

NEXT HOME MATCH
Swinton Lions V Blackpool
 25 March 2005
 Northern Rail Cup



NEXT HOME MATCH
Sedgley Park V London Welsh
 12 March 2005
 National League 1

Today's Teams

Swinton Lions Team:

- 1 Wayne English
- 2 Stuart Oldham
- 3 Lee Patterson
- 4 Chris Maye
- 5 Marlon Billy
- 6 Mick Coates
- 7 Ian Watson
- 8 Paul Southern
- 9 Phil Joseph
- 10 Wes Rogers
- 11 Danny Heaton
- 12 Ian Sinfield
- 13 Lee Marsh
- 14 Warren Ayres
- 15 Ben Cramant
- 16 Rob Russell
- 17 Rob Whittaker

Referee: M Dawber

Oldham Roughyeds Team:

- 1 Jonathon Goddard
- 2 Will Cowell
- 3 Damian Munro
- 4 Alex Wilkinson
- 5 Nick Johnson
- 6 Simon Svabic
- 7 Marty Turner
- 8 Paul Norman
- 9 Gareth Barber
- 10 Danny Nanyin
- 11 Rick Bibey
- 12 Tere Glassie
- 13 Carlos Mataora
- 14 Craig Farrimond
- 15 Gavin Dodd
- 16 Martin Elswood
- 17 James Kirkland

Touch Judges: M Worrall
 A Dugdale



Swinton Lions

Northern Rail Cup
 RUGBY LEAGUE



LHF Healthplan
 National League 2

WATCH THE LIONS ROAR



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Swinton Lions v Oldham Roughyeds
Northern Rail Cup February 27th Kick Off 3pm
 Sedgley Park, Park Lane, Whitefield, Manchester



Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

Season 2005

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Company Secretary David Jones

Director of Rugby Les Holliday

Head Coach Paul Kidd

Commercial Manager Phil Beckwith

Lottery Manager David Bradshaw

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Club Doctor Dr. Khurram Jahangir

Other Officials Alan Robinson (Asst Coach)
Paul Scanlon (Asst Coach)
Laura Henderson (Physio)
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John Holden (Safety)
Rob McGivern (Head Steward)
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Editors

Peter Green,
Martin McDonough,
Steve Wild.

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CLUB HONOURS

Rugby League Champions

1926/27, 1927/28, 1930/31, 1934/35, 1962/63, 1963/64

Runners Up

1924/25, 1932/33, 1939/40

Challenge Cup Winners

1899/1900, 1925/26, 1927/28

Runners Up

1926/27, 1931/32

Lancashire Cup Winners

1925/26, 1927/28, 1939/40, 1969/70

Runners Up

1910/11, 1923/24, 1931/32, 1960/61, 1961/62, 1962/63,
1964/65, 1972/73

Lancashire League Winners

1924/25, 1927/28, 1928/29, 1930/31, 1939/40, 1960/61

Runners Up

1892/93, 1893/94 (Under RFU) 1897/98, 1900/01,
1922/23, 1926/27, 1934/35, 1938/39, 1965/66

Second Division Championship Winners

1984/85

Runners Up

1986/87, 1996;

Promoted

1974/75, 1990/91

Second Division Premiership Winners

1986/87

Runners Up

1988/89

BBC Floodlit Trophy Runners Up

1966/67

West. Div. Champ. Runners Up

1963/64

CLUB RECORDS

Win 90-0 v Prescot Panthers 11/8/1996

Loss 10-106 Leeds 11/2/2001

Appearances Ken Gowers 602 (Inc. 8 Sub) 1954-73

Points

(Career) 2105 Ken Gowers;
(Season) 283 Albert Blan 1960/61;
(Match) 30 Greg Pearce v Prescot Panthers
11/8/96; Mick Nanyin v York Wasps 25/3/2001;
29 Bernard McMahon v Dewsbury 15/8/1959

Tries

(Career) 300 Jim Valentine 1884-1901;
197 Frank Evans 1921-31
(Season) 48 Jim Valentine 1888/89;
42 Johnny Stopford 1963/64
(Match) 6 Mark Riley v Prescot Panthers 11/8/96

Goals

(Career) 970 Ken Gowers;
(Season) 128 Albert Blan 1960/61;
(Match) 12 Ken Gowers v Liverpool City 3/10/1957

Ground Record Attendance

44,621 Warrington v Wigan 7/4/1951

Club Record Attendance

26,891 v Wigan 12/2/1964

World Record Kick

77.75 yards by Martin Hodgson at Rochdale
Hornets 13/4/1940

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Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

Director of Rugby...Les Holliday



Welcome today to our visitors Oldham Roughyeds from NL1. Today will be an intriguing tie as many of today's Lions team have close links from the past with the Oldham club. We ourselves will be looking to keep a winning run going, but today will be a tough encounter. It was pleasing to get 2 results in the space of 5 days. The performance against Rochdale in our first fixture was particularly pleasing as it was our first competitive run out & the team gelled very well. Defensively we stood up & dominated the Rochdale pack & they found it difficult to go around us wide out. Our fitness levels are improving every week which is testament to the players & the hard work the coaching team has put into planning the pre-season training. The attitude of the players to their preparation for the season has been first class & the mood in the camp is very positive to the challenge ahead.

With the visit to Blackpool it was always going to be tough backing up after only 5 days, but we scored 34 points away from home against opposition who will be challenging for a play-off place this year. It took a while to get into our stride but we blew them away in a very impressive 20 minute spell just after the break. The team has had 9 days to prepare for today's game & they are ready for the challenge.

It was good to see so many Lions fans in Blackpool on a very cold evening, your support is appreciated, more of the same again today. You, our supporters are very much apart of the team & it is vital that our support grows in numbers if we are to progress. Success to any club doesn't come easy. Success is a combined effort of all parts of its organisation exceeding that of the previous season. You can play your part by bringing someone new to the game, a friend, a neighbour, a work colleague, treat the family to the Lunch & Crunch. Your support & backing is essential if we are to reach the next level.

Enjoy, Les

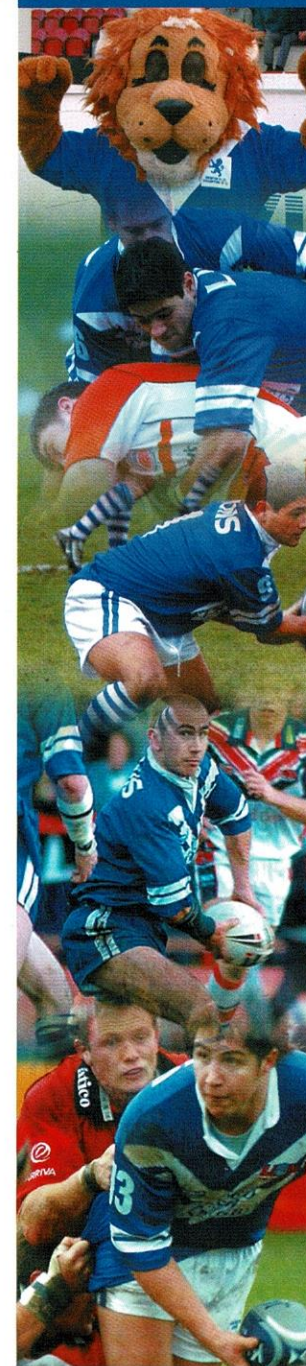
The Lost World of Swinton and Oldham...Ian Jackson

In January 2005, a series of three remarkable television programmes were broadcast by BBC TV that showed long forgotten moving images of Edwardian England at the turn of the 20th century. "The lost world of Mitchell and Kenyon" showed recently discovered film footage of the North of England at the very start of cinematography filmed by two entrepreneurs from Blackburn, named Sagar Mitchell and James Kenyon. The silent films, which even pre-date cinemas were mainly showed at fairgrounds and captured busy town centres, scenes at factory gates and even sporting events. Batley, Hunslet and Leeds were all featured in the BBC TV series at the very beginning of Rugby League, which was then known as Northern Union.

In the early 1900s both Swinton and Oldham were amongst the finest teams and attracted huge crowds at Chorley Road and Watersheddings, respectively. So did Swinton and Oldham feature in some of the 800 film reels of Mitchell and Kenyon? A clue lies in this extract from Trevor Delaney's book: "The Grounds of Rugby League" (1991). In the chapter on Oldham, it read:

"The game against Swinton on 12 January 1901, when it was said a "cinematograph apparatus" was on hand to record events, was ordered to be replayed after thousands of spectators went inside the fencing along the touch-lines and behind the posts. The gates were closed but thousands watched from outside on the hills at the Ripponden Road end (of Watersheddings)."

Continued on page 12





Read Dave Hadfield



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Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

Coach's Comment...by Paul Kidd

Good afternoon and welcome to Park Lane for what promises to be another tough contest with our close neighbours from National League One, Oldham.

A special welcome to Gary Mercer, his team, plus supporters and the board.

We have been very pleased with the start to the season, especially the support we've been receiving from you and we're really looking forward to the challenge ahead in 2005.

It has certainly been a tough start to the year, but that is the beauty of Rugby League right now because every game is a tough one at all levels.

After our last home game against Rochdale it was very satisfying to come away with two points. Then following the Rochdale game we travelled to Blackpool. You could see last week at Bloomfield Road that from the way they threw everything at us in the opening quarter they were desperate to turn us over. However, the composure of the players and commitment to each other and this club brought them their second win.

This afternoon's game will prove to be another massive test for us in which we must match the NL1 club in intensity all the way.

I would like to thank all the fans for their continued support at both home and away matches. Your support once again at Blackpool was fantastic.

Enjoy the game and I look forward to seeing you at next week's game with Oldham.

Paul Kidd

Supporters Trust

It's certainly a good time to be a Swinton supporter. The cold weather that we're not used to anymore in professional Rugby League has failed to cool our enthusiasm or the team's performances. Beating one of NL1's top teams then winning away at Blackpool's first home competitive match, which under those circumstances wasn't going to be easy, must be cutting down our pre-season odds at the bookies.

Two weeks ago members of the Trust committee attended the North West Supporters' Direct quarterly meeting, which on this occasion took place at Old Trafford. Guest speakers included representatives from the Federation of Stadium Communities and the North West Co-operative & Mutual Council. Jacqui Forster of Supporters Direct laid out plans for a Trusts' training day to be held in June.

The Trust recently held meetings with the club with a view to help generate funds for community development. It is hoped two applications for grants will be completed shortly. To help raise money the Trust have developed a 'Prediction League' competition with a £10 entry fee, half of the proceeds will go to the Trust and half in prize money. Predict what position each team will finish in National Leagues 1 and 2 and prove what you know about the greatest game. Get a form at today's match or see the Trust website for more details -

Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

Junior Lions News...by Colin Gettins



May I first of all warm welcome our local rivals Oldham Roughyeds especially the Junior Roughyed fans who have travelled to Park Lane today. What a start to the season we have had, with the Lions defeating our local rivals Rochdale at home, following that with a good victory at a very cold and windy Bloomfield Road against Blackpool Panthers. Hopefully we will follow those victories with another today (sorry Roughyed fans).

I hope everybody enjoyed the half time entertainment at our last home match with Parkview Primary and Mersey Drive Primary enjoying their 10 minutes of stardom. By all accounts both sets of players thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon and wish to thank all the supporters for their warm support. Hopefully these half time matches will become a regular thing for home games, as we continue to encourage youngsters to play Rugby League as well as supporting the Lions.

Membership Cards

This year's membership cards are now ready, so please collect yours today. Remember you need your card for entry into the ground for the Junior Lions admission price.

Match Days

As per last season, the Junior Lions have set up their table near the turnstiles where all members will be entitled to collect their free drink and packet of crisps when producing their membership card. We will also be selling old programmes from Swinton and other clubs to raise much-needed funds. Don't forget to buy your half time sweets from the stall as well.

Special Birthday wishes

Some of our members have recently or are going to celebrate their birthdays. These are:

4th	Josh Birmingham	25th	Jamie Birmingham
8th	Joshua Langham	27th	Leah Grant-Savage
22nd	Samuel Lucas	27th	Steven Robinson
28th	Daniel Langham		

Hope you have an enjoyable day and best wishes from everybody at Swinton Lions.

Season Tickets

Just a reminder of the special Season Ticket deal available for Juniors. These cost £25 for all home and away league and Northern Rail matches. See the Junior stand today for details.

Match Day Mascots

If you want to lead the Lions out at any match this season either contact me on a match day or via the shop during the week.

Half Time Raffle

As like last year there is a free Junior Lions raffle at half time so don't forget to listen for the winners at half time. If you don't hear the winners just check at the Junior Lions table to see if you are a winner.

Today's Junior Lions

Today's Junior Lion is Daniel Langham. Daniel attends Swinton High and his favourite player is Wayne English. In his spare time he enjoys football and watching Little Britain.

Today's Quiz

Unscramble the letters to find the Swinton Lions players:-

**U R On the Lapus
Real Mesh**

Answers Paul Southern and Lee Marsh

Roy Metcalfe

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Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

Away Match Report...By Ian Rigg

Blackpool Panthers 24 Swinton Lions 34

The Lions kept up their good start to the campaign with victory over the Panthers at an icy cold Bloomfield Road.

The Panthers took the lead in the 2nd minute when Eric Andrews collected a through kick at the corner and ex-Lion Jake Johnstone added the difficult conversion. The lead was stretched 16 minutes later when Johnstone added a penalty goal.

The Lions had early chances but ball-handling let them down. However, Phil Joseph scored his first Lions' try from close range in the 22nd minute and Lee Marsh added the goal points. It got even better two minutes later when Chris Maye raced 70 metres to score on the left, and again Marsh converted to put the Lions in the lead at 12-8. Marlon Billy added a 3rd try just before the break but Marsh was unable to convert.

Marsh added a simple penalty goal just after the break to stretch the Lions further ahead and Swinton made the game safe with three tries in nine minutes midway through the half. Billy, Maye and Stuart Oldham all went over and Marsh added two more goals. Arguably a lack of concentration and discipline in the closing stages allowed the home side to come back strongly in the last 17 minutes and they too ran in three tries thanks to Gary Smith, Danny Barton and Johnstone. Johnstone also added two more goals to allow the Panthers to recover from 34-8 down to a more respectable 34-24.

The lost world of Swinton and Oldham (Continued)

Did the "cinematograph apparatus" belong to Mitchell and Kenyon who were active in recording such events across Lancashire at the very same time? Whatever the answer, the Lancashire Senior Competition was definitely hard-fought that season between the top two sides: Oldham and Swinton. The Lions won the original fixture by 7 points to 5 thanks to a Bobby Messer try and two goals by Bob Valentine. However, Oldham successfully protested against the result because of the large number of spectators that had strayed onto the field of play. Steve Wild's history of Swinton RLFC, "The Lions of Swinton" (1999) also records that the Oldham protest was upheld because if the original game was declared void and replayed then "they would give a third of the gate receipts to the Northern Union!" The Swinton and Pendlebury Journal reflected:

"What Oldham failed to achieve on the pitch, they have achieved with cloaked diplomacy"

The re-arranged game took place at Watersheddings on 25 February 1901 and the result was a 3-3 draw. The replayed game was an original four-pointer, without it the Lions would have won the league by a single point! The final league positions show the full extent of the decision to deem the original fixture void.

Lancashire Senior Competition: final league table for the 1900-1901 season.

Position	Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
1	Oldham	26	22	1	3	45
2	Swinton	26	21	2	3	44

Whether or not footage from the void Oldham versus Swinton game at Watersheddings of 1901 still remains and is amongst the many hours of restored film archive from Mitchell and Kenyon requires more research to find out for certain. If it is, then the film would clearly show over 21,000 spectators packed into the ground plus hundreds locked outside where, the "hillside was black with would-be spectators." Such is the lost world of Swinton and Oldham.

Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

Player Statistics



	Played	Subs	Tries	Goals	Drops	Points
Ayres Warren	0	2	0	0	0	0
Billy Marlon	2	0	2	0	0	8
Coates Mick	2	0	0	0	0	0
Cramant Ben	0	1	0	0	0	0
English Wayne	2	0	1	0	0	4
Heaton Danny	2	0	0	0	0	0
Joseph Phil	2	0	1	0	0	4
Marsh Lee	2	0	2	7	0	22
Maye Chris	2	0	3	0	0	12
Oldham Stuart	2	0	1	0	0	4
Patterson Lee	2	0	0	0	0	0
Rogers Wes	2	0	0	0	0	0
Russell Rob	0	2	0	0	0	0
Sinfield Ian	2	0	0	0	0	0
Southern Paul	2	0	0	0	0	0
Speakman Darren	0	1	0	0	0	0
Watson Ian	2	0	0	0	0	0
Whittaker Rob	0	2	0	0	0	0

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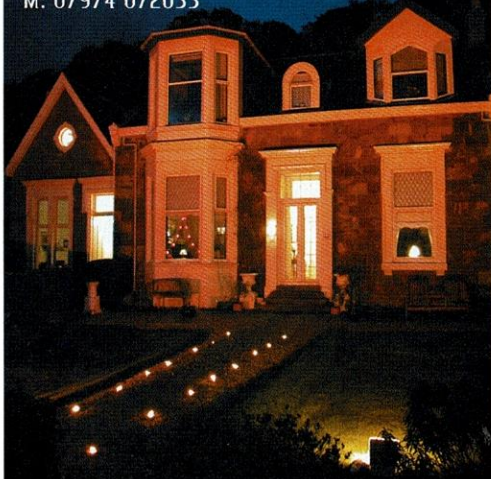
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Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

Welcome to today's visitors

OLDHAM ROUGHYEDS

Gareth Barber, Stand Off

Local born player, who started his professional career with Super League club Warrington Wolves. He has been used effectively as an impact player coming off the bench to exploit tiring defences. Barber represented the National League under-21 side that defeated their Super League counterparts in 2001.

Rick Bibey, Second Row

Started his career at Leigh before making a name for himself at Wigan. Moved on to St Helens last season. Signed for Oldham on a permanent 12 month contract, with an option of another 12 months.

Will Cowell, Full Back, Wing, Centre

The 23-year-old Cumbrian is a product of that prolific provider of Rugby League players, Kells. After originally joining Warrington he left Wilderspool permanently to join Oldham originally on a one-year contract which he has extended for another year on two occasions.

Gavin Dodd, Full Back, Winger

A product of the Royton Tigers youth set up, who later had a spell with Bradford Bulls academy team. Gavin represented Great Britain students in Australia and New Zealand four years ago, and was selected in the GB under-21 squad two seasons ago.

Martin Elswood, Second Row, Centre

Local 20 year old signed from Super League club Huddersfield Giants. At around 6'4" and 16st Martin has power as well as pace. He is eager to further his career and for this reason wants to get some first team rugby under his belt.

Craig Farrimond, Back Row, Hooker

He started his rugby years at the Wigan based Ince Rose Bridge before signing for Warrington, where he was the captain of the under-21 side for two seasons. Craig was offered a full-time contract by the Wolves, but he did not consider it lucrative enough to give up his job. Oldham beat off Leigh and Halifax for his signature.

Tere Glassie, Second Row, Prop

Signed at the beginning of the 2005 season along with his fellow Cook Island internationals, Carlos Mataoro and Jonathon Wilson. Tere has had experience in the top grade in Australia as well as the Batacard Cup Competition in New Zealand and arrived at Oldham from the Newtown Jets.

Jon Goddard, Full Back, Centre

Reared in Castleford youth and schools rugby before joining the Tigers academy. Originally joined Oldham on loan in 2002. Jon swept the board at the Oldham awards last season taking all but the Roughyeds Kids player of the year award. Selected at full back in the 2004 mythical NL1 team.

Andy Corey, Full Back, Half Back

Completing the second year of a two year contract in the 2005 season. A versatile back who has played most of his rugby in the academy at full back. He is enjoying the more demanding training rigours of the first team squad and is itching for his first senior run out.

Simon Haughton, Forward

Signed from Rugby Union club Orrell. While at Wigan he won a host of medals and has 5 GB caps to his name including a man of the match performance against Australia at Old Trafford. Simon has also represented England on more than a dozen occasions.

Jon Hough, Hooker

Came from Warrington and was the first player to sign for his home town club when the new Roughyeds were formed by Chris Hamilton and his fellow directors in the autumn of 1997. He has just signed a new contract to take him to the end of the 2007 season, which will allow him to complete 10 years with the club.

Andy Isherwood, Second Row

25 year old signed from Leigh Centurions. Andy started off as a 14 year old at Wigan but did not make first grade there and moved to Leigh in 2002. He also had a spell with Widnes for their 2003 Super League season, but was injured on a pre-season tour of South Africa. Signed by the Roughyeds for the 2005 season.

Nick Johnson, Wing

Signed for Oldham towards the end of the 2003 season for the run in to the play offs, on a loan deal from Bradford Bulls. He spent most of the 2003 season on long term loan to London Broncos. Last season Nick smashed the Oldham Roughyeds try scoring record, beating the record set by Mark Sibson.

James Kirkland, Prop

Another off the academy conveyor belt. A front row partner along with fellow team mates Adam Sharples and Danny Nanyn, who have also progressed into the ranks of the first team squad. James has the opportunity to deputise the senior hookers in the team, an opportunity made vacant by the retirement of Keith Brennan.

Carlos Mataoro, Stand Off, Hooker

Another Cook Island international brought to Oldham for the 2005 season. He played in the victorious Cook Island team which thrashed the NZ Maoris in the final of the Pacific Rim Cup. Known in the Cook Island team for his robust style of play he is also an astute goal kicker.

Damian Munro, Wing, Centre

New signing from Leigh who notched up 42 tries in 46 games for the Centurions during a two year spell. At 28 years old he has had plenty of experience both in Super League and at the upper end of the National League and has been in two National League 1 Grand Final winners sides with Widnes and Leigh.

Danny Nanyn, Prop

Has risen from the Academy ranks, and is now on the verge of making a first team berth his own. After making his first team debut in the 2004 season, only an untimely injury prevented him from adding to his number of NL1 appearances.

Paul Norman, Prop

Although not the bulkiest of front row forwards, Paul is a player who always makes the gain line and is no stranger to the top end of a tackle count. He started his pro career with the Oldham Bears, where he made 12 appearances before the demise of the club in 1997. Since then he provided sterling service to Leigh Centurion.

Mark Roberts, Centre

Joined Oldham on loan from Warrington Wolves at the end of the 2004 season. He was then the first player to commit to the Roughyeds for the 2005 season. Used last year mainly as a centre, where he can display his devastating turn of pace, he also has the upper body strength to enhance the back row of the pack.

Adam Sharples, Prop

Another of Oldham's academy team production line. A front row forward who made a couple of handfulls of appearances in the first team in 2004, he was not found wanting even when up against the so-called more experienced men in the National League 1.

Simon Svabic, Stand Off

Began his career with the former Oldham Bears club Academy side, where is half back partner was Bradford's Paul Deacon. Since those days he has played Super League with Salford and also at the top in the National League with Leigh Centurions. He signed for the Roughyeds to begin the 2003 campaign.

Marty Turner, Scrum Half

Joined Oldham for the start of the 2005 season from North Queensland Devils the Melbourne Storm feeder team in Australia. Since recovery from a road traffic accident Marty showed up well again for the Devils earning himself the tag of "Best Back" for the season.

Alex Wilkinson, Centre

GB schoolboy tourist to Australia in 1999 and with the England Academy to New Zealand and Australia in 2001. After signing for Bradford Bulls he had loan spells with London Broncos, Huddersfield and Hull FC where he impressed the Humbersiders enough for them to offer him a two year contract. Alex decided he wanted to complete his degree and when part time rugby was the only option he chose his home town club.

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Season 2005





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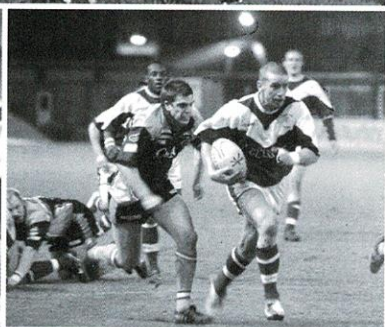
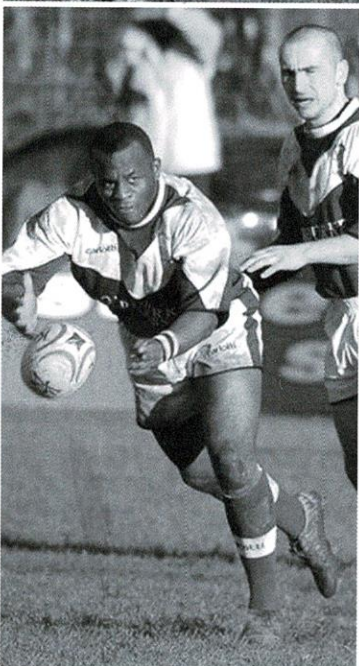
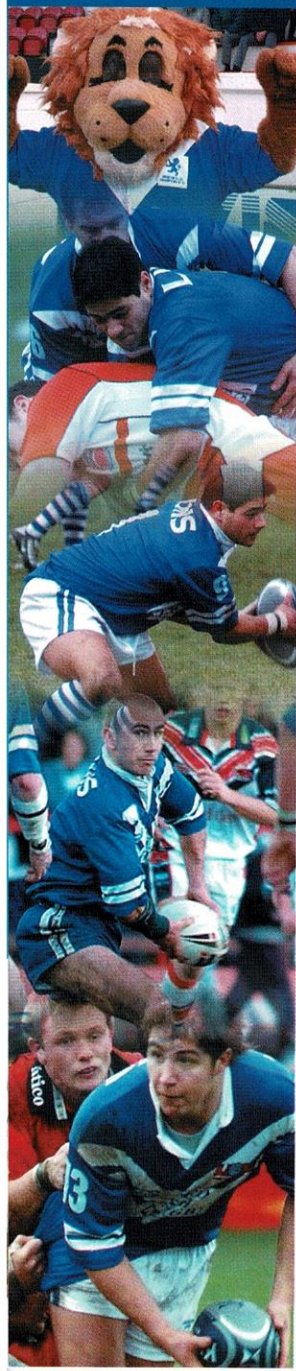
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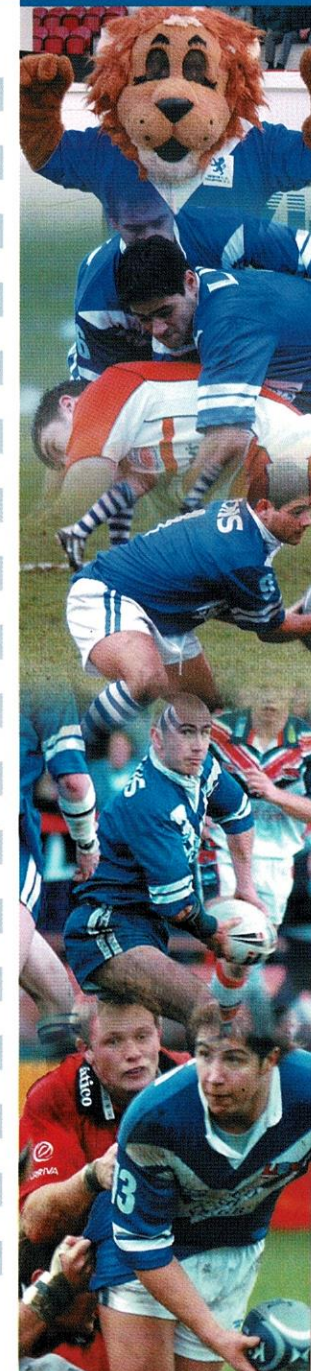
Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

Picture Diary



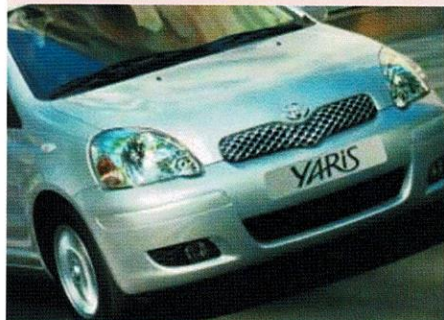
Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

Fixtures 2005



Date	Comp.	Venue	Kick-Off	Club	Score	Attendance
Sun 13/02/2005	NRC	H	3:00	Rochdale	20-14	685
Fri 18/02/2005	NRC	A	3:00	Blackpool	34-24	512
Sun 27/02/2005	NRC	H	3:00	Oldham		
Sun 06/03/2005	NRC	A	3:00	Oldham		
Sun 13/03/2005	CC3					
Sun 20/03/2005	NRC	A	3:00	Rochdale		
Fri 25/03/2005	NRC	H	3:00	Blackpool		
Mon 28/03/2005	NL2	A	3:00	York		
Sun 03/04/2005	CC4					
Sun 10/04/2005	NL2	H	3:00	Workington		
Sun 17/04/2005	NL2	A	3:00	Dewsbury		
Sun 24/04/2005	NL2	A	3:00	London Skolars		
Sun 01/05/2005	NRC P/O					
Sun 08/05/2005	CC5					
Sun 15/05/2005	NL2	H	3:00	Blackpool		
Sun 22/05/2005	NL2	A	3:00	Keighley		
Sun 29/05/2005	NRC Q/F					
Sun 05/06/2005	NL2	A	3:30	Hunslet		
Sun 12/06/2005	NL2	H	3:00	Gateshead		
Sun 19/06/2005	NRC S/F					
Sun 26/06/2005	NL2	H	3:00	Sheffield		
Sun 03/07/2005	NL2	A	3:00	Workington		
Sun 10/07/2005	NL2	H	3:00	York		
Sun 17/07/2005	NRC F					
Sun 24/07/2005	NL2	A	3:00	Blackpool		
Sun 31/07/2005	NL2	H	3:00	London Skolars		
Sun 07/08/2005	NL2	H	3:00	Hunslet		
Sun 14/08/2005	NL2	A	3:00	Gateshead		
Sun 21/08/2005	NL2	H	3:00	Keighley		
Sat 27/08/2005	CCF					
Fri 02/09/2005	NL2	A	8:00	Sheffield		
Sun 11/09/2005	NL2	H	3:00	Dewsbury		
Sun 18/09/2005	P/Offs					
Sun 25/09/2005	P/Offs					
Sun 02/10/2005	P/Offs					
Sun 09/10/2005	NL2 GF					

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St. Patricks Night Quiz Night **Thursday 17th March at Clifton Cricket Club**

Join us for a great fun night out. We're looking for fourteen teams of five people maximum needed to take part in the above event. Plus each team will include a Swinton player. The entry fee is £10 per team, with a prize will go to the winning team, all proceeds will go to Swinton Lions. The Quizmaster will be Mike Caine. To book your team see or ring Phil Beckwith on the shop number.

The next fans forum will be on **Thursday 21st April again at Clifton Cricket Club.** **Watch this space for further details.**

We are arranging a meeting with the suppliers of the replica kit and souvenirs etc. which will be made available for sale in the shop as soon as possible. Keep your eyes on the shop or give us a call for up to date information.

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Leading Lights

THE Northern Rail Cup may be just two weeks old, but already a host of stars have begun to emerge. A cluster of individual players have stood out in the opening two rounds of the competition. As impressive as anyone so far has been Hull Kingston Rovers' new Australian signing James Webster.

Webster joined the Robins from Parramatta Eels, having played plenty of first grade games Down Under. He has already played scrum half, stand off and hooker for Rovers – excelling in all three. He was outstanding in both their victories over Keighley Cougars, and despite his slight frame, looks set to be one of the NL1 stars of the season.

Another should be Castleford scrum half Paul Handforth, a second player to win consecutive 'Gamestar' awards in Rugby Leaguer & League Express. Handforth spent the early part of his career at Wakefield, where he alternated between halfback and hooker and played primarily off the bench. Now he looks to have already made the Cas number seven shirt his own, and has been hugely influential in wins over York and Featherstone.

Another to have produced impressive back-to-back displays has been York City Knights prop John Smith. The 24 year old was a late starter in the professional game, having played until recently at Featherstone Lions. But his high workrate has seen him become a cornerstone of the Knights pack.

There has been no shortage of quality displays from halfbacks in the opening two rounds – in addition to Handforth and Webster. Halifax's Ben Black was in sparkling form at times during their big win over London Skolars, while Ryan Sheridan gave Dewsbury supporters a glimpse of what is to come with a commanding display against Batley. And Featherstone halfback Josh Weeden has also shown plenty of nice touches in his two games so far.

In the pack, two players to catch the eye on the opening weekend were Workington's John Tuimaualuga, and John Tomes of Gateshead. They shared the season's first NRC Player of the Week crown, but missed out on the action last weekend when their scheduled clash was postponed.

More stars are sure to emerge this weekend. It's shaping up to be a terrific competition.

Read full reports from all the weekend's game in Monday's
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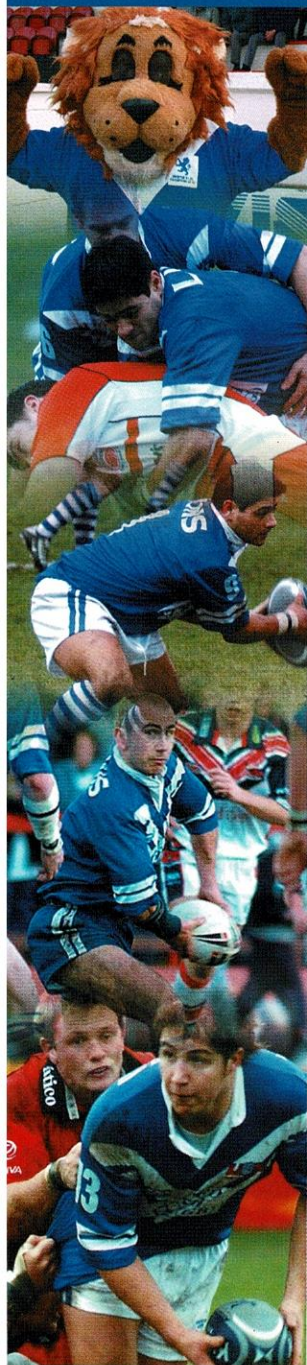


Taking people to places



Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

The Roving Mike...Mike Caine



Well, did everybody enjoy the night out at the best 'half a football ground' in the country last Friday? I certainly did, but I must admit, it was strange to see the 'Lions' playing on the home ground of my favourite football team. Not for the first time though, as I remember the night back in March 1987, when we last played at Bloomfield Road, against the old Blackpool Borough club.

Having been a Blackpool FC, supporter from a very early age – I can remember back to the days of Jimmy Armfield and Tony Waiters and more recently Mickey Walsh, Derek Spence, Paul Stewart and Colin Hendry's mish mash of a team from today – it is with a great deal of goodwill that I wish the new Blackpool Panthers all the best, in their quest to make Rugby League a success on the 'Costa Del Fylde'.

However, in the first three home fixtures for the Panthers, only one will have taken place as planned and that was a friendly against St Helens. Today, they are being forced to play Rochdale Hornets (Not Oldham as their P.A. announcer claimed last Friday night), at the home of Preston Grasshoppers RUFC and of course, our game last weekend was played on the Friday night instead of the Sunday because Blackpool were due to play Bradford City on Tuesday!!!! It doesn't bode well for the future of the new venture it seems.

Commendably, the Panthers are claiming excellent relations with their soccer landlords. However, my spy on the 'Costa Del Fylde' claims the football club are to blame for the state of the pitch. It seems they don't have a full-time groundsman. With this being the case, it is very understandable that Colin Hendry has insisted on a four day hiatus between Rugby and Soccer matches on the ground.

Also, when Blackpool FC began the re-development of their stadium three years ago, the current stands were built in different positions to the old West Stand and Spion Kop. As a result, the pitch had to be moved in a North Westerly direction, so that it was closer to the stands we visited last Friday. Unfortunately, my spy tells me the football club went for a cheaper option when the pitch was re-laid and hence the current problems are the result. Port Vale manager Martin Foyle claimed recently, "I am glad my team don't have to play on that pitch every other week"!!!! (And that was before the Panthers had even set foot on the place!!!!).

It is the same old story though, and that is that the grass is cut a lot shorter for Soccer than it needs to be for Rugby, which causes the pitch to wear out much quicker. Why do you think that so many soccer players have complained about the pitch at the Millennium Stadium being so slippery – because it's a Rugby ground with longer grass, that's why!!!

The re-development of Bloomfield Road has more recently been held up through the club having to wait for the old railway bridge on Bloomfield Road itself, to be knocked down. This having recently been completed, the local council have stated that they want the football club to commence the building of that part of the ground.

It is great to be able to go to Blackpool once again to watch professional Rugby League and I really do hope that the Panthers can make a go of it, except that is for Good Friday, 15th May and 24th July. Yes, I may well have had a Tangerine and White scarf in my pocket last Friday, but it was the Blue and White one I wore, not only to try and keep warm, but to show who I was really supporting!!!!

Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

One Lion on the Shirt...by Ian Jackson



The recent book "Played in Manchester" by Simon Inglis (2004) laments the fact that there are "no memorials at all for Station Road, the former home of Swinton RLFC, sold for re-development in 1992." However, what memorial is suitable for our former ground? In summary, Station Road staged:

- 5 Championship Finals
- 4 Premiership Finals
- 30 Challenge Cup Semi-Finals
- 15 International Test Matches
- 2 World Cup Matches
- 2 International Matches
- 17 Lancashire County Cup Finals
- 2 War of the Roses County Games

In addition, Station Road was the venue for many International Tour Games and Amateur Cup Finals as well as home matches for the Lions. The debate continues for a fitting and lasting tribute to Station Road and all those great Swinton players from the past, such as Bryn Evans and Martin Hodgson from the early days of the ground, which opened in March 1929; the Championship side of the 1960s that included Ken Gowers and Alan Buckley through to more recent times and the likes of Danny Wilson and Les Holliday. Of course, the wonderful thing about Station Road was the variety of visiting teams that played there as well as the Swinton greats. Here are three great rugby league wingers who graced the wide open spaces of Station Road.

Brian Bevan, (Warrington and Blackpool)

Australia-born Bevan is the leading try scorer in the British game with 796 tries between 1945 and 1964 mainly for the great Warrington side of the 1950s. Initially, Station Road was not a happy hunting ground for Bevan who was on the losing side in two Lancashire Cup Finals and three Challenge Cup Semi-Finals at Swinton between 1945 and 1953. However, Brian Bevan scored a crucial try in the 8-4 victory over Leeds in the 1954 semi-final at Station Road that sent Warrington to play Halifax in the final. The Wembley game was drawn 4-4 and the Wire eventually won the replay at Odsal in front of over 102,000 spectators.

Tom Van Vollenhoven, (St. Helens)

South Africa-born Vollenhoven was equally good in defence and attack. The first and only rugby league winger to score a hat-trick against him was Swinton's John Stopford at Station Road in April 1959 (a feat John repeated at Knowsley Road in April 1963). In total, Vollenhoven played 17 times at Station Road, against the Lions and also in finals and semi-finals. The flying Springboks played at Swinton more than any other venue except Knowsley Road in a rugby league career that lasted from 1957 to 1968.

Billy Boston, (Wigan and Blackpool)

Wales-born Boston played at Station Road for both club and country. Boston notched up a try against the Australians at Swinton in Test Matches in December 1956 and October 1959 as well as for Wigan against Oldham in the 1966 Lancashire Cup Final. In all Boston scored 571 tries in a career from 1953 to 1970 and is second only to Brian Bevan in the all time list of rugby league try-scorers in Britain.

All three players are featured in the "Rugby League Hall of Fame" by Robert Gate (2003) but there are no Swinton players not even Martin Hodgson who played 12 times against Australia for Swinton, Cumberland and Great Britain and was never on the losing side. Hodgson also holds the record for the longest kick in rugby league history (77.75 yards) and deserves a monument at Station Road all of his own.



Swinton Lions Rugby League Club

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