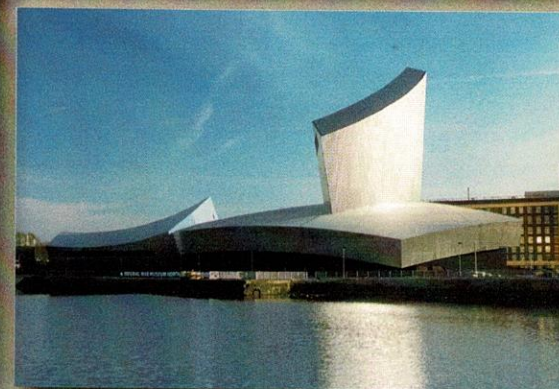
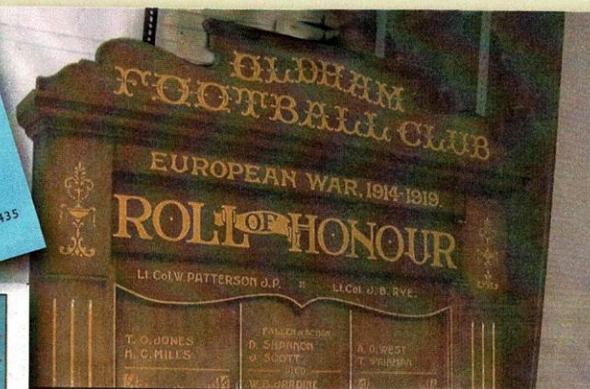
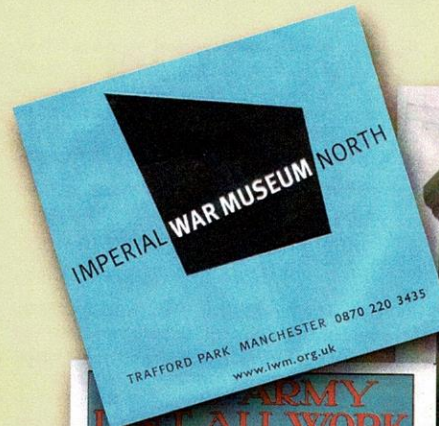
# OLDHAM EVENING Chronicle

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# WALKERBOUT

With Brian Walker



The state of the art, Salford Quays sited IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM NORTH has organised a special feature **SPORT DURING THE WAR** to run from July through to October (exact dates to be confirmed).

Their research has concentrated on soccer, rugby, horse racing and cricket with the Oldham club selected to help portray the story of league at war. From a time just prior to the Boar War when Oldham's Lancashire capped forward Ben Andrew emigrated to South Africa and represented his adopted country against the touring British, through the Great War when it was said that the Oldham club provided more of it's players, officials and staff than any other club in the Northern Union to the Second World War, when, unlike during the First, the Government actively encouraged organised sporting events as a diversion from the mundane.

Many from the Oldham club distinguished themselves and some never returned. Former England rugby union forward Bill Nanson, killed at El Krithia and who was awarded the Queen's and King's medal for gallantry will feature prominently in the exhibition but this is also a story of ordinary people, especially those who managed to keep the sport alive during the most difficult of circumstances.



# NATIONAL LEAGUE TALK

with GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS



## TIME FOR FRENCH INJECTION?

ONE idea floated in recent years to add to the appeal of the Arriva Trains Cup has been to include French clubs in the competition at some stage.

On the evidence of last weekend's Powergen Challenge Cup games, the French could certainly compete at this level.

Limoux – only sixth in the national French league – beat Super League hopefuls Halifax 19-18 in the major shock of the round, while UTC again impressed at Castleford (having already beaten Hull KR) and Pia showed plenty of guts against Huddersfield.

"The French were full of enthusiasm and aggression, played with a lot of flair and deserved their victory," Halifax coach Tony Anderson said after the game.

"If anyone has to come down here in the next round, they're going to find it very, very tough."

The one obvious objection would be the travelling expenses incurred by having French teams in the English groups. That was one of the reasons for scrapping the Treize Tournoi – held just once in 1998 – despite some success.

But that could be neatly sidestepped by having a separate French pool in the group stages. For example, UTC, Toulouse, Pia, St Gaudens,

Carcassonne and Limoux could make up a French pool, with the winners moving through to the knock-out stages.

Fitting it in with the French league campaign may be problematic, but it is certainly something that could be looked into further.

Having French teams in the ATC would add prestige and a touch of glamour to a competition in which the crowds are currently falling below expectations.

It would also significantly boost the game in France to have the opportunity to take on English sides on a more regular basis.

And why not go further than that, and include a pool of teams from National League Three, or the TotalRL.com Conference?

Again, one-sided scorelines would be avoided, as they would compete in a separate pool, with just one side progressing to the quarter finals.

The ATC certainly has plenty going for it at the moment – a wealth of local derbies, the first professional Rugby League action of the year, and the chance for clubs outside the top flight to win some silverware.

But if the competition is to continue to grow, then the addition of a few new teams might be just the injection it needs.

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PLAYER  
PROFILE

# WILL COWELL

Will Cowell is in his third season with the Roughyeds and, excluding the scheduled midweek Powergen Challenge Cup tie with Sharlston Rovers, he has made a promising start with three tries in six appearances.

He began a new challenge in his rugby league career when he originally signed a one-year deal with Oldham in November, 2001 after four years with Super League club Warrington Wolves.

A product of the Kells amateur club in Whitehaven -- a prolific provider of talented youngsters to the professional game -- he signed for Warrington in 1997 on returning from a BARLA Great Britain under-21 trip to Australia when he was only 17.

While learning his trade as a youngster at Wilderspool, 150 miles away from his home and his roots in Cumbria, he made six starts in Super League, plus another eight appearances as a substitute -- 14 games in total in the sport's elite division.

Mike Ford was still coach here when Cowell signed in the close season before the 2002 campaign, about the same time as Jon Goddard, who came from Castleford, initially on loan, and John Braddish, who arrived on a similar arrangement from St Helens.

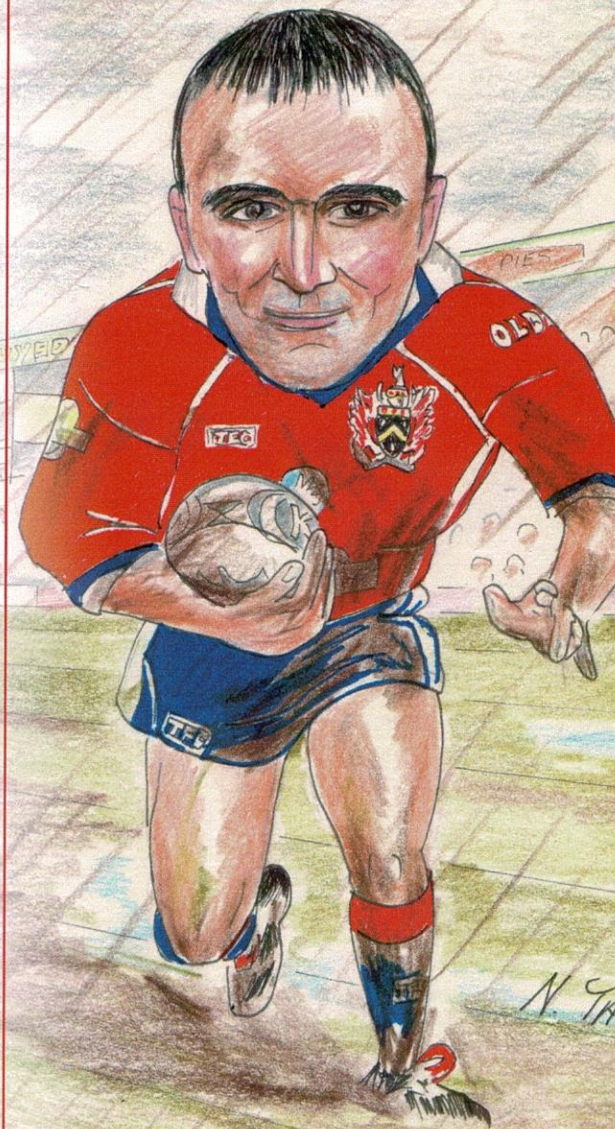
Cowell signed outright to begin a Roughyeds career in which he scored five tries in 27 appearances in 2002 and two tries in 13 games in 2003.

When he first signed, he said: "I play wing, centre or full-back -- basically anywhere in the backs -- but I have a feeling Fordy will be playing me on the wing."

He was spot on, yet ironically one of his best performances in a Roughyeds jersey came towards the end of his first season when he scored two crucial tries from the left-centre spot at Batley in a 20-20 draw that earned Oldham a vital point in the push for a top-nine finish.

By this time, Ford had gone, John Harbin had come and gone, and Steve Molloy had taken over as boss for the last 14 matches of the season, in which he used Cowell on no fewer than 13 occasions.

On one of them, against Huddersfield Giants at Hurst Cross, Cowell displayed an electrifying burst of speed to score under





## WILL COWELL CONT...

the posts from inside his own half as Molloy's men gave the Giants the fright of their lives.

After going 32-12 down, the Roughyeds roared back with 18 unanswered points to claw it back to 32-30 before time ran out on them... and the sight of Cowell holding off Huddersfield's speed men to score a superb try from distance is still fresh in the memory of many Roughyeds supporters.

One has the feeling that the best of Cowell has still to come -- and judging by the comments of the club chairman, Chris Hamilton, when the Cumbrian accepted the offer of a new one-year deal to cover the 2004 season, it appeared that the club held a similar view.

I wrote in the Oldham Evening Chronicle at that time: "Oldham accept that Cowell has not had much luck with injuries and that for much of last season (2003) he had an additional distraction in that he was preparing for his wedding.

"Said Mr Hamilton: 'All that is behind him now and Will knows -- he didn't need us to tell him -- that he is due a big season.

'In his two previous seasons with us he has not fully achieved what either he or we would have liked,

We have had a good chat with him. He knows the score and he is keen to make a big impression this time.

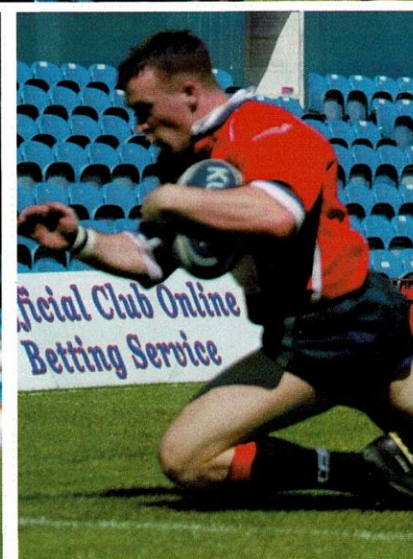
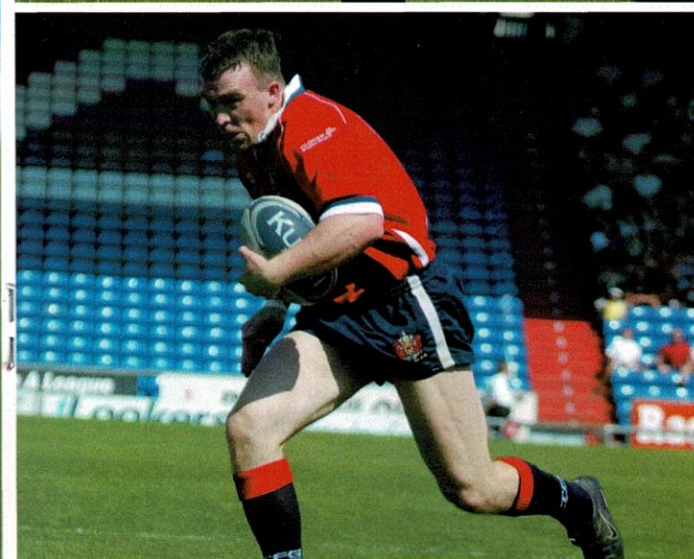
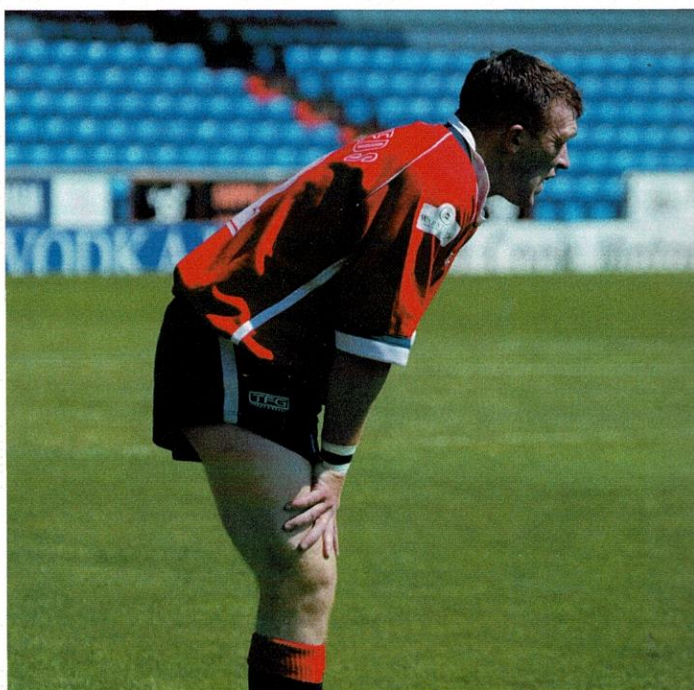
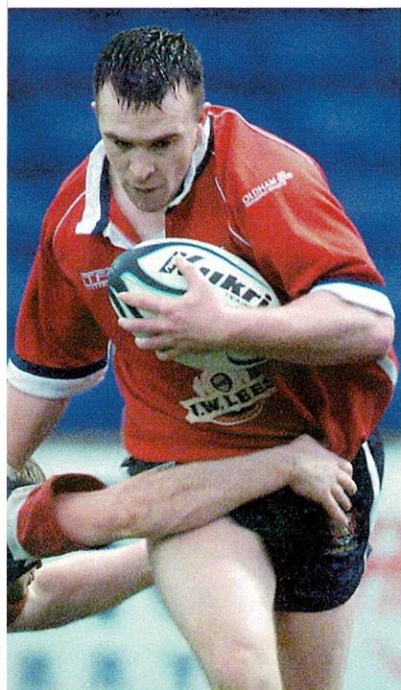
'The one thing about Will is that he has first-class attitude and commitment and those are qualities that are always going to give him a fighting chance.' "

Molloy, the team boss, spoke similarly and added: "We've seen what Will can do and now we want to see him do it more often. He is determined to go well in 2004."

So far, so good. Now 24, Cumbrian Cowell has made the right-wing spot his own so far this season and has bounced in for three tries as well as doing a feast of work when going inside to help out his forwards or to run the ball out of the Oldham quarter.

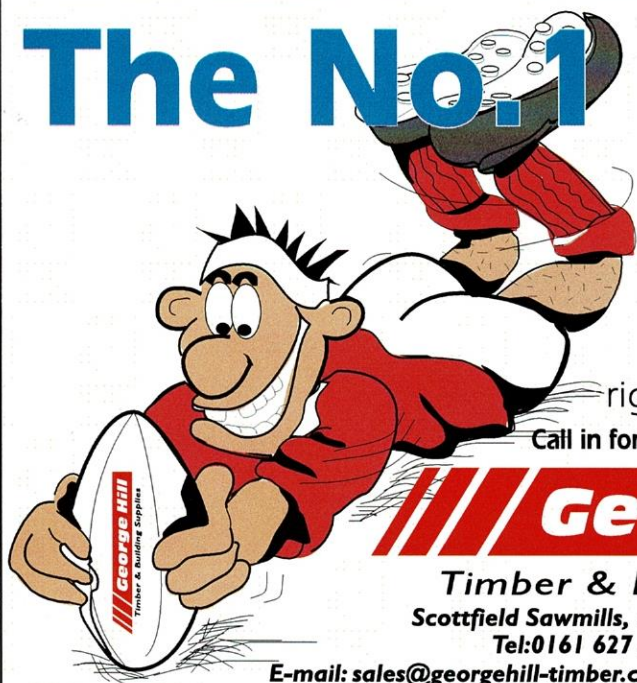
His two tries up the hill at Batley, and that special effort against the Giants at Hurst Cross, proved that Cowell has what it takes to be a hit in the National League. More of the same, please Will!

ROGER HALSTEAD





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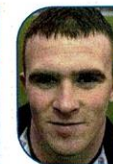
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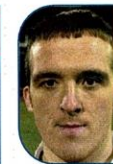
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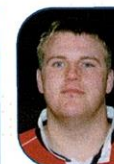
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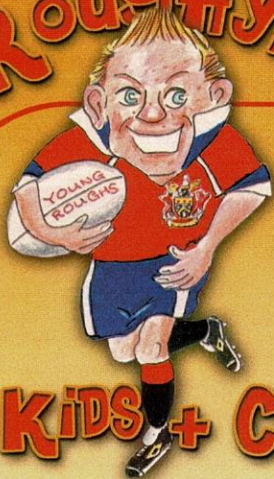
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# ROUGHYED



## KIDS + Co

# Hi KIDS

HOPE YOU ARE ALL GOING TO SHOUT LOUDLY TODAY WHEN WE TAKE ON THE "CENTURIIONS" AND THAT THE SCORE WILL BE IN OUR FAVOUR.

We would like to thank our juniors who represented us magnificently at the recent away matches.

Firstly Cameron Clare who was on duty at Leigh, Cameron is seven years old and has been a Roughyed Kid for some time now.

Holly King was our mascot at Sedgley Park where we had a big win against Swinton Lions.

Mascot for todays match is six year old Charlotte Goodinson whose favourite player is of course Dane Morgan. Good luck Charlotte, enjoy your day.

More news in the next programme.

See you soon

Janet & Carole



## TODAYS MASCOT

**Charlotte Goodinson**

Age: 6

Favourite Player: Dane Morgan

## OLDHAM RUGBY SUPPORT GROUP

It has certainly been a busy period at the Social Club over the last couple of weeks. A family party night with the theme of "Grease" was organised by Carole and Janet of Roughyed Kids and supported by ourselves and was enjoyed by young and old alike. Another successful Quiz Night closely followed this.

Prior to our next Quiz Night will be a first for the club, a Race Night, an event which will make great use of our giant screen facility. This promises to be a fun evening in what is always a convivial atmosphere. Make a date to join us.

Finally, congratulations to Mr Stott on his £10,000 win in the Club Cash Big Draw and to all those who so superbly organised an excellent evening of entertainment and excitement at the Social Club.

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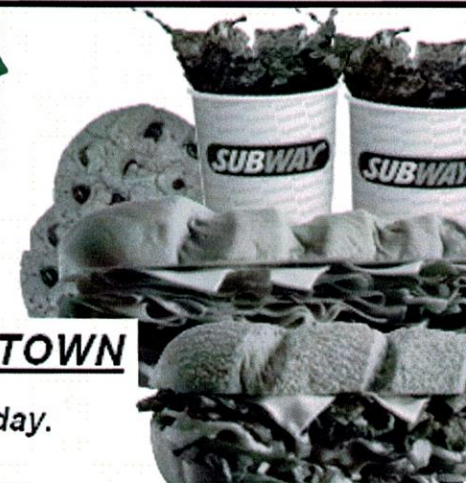
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# ON THIS DAY

DON YATES LOOKS BACK TO MARCH 7TH YESTERYEAR

It was on this day ninety years ago, on Saturday 7th March 1914, that Leigh visited Oldham for a League Championship match. The contest was one of little consequence with Oldham in mid-table and Leigh a little lower. However, the Roughyeds were able to avenge an earlier league defeat at Leigh by beating their visitors 19-0. The match was of significance for the talented New Zealander George Smith, a superb all-round sportsman, who was making his 173rd and final appearance in an Oldham shirt. With admirable timing he was able to score his one hundredth try for the club. Second-row forward David Holland scored the other two Oldham tries and full-back Alf Wood added five goals. At the conclusion of that 1913-14 season both Holland and Wood, together with Oldham stand-off Billy Hall, toured Australasia with the British Lions, and all three played in that historic Rorke's Drift test against the Kangaroos.

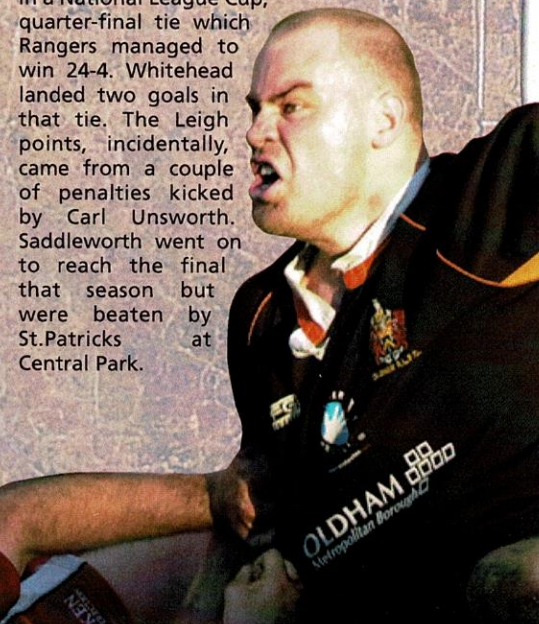
On Sunday 7th March 1976 a Great Britain Colts team, coached by Graham Starkey, was well beaten, 39-5, by France in the Stade Coubertin, Cannes in the south of France. There were three players from Leigh included in the British line-up that afternoon. The British try was scored by centre John Woods; arguably the most talented player ever to come from that hotbed of rugby league. On the bench for Britain were Tommy Gittens, a hard working second-row forward, and the unfortunate utility back John Burke, whose full potential was never realised after he broke his neck playing for Workington Town a couple of years later.

The senior Great Britain team enjoyed a much better afternoon when they met France in Carcassonne exactly seventeen years later, on Sunday 7th March 1993. Three players familiar with Oldham followers turned out for Great Britain that day. They were the current Oldham coach Steve Molloy; a former Oldham coach and a player for both Oldham and Leigh, Mike Ford; and a player who began his professional career with the Roughyeds, Chris Joynt. Molloy was then with Leeds, Ford with Castleford, and Joynt with St. Helens. The Lions won 48-6 with Mike Ford scoring one of the nine British tries.

Oldham's powerful centre James Bunyan is now with his fourth professional club

since he left Milford in August 1995 to join Huddersfield. After a spell with Doncaster, Bunyan joined Rochdale Hornets three years ago and on Wednesday 7th March 2001 made his debut for Hornets in a Northern Ford Premiership match away to Keighley. It was a successful start to his stay at Spotland with Rochdale winning a close fought encounter 23-20. Bunyan went on to make 84 appearances for Hornets and he scored 26 tries before joining the Roughyeds last November.

During the winter months local rugby enthusiasts will have followed the fortunes of the amateur game here in Oldham and in particular the Standard Cup competition, the final of which takes place here at Boundary Park on Easter Sunday morning, 11th April, kick-off 11am. Shaw Rhinos meet Waterhead in that final. Oldham director Sean Whitehead has made a playing comeback with the Rhinos in recent weeks after a distinguished amateur career with Saddleworth Rangers and spells at professional level with Swinton and Rochdale Hornets. He won every domestic honour available with Rangers and twelve years ago, on Saturday 7th March 1992, found himself playing for Rangers in a tough cup-tie against opposition from Leigh. That day Saddleworth entertained Leigh Miners in a National League Cup, quarter-final tie which Rangers managed to win 24-4. Whitehead landed two goals in that tie. The Leigh points, incidentally, came from a couple of penalties kicked by Carl Unsworth. Saddleworth went on to reach the final that season but were beaten by St. Patricks at Central Park.





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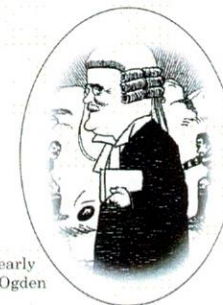
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# AS IAN SEES IT

with IAN WILSON

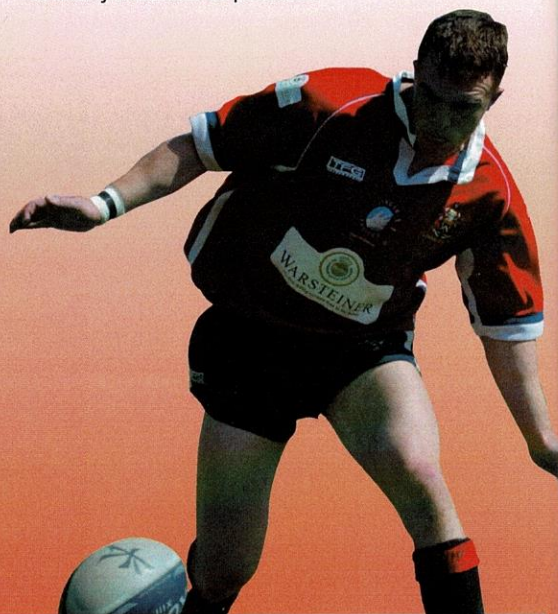
What a fantastic first weekend for Super League! Bradford v Wigan was just men against boys, though I must say that I am fairly happy that I just managed to squeeze Leslie Vainikolo into my FL team! I am not sure that Leeds' trouncing of London was a reflection of Leeds' quality or London's weakness - I hope very much the former. Saints were apparently very impressive against Hull who, in spite of their seemingly inevitable injury crisis, did at least compete very well. And Warrington looked fairly impressive in beating a combative Wakefield side, who looked as though they were unlikely to finish in eleventh place again this season: Their David Solomon looked as though he might be one of the real quality signings of the year.

The other two games were very interesting in a rather different way. Every body seems to be assuming that Salford v Widnes was a relegation four - pointer even at this ridiculously early stage of the season - and they may well be right. So Salford's win might well be crucial by the end of the season, and it was good to see them at least begin their latest effort as a Super League side with a win. Though I suspect they will be relatively few and far between as the season really gets going. Huddersfield's win over Cas. might also prove to be very significant. I think Jon Sharp might turn out to be quite a success as a coach at Huddersfield, and that they and Wakefield might find reaching the safety of the middle one third of Super League IX rather more accessible than, say, Cas. and Widnes this season. We shall see!

What about the attendances? In the six Super League games crowds totalled a record 70,000, so that, with another 10,000 at the ten National League matches, 80,000 people watched professional rugby league live over the weekend. Given the long - run tendency for this figure to be around 55,000 - for the past few years anyway - this can only be regarded as fantastic news, especially given that we are talking about mid - February, hardly the height of summer sun and warmth.

Together with the recently announced deal with BBC TV to supplement the Sky deal - and I hope that the moaners and whisperers give due credit to Richard Lewis here - I cannot imagine a more up beat week for the game to kick off 2004 properly. Long may it continue!

What of Oldham so far? I have seen the games against Castleford Panthers and Swinton, but, because of other commitments, missed the Law Cup, Chorley and Leigh games. So I think it is only fair to suspend any attempt to make any judgements. As last season, the National League is surely what really matters, so that we are only about half way through the preliminaries at this stage. Featherstone at Boundary Park on Easter Monday is highlighted on my calendar, and I suggest that the players and coaching staff deserve until then to prepare. For the time being, let's all try to concentrate on doing whatever we can to persuade as many people as possible to come and attend as many matches as possible.



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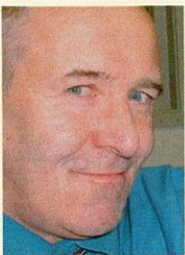


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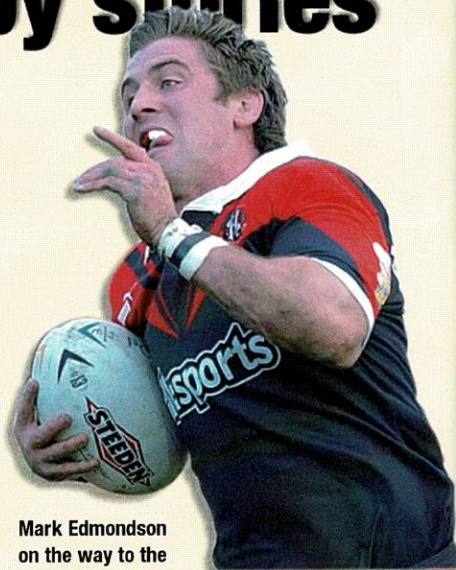




**By Danny  
Lockwood**

**Publisher  
League Weekly**

# rugby stories



**Mark Edmondson  
on the way to the  
line in the Cup**

IT HAS always been a truism in rugby that 'the ball moves faster than the man' - a strikingly compelling reason, you would think, for passing it rather than running and handing it to your pal.

Not any longer, however. There will be obscure nations in this summer's Olympics whose 'sprinters' would be blown away by the average Super League prop. It's one thing a 5ft 7in, 10-stone winger covering across and trying to get tangled in the legs of an attacker, quite something else when the mountain of beef tracking laterally with malicious intent is the size of a Massey Ferguson and travelling considerably faster.

The world record for a try-scoring prop used to be held by former Batley favourite Trevor 'Tank' Walker. Any part of the body that you chose to try to 'tackle' Tank - from his knees to his neck - was about 15-feet around. You had a choice. Take his ankles, try to decapitate him, or venture forth accompanied by a swarm of defenders, one of whom he might eventually trip up over. Usually over the try line.

He wasn't - still isn't - a tall man. But apart from having excellent rugby league skills (and a cunning mastery of the dark arts of the scrum that the Borgias would be chuffed with) trying to tackle Trevor was like trying to tackle that big orange balloon that used to chase after Patrick McGooohan at the start of The Prisoner. (At least I think it was orange. We didn't have a colour telly).

Now you could never have accused Tank Walker of taking steroids, unless they were secreted in one of Desperate Dan's cow pies. He was strong as an ox, and quick over 10 yards - but generally only the 10 yards out from the opposition try line. Unlike the modern breed of prop forwards, "aerobic" athleticism wasn't on his training agenda ... but then again neither did it have to be, especially when he returned to the amateur game with Dewsbury Celtic. Tank would linger down in the "Nine 'oil" getting his breath, patiently waiting for the supremo of amateur scrum halves, Mick Doyle, to find touch in the opposition 25. Sometimes Tank might have to take two or three strides to where the scrum would form, and he could terrorise the opposition front row again.

The memories of such legendary elements of the game were brought to mind by two sublime moments in St Helens' stunning Powergen Challenge Cup win. The first was when Mark Edmondson accelerated away from the Bulls defence for a try, with a startling show of pace for a so-called engine room man. It reinforced the idea propagated by many that rugby league is now a sport played by 12 second row/centres and a scrum half. I'll bet Trevor Walker came over all hot and bothered just seeing a front-rower running that distance, that fast.

But the second was the artistry of the Lee Gilmour try; a training ground move executed with such precision, and at such pace, as to render the speed of any covering defence irrelevant. Unless of course there just happened to be an 'old school' prop lingering in the vicinity, with a forearm the size of a ballet dancer's thigh, just made for clothes-lining fools daft enough to run onto balls with their heads up ... ah, the good old days!

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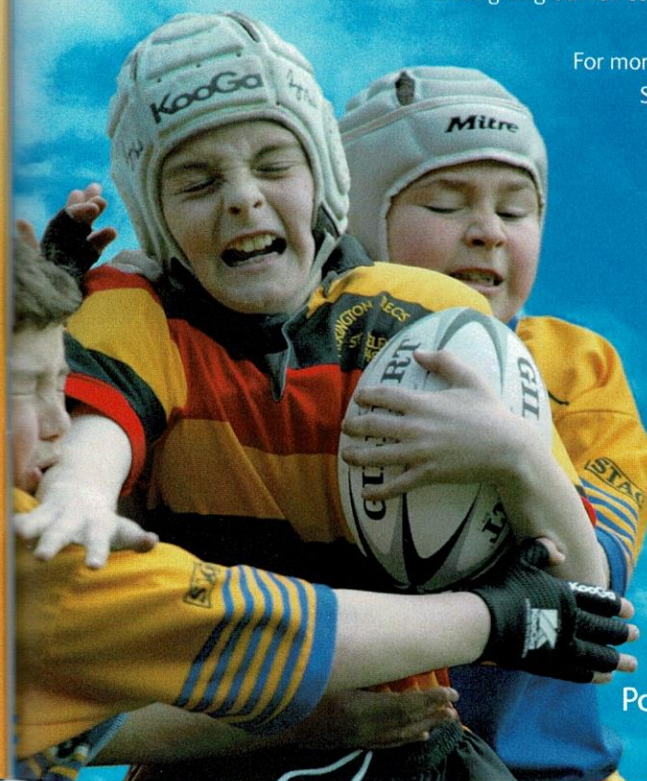


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## Fixtures

DATE	OPPONENTS	CUP	VENUE	K. O.	RESULT	W/L
01/02/04	Chorley Lynx	AT Cup	Home	15.00	64-14	W
06/02/04	Castleford Panthers	Powergen CC	Home	19.30	16-8	W
15/02/04	Leigh Centurions	AT Cup	Away	15.00	51-32	L
22/02/04	Swinton Lions	AT Cup	Away	15.00	18-30	W
29/02/04	Sharlston Rovers	Powergen CC	Home	19.45	24-4	W
07/03/04	Leigh Centurions	AT Cup	Home	15.00		
14/03/04	Powergen CC R5	Powergen CC				
21/03/04	Chorley Lynx	AT Cup	Away	15.00		
28/03/04	Powergen CC Quarter Finals	Powergen CC				
28/03/04	Rochdale Hornets	AT Cup	Home	15.00		
04/04/04	Swinton Lions	AT Cup	Home	15.00		
09/04/04	Rochdale Hornets	AT Cup	Away	19.30		
12/04/04	Featherstone Rovers	NL 1	Home	15.00		
18/04/04	Powergen CC Semi Final 1	Powergen CC				
18/04/04	Halifax	NL1	Away	15.00		
25/04/04	Powergen CC Semi Final 2	Powergen CC				
25/04/04	AT Cup Play-offs	AT Cup				
02/05/04	Leigh Centurions	NL 1	Home	15.00		
09/05/04	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL1	Away	15.00		
15/05/04	Powergen CC Final	Powergen CC				
23/05/04	Rochdale Hornets	NL 1	Home	15.00		
30/05/04	Batley Bulldogs	NL 1	Home	15.00		
06/06/04	AT Cup Quarter Finals	AT Cup				
13/06/04	Keighley Cougars	NL1	Away	15.00		
20/06/04	Whitehaven	NL 1	Home	15.00		
27/06/04	AT Cup Semi Finals	AT Cup				
04/07/04	Doncaster Dragons	NL1	Away	15.00		
11/07/04	Halifax	NL 1	Home	15.00		
18/07/04	At Cup Final	AT Cup				
25/07/04	Leigh Centurions	NL1	Away	15.00		
01/08/04	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL 1	Home	15.00		
08/08/04	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	Away	15.00		
15/08/04	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	Away	15.00		
22/08/04	Keighley Cougars	NL 1	Home	15.00		
29/08/04	Whitehaven	NL1	Away	15.00		
05/09/04	Featherstone Rovers	NL1	Away	15.00		
12/09/04	Doncaster Dragons	NL 1	Home	15.00		
19/09/04	NL 1 & 2 Play-offs	NL1				
26/09/04	NL 1 & 2 Play-offs	NL1				
03/10/04	NL 1 & 2 Play-offs	NL1				
10/10/04	NL 1 & 2 Grand Finals	NL1				
17/10/04	NL 1 & 2 Prom/Releg. Play-offs	NL1				

### Key

AT Cup – Arriva Trains Cup  
 Powergen CC – Powergen Challenge Cup  
 NL1 – National League Division 1

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