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# CONTENTS

Oldham RLFC v Batley Bulldogs

## FEATURES

- 4 **In The Chair** with Chris Hamilton
- 6 **Direct From The Dug Out** Looking ahead to today's game
- 8 **Roger And Out** with Roger Halstead
- 7 **40/20 Vision** with Ian Wilson
- 10 **In Yer Face** with Geoff Cooke
- 12 **Chit Chat From Around The Club**
- 14 **Around & About** with The Heritage Trust
- 16 **Visiting Today** Batley Bulldogs
- 17 **Jounalistic License** by Matthew Chambers
- 18 **Halstead's Choice** A profile of David Best
- 22 **Oldham Stats**
- 23 **The Boot Room** A look at the current squad and their sponsors
- 24 **Roughyed Kids & Co** Events for all the family and today's mascot
- 28 **Club Cash**
- 29 **Oldham Rugby League Social Club**
- 33 **National League Talk** Centurions bask in seaside success with GARETH WALKER
- 34 **Fixtures & Sponsors**
- 36 **Today's Teams** View both of today's teams in full, plus match officials

## Club Records - 1998-2005

**Trans-Penine Cup**  
Finalists - 1998

**Northern Ford Premiership**  
Club of the Year - 2000  
Grand Finalists - 2001

**MOST APPEARANCES:** John Hough, 209 - Jan 1998 - September 2005  
**CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES:** Phil Farrel, 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:** Nick Johnson, 25 - 2004

**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  
James Bunyan v Featherstone Rovers, 4 - Apr 12th 2004 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 Workinton 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 (amt), 64-0 - Jan 28th 2001 RLCC 3rd Rd at Boundary Park

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

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## CHAIRMAN

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Sean Whitehead

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Steve Deakin

## ASSISTANT COACH

Alan Hadcroft

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Harry Ogden 1940-56

Alan Davies 1950-62

Frank Stirrup 1950-62

Bernard Ganley 1950-61

Sid Little OBE 1951-59

John Etty 1954-59

Derek Turner 1955-59

Kevin Taylor 1962-77

Mike Elliott 1962-79

Bob Irving 1964-74

Martin Murphy 1966-82

Terry Flanagan 1979-89

Andy Goodway 1979-85 & 1993-94

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. ([www.digisport.co.uk](http://www.digisport.co.uk))

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# in the chair

with Chris Hamilton

Welcome back to Boundary park for our first "real" home game for over 2 months.

As if the finances weren't tight enough this year our enforced move to Sedgley Park only served to increase the financial pressure and unlike last season we were unable to temper that disappointment with points on the field. Myself and Sean made a conscious decision a couple of weeks ago to remind everybody of why we are in the situation we are in and to also enlighten you as to some of the hurdles we have had to overcome and continue to have to overcome, as we strive to take the club forward.

One of the key points of course was to make sure that ANYBODY who was looking to be involved in the club either by joining the Board or by taking over from myself and Sean could have no misconceptions about what the situation is.

You would expect that anybody interested would of course contact myself or Sean to clarify exactly what the terms might be but to avoid any grey areas we took the decision this week to confirm that if we were to be bought out we would not be looking for payment of our Directors Loan Accounts in full.

This surely now makes our position absolutely clear and if there is anyone who is remotely interested in the club, in terms of investing, then they cannot have any excuses or misconceptions as to the situation.

We have made it quite clear that we are ready, willing and able to meet and talk with anyone at any time and we only hope that "the investors" will now come forward.

On the playing front we are hoping that tonight can see the lads secure their first win of the season but Batley have been one of the surprise packets of the season to date and have made many

people eat their pre season predictions!

They will be a tough nut to crack and our previous two home fixtures against them (including one at Blackpool!) have both been disastrous from an Oldham perspective with big leads having been lost on both occasions, turning potential wins into losses.

Anybody who thought Hull KR were going to go through the season unbeaten had their hopes dashed last weekend and if ever a reminder was needed that with a top six play off system in place you only need to lose one game when it matters to ruin your season then that was it!

It will surely do the fight at the top of the league a world of good as Leigh and Widnes try to catch Hull KR and I am sure that Hull KR will use it as a learning curve to make sure they dont fall at the Play Off hurdle - it should certainly make sure the next few games are as competitive as ever.

To finish off this week can we once again thank you for your ongoing support. Just like you we feel the pain and disappointment but we are working hard and will continue to do so.

Good luck to Steve and the lads tonight and please get behind the team as we strive for that first win - you CAN make a difference.

Enjoy the game

*Chris*



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# direct from the dug out

with Steve Deakin



Nice to be back at Boundary Park, two games at Sedgely Park gave mixed results and performances. Although appreciating all they did to help make us feel at home there's nothing like a permanent home base, and for us that's Boundary Park.

It will probably be a special homecoming for Phil Farrell with his first home appearance in this his second spell in Oldham colours. At the time of writing these notes we are still trying to bring in other players but to be honest the success of those endeavours is to a large degree out of our control. As some of you may have read in the Oldham Chronicle we are not just looking to this season but also to the future in this respect.

At this time of the season your club is either heading for the play offs or to a dogfight to avoid relegation and our fans know our lot is the dogfight. Despite this our aim is to ensure we give our all in every game to the end of the season so that there is a positive end for our own sakes, the sake of our fans and to build a platform for next season.

It goes without saying that results have not matched people's desires and expectations so we are determined to make the last seven games of the season a truer reflection of the abilities of the players within the team and with a little bit of consistency, good luck and 50/50 calls from match officials we can still get some good results.

Please enjoy the game and continue to support the team in a positive manner.

All the best,  
Deaks



# club corner

## ORLFC PREDICTION LEAGUE

	Week 9	Overall
1	Nigel Marland	18 150
2	Paul Hulbert	15 147
3=	Peter Buckley	22 145
3=	Ian Wilson	26 145
5	Michael Ackroyd	17 140
6	Ashley Baxter	14 137
7=	Tim Boycott	14 134
7=	Harry Whitehouse	17 134
7=	Chris Hamilton	22 134
10	Colin & Dorothy Johnston	12 133
11=	Roger Halstead	19 130
11=	Wayne Halstead	15 130
11=	Matthew Chambers	26 130
14	Four Red Lions	12 127
15=	Steve Baldwin	17 126
15=	Geoff Cooke	20 126
17=	Jeff Bates	12 123
17=	Brian Walker	19 123
19	David Webster	20 122
20	Sara Jackson	10 121
21	Roger Ivens	16 120
22	J Hulmes	22 119
23	Frank Pullen	10 118
24	Janet Yewdale	16* 115
25	Paul Gough	16* 113
26	David Stephens	14 111
27=	David Lord	8 109
27=	Nick Henry	12 109
29	Terry Bailey	13 107
30	Val Webster	15 101
31	John McAndrew	10 96
32	Iain Ashworth	12 93
33	Peter Illing	6 67

**Clarice Stevens and Gordon Kent have both paid £20 but will not be taking an active part in the competition.**

Generally high scores with one perfect score from Ian Wilson who with 24 points was top scorer along with the Chronicle's Matthew Chambers who shoots up to joint 11th with the Halsteads. The Johnstons had another poor week and the second half of the season is letting them down after a superbly consistent first half. Chris Hamilton has moved up into contention after a few disappointing weeks and Peter Buckley continues his run moving into a close third place. It's still very tight at the top.

- Paul Gough and Janet Yewdale's results didn't get through this week so I have given them the average score for the week.
- I have now also added the Rochdale - Widnes result from last Saturday so we are now up to date.

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# roger and out

by ROGER HALSTEAD

AFTER a working life in local journalism spanning more than 48 years ---- more than 40 of them covering rugby league for the Chronicle ---- I think I have some qualifications for making informed comment on what goes on in media circles in relation to our sport.

Take local radio, for instance, and in particular Radio Manchester (formerly GMR). Now, at the outset, I have to say that local radio, like local papers, do an excellent job on behalf of a sport that all too often is unable to capture the imagination of the nationals, especially the tabloids.

How times change! Those of us brought up on a diet of rugby league and newspapers in the late 1940s and then the 50s fondly recall the days when, in rugby league terms, the tabloids were king and their big-name reporters had by-lines that were household names throughout the North of England.

Remember Joe Humphreys (Daily Mirror), Jack Bentley (Daily Express), Allan Cave (Daily Herald). In my early days at the Chronicle I vividly recall spending a whole dark and cold evening with Allan and a freelance reporter from Leeds trudging the streets of that city in a desperate search to track down Hunslet's GB centre Geoff Shelton, who was rumoured to be on his way to Oldham.

Allan, working for a morning paper, had a deadline to catch, but we spent hours following up leads before we got our man, if memory serves, on a housing estate to the east of the city.

Geoff confirmed he was coming to Oldham, Allan got his story on time --- and it was headlines in the Herald the next morning. It wouldn't happen today. Mobile phones, computers, the electronic media and club websites have in many ways removed the thrill of the chase --- and, in any case, deadlines are hours earlier; the broadsheets have replaced the populars as the best and most comprehensive for coverage of our sport; and local radio has come into its own.

Even so, clubs outside Super League get little or no coverage in the nationals or on Sky, although it is good to see that Sky now take live the final of the Northern Rail Cup and the LHF Healthplan National League grand finals.

Let's have it right --- what would a club like Oldham do now for coverage outside its own website if it were not for the likes of the Chronicle, the Advertiser, The Revolution, Radio Cavell, Radio Manchester and, more recently, Channel M.

Radio Manchester's coverage of our sport is first class and in Jack Dearden and Trevor Hunt they have a couple of intrepid broadcasters who, when interviewing chairmen or coaches on air, can always be relied upon to ask the searching questions that the man in the street would love to ask himself. It's interesting, topical and from the station's point of view it's getting to the nitty-gritty: it's great local radio.

There are times, though, when you've got to have a lot of sympathy for the bloke on the receiving end. Take Chris Hamilton after Oldham's heavy defeat at Widnes a couple of weeks ago.

Like everyone else of a Roughyeds persuasion, Chris was pretty much on a downer after seeing his side leak 72 points, albeit by a team of full-time professionals which, comparatively, had cost a small fortune to assemble.

At the final hooter, he probably wanted to go home like the rest of us.

But in his capacity as chairman that's not possible. He has to put on a brave face, congratulate all the Widnes party, put a shoulder round some of his Oldham personnel, make a speech in the boardroom, try and talk rationally to any fan who crosses his path, answer questions from reporters and, if requested, climb the steps to the top of the stand to be interviewed on local radio.

One-on-one interviews are their life blood. And Chris, even in the bad times when he hurts and he knows the tough questions will be coming in thick and fast, always goes out of his way to co-operate and make himself available.

In this instance, he was left waiting for several minutes with the head phones on --- and, in turn, the official presentations were held up in the Widnes boardroom --- before he got the cue that Jack, back in the studio, was ready for him.

He didn't want to talk about the match; he wanted to grill the Roughyeds chairman about a whole range of topics, from the current financial state of the club, to how the board viewed the future, to whether or not there was to be any new investment forthcoming.

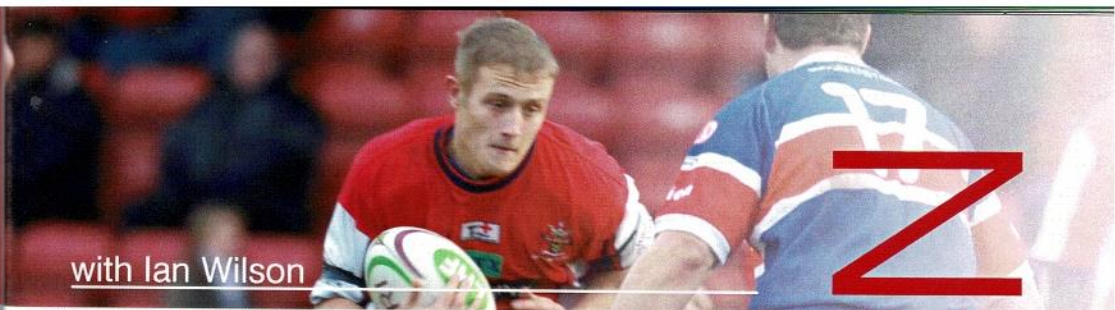
Now Chris Hamilton isn't the sort of bloke to seek sanctuary in a hiding place. If he had been, he wouldn't have been talking to Jack in the first place. He knows that, in his capacity, part of his job is to talk to the media -- a responsibility he never shirks. In my days at the Chronicle, he regularly fielded calls from me at midnight and, occasionally, in the small wee hours.

But in this instance, and given that everybody in rugby league knows Oldham are toiling to stay the course in National League One this season only because Chris and Sean have worked miracles just to keep the club afloat, Chris might well have wondered if that sort of in-depth interview would have been more appropriately conducted as part of the station's Thursday night 'Rugby League Show' rather than in the heat of the moment literally minutes after a game.

The media has a job to do -- nobody knows that more than I -- and Radio Manchester does that job very well indeed.

But there are times when I bless the day I chose to be a reporter (commenting on what others do) rather than a club chairman (actually doing it, and taking the flak as well).

ROGER AND OUT.



with Ian Wilson

A number of recent events have raised the ever-fascinating issue of how important is the manager/chief coach in determining the success or otherwise of a professional sports team.

In our game, the ups and downs of Ian Millward, the replacement of John Kear by Peter Sharp at Hull, Brian Noble's move from Bradford to Wigan and now Tony Rae's movement upstairs and replacement by Brian McDermott at Harlequins give one plenty of ammunition to go at. And the football world cup, not to mention some very variable performances in international cricket, also bring the role of management into sharp focus.

The football is easy - there seems general agreement that England's failure to make any impact on the World Cup tournament was down to a significant extent to managerial failure. One can easily envisage another manager picking a squad, using subs, motivating the team and organising tactics in ways which would have resulted in better outcomes. Similarly, Brazil's relative failure and the success of Italy and Germany have all been attributed to managerial performance.

The case of France, however, shows that it is not quite as easy as that - they did well, but was that as a result of, or in spite of, the manager?! And what about Duncan Fletcher's influence on the performances over the past two years of the England cricket side - certainly lots of positives in terms of test cricket, but very much the opposite in one-day cricket, where his strategies seem remarkably ill-advised, especially

when contrasted with the undoubted achievements in the "proper" form of the game. But the case of Fletcher - as indeed of Bob Woolmer with the Pakistan side - certainly supports the view that, for good or ill, a manager has a vital impact.

In RL, coming a little closer to home, the same is surely true, in spades. Brian Noble was undoubtedly a significant reason behind Bradford's run of successes in the Super League era, and also a major force in engineering what will now almost certainly be Wigan's top division survival in 2006. And John Kear had evidently "lost" the senior players in the Hull dressing room when the side's performances plummeted earlier in the season. Peter Sharp has since clearly had a very positive impact - though it is an interesting question as to whether this shows the importance of the coach or illustrates his impotence vis-à-vis players!

What of the situation at Oldham, then? I would like to think that it can currently be compared with that of Brian Noble and GB - on balance, I would argue that performances in the recent past would have been worse without Noble than with him, and that he deserves more time and more resources before a judgement is made. And exactly the same for Steve Deakin with us.

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40/20

# in yer face

with Geoff Cooke

In his column in League Weekly last Monday Maurice Bamford quoted some rules from the 1971 rule book.

These defined a forward pass, how exactly a play the ball should be executed, and what action should be taken against violent conduct.

All of these rules - and you can think of others without trying at all hard - are now more honoured in the breach than the observation. The fact is that nowadays in the search for continuity of play rules are laid wide open to interpretation and all this does is create frustration and anger. For example, if the referee, touch judges and video referee cannot see clearly that a ball is properly touched down then a try should not be awarded. 'Benefit of the doubt' to the attacking side is ridiculous. If this is really what we want then we should copy American Football and award a 'Touchdown' (an ironical term if ever there was one) once the ball is carried over the line. In my view it is impossible to score a try by touching down with the chest as Gareth Raynor did recently for Hull FC against Salford. No wonder Karl Harrison was furious. I'm not one of those who demands 'consistency' from referees because the officials are only human and consistency is impossible to achieve. Rather, each referee should develop his own style and it would then be up to Coaches and players to analyse the referee as they do the opposition to ensure they stay within the letter of the law. As things stand I don't know how far the game is refereed by preconception from the referees' controller at Red Hall, how far by video monitor, how far by an observer in the stand, or how



far by the officials with the whistles and flags. What I do know is that some clubs don't half get a bad deal, with Wakefield and Salford at the forefront. Can older followers of the game imagine the likes of Ron Gelder, Charlie Appleton, Eric Clay, Billy Thompson or Fred Lindop thriving in the modern game? No, neither can I and there's barely one of the current crop capable of being mentioned in the same breath as those five.

The hidden depths of rugby league occasionally give up a secret to stun the public. Such was the revelation that Bradford Bulls had massive debts. Now comes the news that Widnes, reputedly £60,000 in debt when new Chairman Stephen Vaughan (who is also Chairman of Chester City FC) took over the club are in fact £300,000 in debt. You might have thought that a shrewd businessman would have done his homework before entering into an agreement but the ability of clubs to disguise the true state of affairs never ceases to amaze. I stand by my comments of last year that Oldham's situation was only the tip of the iceberg. At least Oldham's problems once out in the open have been addressed. The current pain felt by management, players, staff and spectators will not go on for ever. If relegated Oldham must simply start again and prosper at a lower level. Remember when you hit rock bottom the only way is up.



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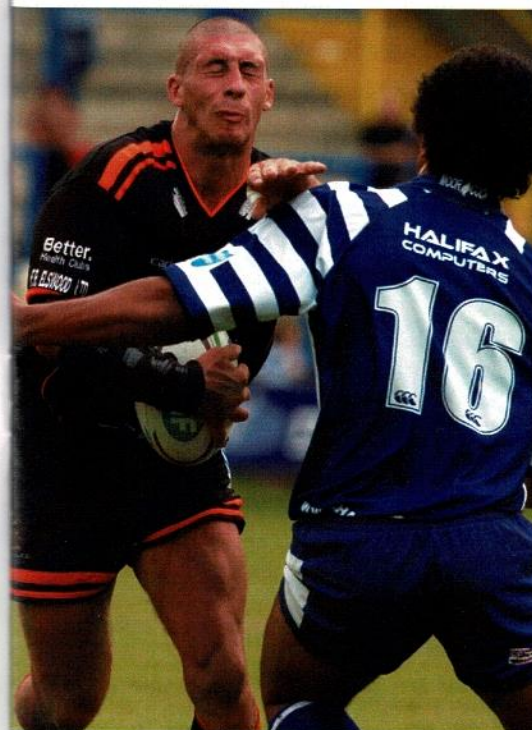
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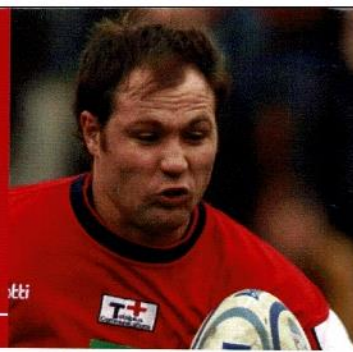
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# LTS

# chit chat

from around the club

with Roger Halstead



(for fans who don't see daily bulletins on the club's official website at [www.roughyeds.co.uk](http://www.roughyeds.co.uk))

Roughyeds directors Chris Hamilton and Sean Whitehead have given unqualified support to coach Steve Deakin in a statement published in the local press.

The owners are right behind him --- and they want the fans to give him a vote of confidence, too.

Deakin, then out of rugby after a split with new Super League club Catalans Dragons of Perpignan, took over the Roughyeds a few weeks into the season after John Pendlebury left.

A local man, he said at the time that to take charge of his home-town team was his dream job, although it hasn't exactly turned out to be a bed of roses.

But in a joint statement from Chris and Sean, the board stressed that they were fully supportive of a man who was 'on a hiding to nothing' when he took over.

The statement went on: "We have to keep things in perspective. If we go down, we won't be the first Oldham side to get relegated, and we won't be the last.

"It's nearly 50 years since Oldham last won the rugby league championship. There is a lot of talk of the glory years, but in the past 75 years the real glory years amount to no more than ten --- the fifties --- although there have been some very good seasons as well as a lot of poor ones.

"Steve Deakin is a quality coach and we are fully aware of his capabilities.

"He was on a hiding to nothing when he took the job on. He wasn't involved in pre-season work and he inherited the majority of a squad to which he had he little input.

"The situation when he took over was an extremely difficult one, if not bordering on the impossible. A lot of coaches wouldn't even have looked at the job on that basis, but Steve had no hesitation in taking it.

"Defeats hurt him as much as, if not more, than everyone else because he is an Oldham man and this was a job he always wanted.

"We appreciate the difficult situation he is in, and we ask our fans to consider the many difficulties he has to overcome."

-----  
THE directors have also issued a statement this week to clarify the situation for potential investors in the club.

"We want to make it perfectly clear where we stand on this issue, given misleading media speculation and incorrect assumptions," they said.

The statement continued: "As we have said time and time again, we will talk to anyone who wants to join us or buy us out.

"Any take-over or addition to the board would be subject to negotiation, obviously, but the popular misconception that we will be seeking repayment of our directors' loans accounts is both misleading and inaccurate.

"The popular belief is that if we are going to sell the club it will be on the basis that we will want all our money back, namely the best part of £150,000 in directors' loans alone.

"In addition to that there is also £50,000-worth of issued shares --- £25,000 each --- which we purchased first at the formation of the club and more when the other two founder directors left the club.

"In order to clear up any confusion or misunderstanding we wish to state categorically that we are not looking to get back all the money we have invested in the club.

"We don't want misconceptions flying around the town and we feel it is a point that needs to be cleared up once and for all."

FANS are being offered best-ever deals on replica jerseys --- and officials hope to see a lot more of them at Boundary Park tonight and in subsequent home games as a result of the decision to sell them at cost. Adults replicas are on sale now at the club shop in Waterloo Street at a give-away £25, down from £43.

Junior sizes are going for £20, down from £38.

Said Chris: "They haven't sold as well as we would have liked for a variety of reasons. But we need to turn them into money, and we hope fans will respond."

-----  
THERE was some good news at last for Roughyeds last week when David Best was given a not-guilty verdict by the RFL disciplinary committee.

He was sent off for an alleged head-butt, resulting in Roughyeds playing for nearly an hour against Rochdale with only 12 men on the field.

Despite this, we led until two minutes from the end before unluckily going down 22-28.

David made a personal appearance before the disciplinary committee, accompanied by Chris Hamilton.

After the verdict was announced, Chris said: "It was a good, fair hearing and, obviously, we are pleased with the result. We felt all along that David's dismissal influenced the result and that, had he not been sent off, we would have picked up our first league win.

"The committee now find him not guilty --- I guess it's a case of 'what will be will be'."

-----  
ALL being well Phil Farrell will be striding out again at Boundary Park in Oldham colours tonight for the first time in nearly two years. And, typically, our former club skipper has promised he will give 100 per cent in everything he does for the Roughyeds now he is back after a season and a half with Rochdale.

He comes in a straight swop for Andy Bailey and he had no hesitation in signing Oldham forms for the second time in his career.

He made his second Oldham debut against Widnes at the Halton Stadium two weeks ago, setting up two tries, but his real homecoming will be in tonight's encounter here at Boundary Park in a match which will rekindle loads of memories both for him and for the fans.

Faz made 120 appearances for Roughyeds between the spring of 2000 and the end of the 2004 season and he says it is good to be back.

He added: "A few of the lads I knew before are still here, like John Hough, Gareth Barber and Simon Svabic, and I've been best mates with Simon since we were kids.

"We have seven league games left now and as far as I can see there is no point at all in us worrying about what might or might not happen beyond the next game.

"All we can do, as players, is to make sure we give 100 per cent effort in every single thing we do. Nobody can do more than his best.

"And on the same theme it wouldn't do anybody any good if we were to start worrying about what other teams might be up to.

"If, as individuals and as a team, we do our best at all times over the next few weeks we will have done all we could possibly do. Anything beyond that is out of our hands.

"I've known Deaks for a long time because he coached me when I was with Lancashire academy. He has a lot of good ideas and judging by the way everybody is training there is certainly no shortage of effort and intensity."

■ Thursday 7.00pm & 9.30pm  
Repeated Friday 12.30 & 9.00pm, Saturday 5.30pm, Sunday 1.00pm



## The weekly Rugby League programme from Channel m

Highlighting Salford City Reds plus features on Swinton, Oldham, Rochdale, Leigh, Wigan and the local BARLA clubs. Including a mix of match action, big game previews and reviews, player chat, club history and community activities.



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channel  
m

# AROUND & ABOUT

with The Heritage Trust



## MITCHELL & KENYON RUGBY FILM EVENING

Many of you will remember that a few years ago builders, whilst working in Blackburn, discovered stored in a barrel, a substantial amount of old film. It turned out that it was taken between 1900 and 1903 by early filmmakers Mitchell and Kenyon and much of it was in pristine condition. It is about life in general in the north of England and a series introducing much of the film was shown on BBC2 late last year.



The first ever try recorded on moving film was scored during the Oldham vs. Swinton match, played at Watersheddings in 1901. This is a 'still' from that footage.

Amongst this film was invaluable footage covering sport in the north – cricket, football and especially rugby league (or, as it was known in those days, Northern Union rugby). It now gives us an opportunity to see many of the great teams and players from that era and includes what is believed to be the first try recorded on film taken in 1901 during an Oldham vs. Swinton game played at Watersheddings (which itself had only been open 12 years). These films are a vital window on a world that previously survived only in sporting folklore and newspaper archives and also gives us a valuable insight into the people who played and watched the game.

Now, all the rugby league footage has been combined into one continuous film that was recently presented to a packed house at the



Hull, 1902

galleryoldham  
April - August 06



National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford and will now be shown for the first time to a Lancashire audience, here in Oldham, this autumn.

Distribution of the film is strictly controlled by the British Film Institute and because special equipment is required to project the film the venue will be probably Gallery Oldham or alternatively the Lyceum.

Don't make the mistake of thinking this will be an evening for anoraks! It's rugby entertainment at its best! Dr. Vanessa Toulmin, Research Director of Sheffield University, who has been responsible for the preservation and subsequently the marketing of these films, will be there to explain the background and Dr. Tony Collins from the RFL will cover everything that's going on in the film. **As would have been the case back then there will even be an accompanying silent-film pianist!**

Previously the Heritage Trust has fully funded such events but because the overheads this time are so high and attendance limited to circa 100 it can only partially cover the costs so a charge of circa £6pp will have to be made. Details of the event will be published in many local newspapers and the rugby league media and because demand will be from throughout the county and beyond its anticipated tickets will be snapped up (already news of the event has leaked and a number of those who attended the first showing in Bradford are asking for tickets). So, to give Oldham supporters an early opportunity to reserve seats please either e-mail your name etc to [mickharrop19a@hotmail.com](mailto:mickharrop19a@hotmail.com) or write to Oldham RL Heritage Trust, 19A, Rock Terrace, Manchester Rd, Mossley, OL5 9QD. Don't send any cash at this stage!

Don't miss it!

**Brian Walker**

MICHAEL TURNER'S NEW OLDHAM BOOK WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE AUTUMN. DETAILS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE CLUB'S MATCHDAY PROGRAMME.



# visiting today

## Batley Bulldogs

**Gary Thornton** – Head Coach – Commencing his third season as Head Coach. In his days with the club as a flying wingman Gary notched 79 tries which places him in 13th place in the club's all time try scoring list. Formerly played with Wakefield Trinity.

**Joe Berry** – Assistant Coach – Joined the Coaching Team following his retirement from playing last season. A former Scottish International whilst serving Batley who also served Keighley, Doncaster and Rochdale Hornets as a player.

**Paul Harrison** – Academy Head Coach & The Club's General Manager – Taken on the role of guiding the club's young stars of the future. In his playing days 82 tries saw Paul installed in 10th place in the club's all time try scoring list. Full Time General Manager for the 'Bulldogs'. Paul's day to day activities now include fund raising activities for the club.

**Simon Bissell** – Age 19. Prop. Signed from Wigan Academy. One for the future.

**Andy Boothroyd** – Utility forward. Signed in the close season following his release by Halifax.

**Leigh Cooke** – Second Row. Signed in the close season from Castleford Tigers, having featured in the 'Tigers' first team early in 2005 before injury wrecked his season. A good future in the game looks on the cards for the talented young forward.

**John Gallagher** – Age 20. Stand Off. Signed late in 2005 from Leeds Rhinos and made an instant impact on his debut at Oldham coming on as a substitute and becoming the first Batley player ever to score a hat-trick of tries on his debut. Scored the winning try in the LHF Healthplan Qualifying Final against Dewsbury which maintained our place in National League One and was also voted man of the match.

**Scott Houston** – Age 21. Prop / Second Row. Formerly with Huddersfield Giants. A Student International who was recommended to the club by former Batley favourite Craig Wright after impressing with Queens ARL. A no nonsense type of player.

**Shaun Ibbetson** – Prop / Second row. Close season signing from Hunslet Hawks who spent part of last season on loan at York City Knights. A big future in the game is being predicted for the 20 year old forward.

**Andy Jarrett** – Age 22. Prop Forward. Signed in the close season from Featherstone Rovers. Injury wrecked Andy's 2005 Season – now back to full fitness.

**Steve Jones** – Centre. Joined the club initially on loan in 2005, now signed permanently for the club. Hard tackling player formerly with Featherstone Rovers, Huddersfield Giants & Newcastle Falcons RU. Taken on the unenviable role of goal kicker following the departure of Barry Eaton.

**Martin Kenyon** – Prop. Also signed from Wigan Academy in the close season. Another outstanding prospect for the future.

**Chris Langley** – Age 25. Centre / Loose Forward. Close season signing from Doncaster. Strong running player who can also operate in the pack. Formerly with York City Knights, Featherstone Rovers, Huddersfield Giants & Bradford Bulls.

**Craig Lingard** – 11.12.1977. Fullback. Closing in on the club's all time try scoring record held by Glen Tomlinson. Craig is the club's current longest serving player. A tremendous attacking player. Formerly with Sheffield Eagles and Sharlston. Scored 16 tries in 2005 making 116 tries in total for 'The Bulldogs'.

**Aiden Lister** – 8.1.1985. Wingman / Fullback. Signed from Batley Boys and broke into the first team last season.

**Kris Lythe** – 29.3.1983. Hooker. Much sought after player following his tremendous performance in the televised LHF Healthplan Qualifying Final win against Dewsbury Rams. Quickly re-signed by Batley for the 2006 Season despite interest from several other clubs.

**Iain Marsh** – Age 25. Scottish International. Centre / Second Row. In his second season with the club, previously with Oldham and Barrow. Honest player who never takes a backward step. Team Captain for 2006.

**Martin McLoughlin** – 2.8.1980. Prop / Second Row. Irish International. Had a good season last term despite being out for a long period with a knee injury. Formerly with Oldham and Barrow.

**Sean Richardson** – Second Row. Starting his third season at Mount Pleasant. An experienced campaigner who has served numerous clubs in his long career. Holder of the record for appearing in National League Grand Finals.

**Andy Robinson** – Wingman. Close season signing from Keighley Cougars. Leading try scorer for the 'Cougars' for 2003 & 2004. Originally from Dewsbury Moor.

**Darren Robinson** – Age 26. Hooker / Loose Forward. 10 tries were registered from 19 appearances after signing during 2005. Fugged and aggressive player formerly with Rochdale Hornets, Dewsbury Rams and Sheffield Eagles. Tremendous opportunist player close to the try line.

**Neil Roden** – 9.4.1980. Halfback - Experienced campaigner formerly with Oldham who gave great value for money performances last season for 'The Bulldogs' touching down on

9 occasions.

**David Fourke** – 12.3.1981. Prop / Second Row. Consistent performer who plays well above his size. Close to 100 appearances for the club.

**Mark Sibson** – 20.10.1976. Wing / Fullback. Tremendous pace and formerly with Huddersfield, Castleford, Bramley and Oldham. 37 tries from 75 appearances to the start of 2006.

**Gary Smith** – Age 24. Second Row. Close season signing from Blackpool Panthers. Formerly with Chorley Lynx and Skirlaugh. Player of the year last season with Blackpool Panthers.

**Tim Spears** – 27.7.1984. Second Row. Formerly with Dewsbury Rams and Castleford. Voted Young Player of the Year in 2005.

**Luke Stenclion** – 25.2.1986. Prop. Close season signing from Leeds Rhinos. A big future is predicted for Luke by many of the games experts.

**Jamie Stokes** – Wingman. The former Featherstone Rovers flyer scored 12 tries in season 2005 including 4 against his former club in a superb match winning performance.

**Anthony Thewliss** – Age 20. Second Row. Close season signing from Dewsbury Rams. Formerly played with Batley Boys.

**Mark Toohy** – 16.6.1982. Second Row / Stand Off. Formerly with Batley Boys. Injury curtailed Mark's 2005 season early but now back to full fitness. 25 tries from 101 appearances up to the start of 2006.

**Michael Wainwright** – Age 25. Three - Quarter. A close season signing from Super League outfit Wakefield Trinity Wildcats who previously gave service with Dewsbury Rams, Leeds and Hunslet Hawks. Michael will add pace and strength to the back division.

# journalistic license

by Matthew Chambers

THE sacking of Doncaster coach Tony Miller last week was a peculiar decision if ever there was one.

The 'Lakers' (shudder at that name) are precariously situated just below the play-off zone in the LHF Healthplan National League One standings.

A single point behind both Batley and Rochdale, the club's season is wobbling atop a knife-edge.

Should the men from South Yorkshire lose at Rochdale this weekend, with York beating Halifax at home - a distinct possibility given those two clubs' relative fortunes of late - then Doncaster would end up being a mere three points clear of the relegation zone.

Conversely, a Lakers win at the weekend coupled with an Oldham victory tonight would see them clamber up into the bosom of the play-offs in fifth place.

You wouldn't immediately think, then, that this crucial point in the season would mark a time where it is prudent to fiddle with the coaching staff, let alone be bold enough to utter the phrase 'Super League' four times in the space of two sentences.

But Donny chairman John Wright must have thought differently, removing Miller and installing Graham Holroyd as a temporary player-coach in time for Sunday's game.

"In February next year we will be moving into a stadium with Super League quality, and we will have commercial staff with Super League quality," said Mr Wright this week.

"We are hoping to have enough people supporting us to take us to Super League level, and consequently we want a coach with Super League quality."

Good luck with all that, I say. They will certainly need it, even with the proposed £500,000 close season splurge on players.

Unfortunately, it seems to me that even the best marketing operation in the world will struggle to whip up enough fervour to start making significant

inroads into that kind of dosh, considering that their last home crowd was 1,083 against full-timers Leigh.

Let's hope the Lakers, for all their new stadiums and big promises, don't overstretch themselves in going for glory.

It will be interesting to watch, that's for sure, but I'm pessimistic about their chances given such a supporter base.

The sad fact is that even in the supposed heartland of the M62 corridor, this summer game simply isn't drawing in the punters - at least at this level.

When Widnes took on the Roughyeds at the Halton Stadium two weeks ago, the match was played out in front of a crowd of 3,213.

Even though such a number appeared pitiful within such huge, sparkling surroundings, it was by far the largest NL1 gate of the day.

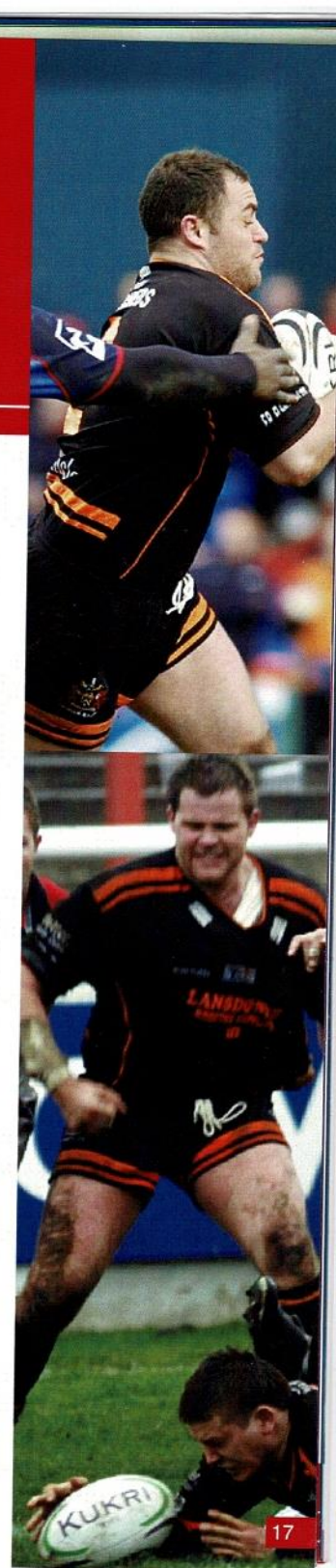
Super League does have the glamorous stars and big-name teams, but surely there is a way of mustering more support than this from big names like Leigh, Halifax, Oldham, Hull KR and Widnes.

The way I see it, each and every empty seat represents a potential season ticket holder of the future who has chosen to do something else instead.

Good on the cheap child season ticket offer. And good on Oldham for their offer of two free children's tickets for every paying adult.

It is a start. But far more needs to be done by each and every club to attract rugby league's customers of the future, or the future of the professional game outside Super League remains bleak - even with a more realistic attitude towards promotion.

Matthew



# halstead's choice

by Roger Halstead

STUART McDonough, former Watersheddings committee man, BARLA life member and all-round Oldham Rugby fanatic, was the man behind the introduction to our sport of the Best twins, David and Jason.

A close relative of the family, and at the time full-time steward of the St Anne's club, Stuart was keen to see that the six-year-old twins who called him 'uncle' were taught how to pass a rugby ball almost before they started junior school.

"I could see they had some ability even at that young age," recalled 76-year-old Stuart this week. "To be honest, rugby didn't seem the most important thing in their lives at that age --- they had a bit of take it or leave it in them --- so I was delighted to see them sticking at it when they got a bit older.

"They can be a bit fiery on the field, perhaps that's not a bad thing in prop-forwards, but they're smashing lads -- you couldn't find better anywhere."

The Best boys now are 27, and although their rugby careers have not always been in tandem there have been many times at St Anne's, Saddleworth Rangers, Rochdale Hornets and even once here at the Roughyeds when fans and opponents alike thought they were seeing double.

David, of course, is now a signed-on Roughyeds player with an agreement that runs to the end of the season.

Like all sets of twins --- I recall interviewing the Gibbons boys and the Farrell lads some years ago --- the Bests can tell a yarn or two about what it's like to have a double. But I reckon David's story crowns the lot.

Medical science as it relates to midwifery and childbirth will have advanced greatly in the last 27 years, David assuring me that no one knew he was around until he was born ten minutes after Jason!

Said the "unexpected" David: "I suppose it's difficult to comprehend now, but our Mum, Elaine, thought she was just having Jason. Apparently, no one knew I was there because of the way I was positioned. Mum had just been told she was unusually large, but when I arrived as well I'm told it was a bit of a shock to everyone, not least Mum and Dad.

"You can imagine it, can't you. Somebody apparently muttered something about we might be the St Anne's half-backs one day. Well, we never actually made that, but we have played prop together a few times, so that's something a bit special."

The twins were at St Anne's until they were ten or 11. Then, one year, there was no team for their age group so Dad, Sid, took them along to Saddleworth where they played in a side coached and organised by Duggie Baker.

David  
Best

PLAYER PROFILE



# david Best

Continued...

Recalled David: "Douggie was great as a coach and we learned our trade from him until we were about 15 or 16.

"Jason then had some time at Bradford with Marlon Miller, another Rangers youngster, before deciding to sign for Rochdale in the days when Iain MacCorquodale was connected with them.

"I had the chance to go to Rochdale as well at that time, but I opted to chase BARLA youth honours instead and I was rewarded in 1997 when I was picked for the Great Britain under-18s squad to play in France and to go on a tour of Australia.

"Paul Ashton, also from Saddleworth, was on the tour as well as Will Cowell, from Kells, who later signed for Warrington and then became a Roughyeds player, and several others now playing pro, including Andy Spink (Halifax) and the Whitehaven trio of Marc Jackson, Gary Purdham and Phil Sherwood.

"I dislocated my shoulder in one of the early games against Adelaide Rams so that set me back and I missed the first Test. But it was great experience and I learned from it."

Returning home, David had another season with Rangers under their new coach, Mick Worrall, and did some training with Sheffield Eagles in the year they rocked Wigan to lift the Challenge Cup at Wembley with a certain Steve Deakin as assistant coach.

The travelling to Sheffield several times a week didn't suit him, so he chose instead to sign for Hornets where he linked up once more with Jason. In the same Hornets under-21 academy team at that time were the twins' fellow Oldhamers Chris Hough and Danny Sculthorpe.

In the last year of his contract at Rochdale, when Aussie Steve Linane was head coach, David's work as a joiner took him to Holland for long periods and this inevitably sent him tumbling down the Scotland pecking order.

By the time David was back at Scotland and it was 'business as usual' Linnane had departed for pastures new and Steve Deakin had taken over, a tenure which was not to last very long before Deaks, our present coach, opted to take over at Keighley.

David followed him, had a year with the Cougars, but also suffered a serious ankle ligament injury in training, which sidelined him for eight or nine weeks.

Out of work, fed up of injuries and generally feeling disillusioned, David briefly returned to St Anne's, with Jason, but he was seriously in need of a pick-me-up and it came in the shape of an out-of-the-blue phone call from his old mentor, Steve Deakin.

David was back in work by this time, but he needed a new start in his rugby life and it couldn't have come in a more unexpected fashion.

David takes up the story: "I was sitting in the works' van having my lunch when my mobile rang and Deaks was on the phone to ask if I fancied a full-time deal to play with UTC in the French Elite League, division one.

"Deaks had taken over as head coach of the French club, which later became Catalans Dragons, but he said he wanted me over there the next day.

"It was a Monday lunchtime. I flew back to the office to tell them and they said it was an opportunity that was too good to miss. They were very good with me.

"The next morning I caught a flight out of Stanstead for Perpignan and Deaks was waiting for me at the airport. Twenty-four hours earlier I had been at work in Oldham.

"In many ways it was fantastic in France. I was there for the best part of a year. There were a few Aussies and Kiwis and it was good to have Deaks around.

"All those who didn't speak French leaned heavily on Deaks because he speaks the language fluently and he acted as our interpreter.

"Russell Bawden, who had been at London Broncos, as it was then, also took me under his wing. He had played State of Origin rugby back



home and he taught me a lot.

"For most of my time in France I enjoyed it, but the English-speaking guys numbered no more than five or six and towards the end I was beginning to feel a bit homesick.

"When I finally got home I was delighted to learn that my previous employers had kept my job for me. On the rugby front, I went back to St Anne's and I was playing there alongside Jason when Deaks took over at the Roughyeds and later asked me to join him.

"I've signed for the rest of this season and, despite results, I have to say I am enjoying it immensely."

David had a lot of complimentary things to say about the club, about Deaks and about the Roughyeds chairman, Chris Hamilton, who accompanied him last week to the RL disciplinary committee in Leeds.

The committee listened to the evidence and the reports of the match officials and also watched a video recording of the incident before ruling that Best was not guilty of an alleged head-butt in the recent derby clash with Rochdale.

It was while travelling to Leeds and back that David got talking to the club chairman and told him how much it meant to him to be playing for his hometown club.

"I know every local lad says the same," said David, "but until you're in that position you can't describe what it means.

"If it doesn't mean something special I reckon something is wrong and you shouldn't be playing for the club in the first place.

"I just feel sorry at the moment for the club and for everybody connected with it. We deserve better crowds and we certainly deserve our own ground -- even Leigh are getting a new one now.

"As for Deaks, he is a top coach, who is meticulous in his planning and pays attention to the smallest detail. Little things matter to him. He'll have one-on-one video sessions with you and show you where you have gone wrong.

"That's how you become better players individually and a better team collectively.

"We are a young squad -- average age 23 -- and I was staggered at first to learn that, at 27, I was one of the oldest players at the club.

"I've always considered myself a youngster' at my other clubs, but at the Roughyeds I'm one of the seniors, one of the old-timers. That's something I'm coming to terms with."

David lives in Oldham with his girl friend, Lucy, and he recently started yet another new chapter in his working life when he gave up the security of paid employment to start up as a self-employed joiner.

Roughyeds wish him well --- both on and off the field.

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# Oldham RLFC 2006 season's statistics

Oldham match stats upto July 10th 2006

NAME	PLAYED	TRIES	GOALS	POINTS
A. Bailey	9	0	0	0
G. Barber	14	5	24	68
M. Callan	9	0	0	0
G. Corcoran	9	1	0	4
W. Corcoran	12	2	2	12
C. Dean	6	0	0	0
A. Gorey	15	7	0	28
D. Gorton	16	3	0	12
D. Guest	5	0	0	0
A. Hadcroft	5	0	0	0
G. Hayes	17	1	0	4
I. Hodson	19	2	0	8
C. Hough	12	0	4[+1 d-g]	9
J. Hough	14	0	0	0
J. Kirkland	7	0	0	0
C. Maye	14	3	0	12
D. Nanyin	9	0	0	0
C. Percival	10	8	0	32
M. Redford	8	1	0	4
M. Roberts	9	1	0	4
S. Svabic	17	5	1	22
A. Wilkinson	11	3	0	12
L. Wingfield	12	5	0	20
C. Campbell	4	3	0	12
D. Best	8	0	0	0
J. Best	1	0	0	0
C. Baines	10	0	0	0
P. Ashton	5	2	1	10
C. Redford	2	0	0	0
A. Wallace	2	0	0	0
S. Stephens	2	0	0	0
K. Kerr	1	0	0	0
D. Ligairi-Badham	1	0	0	0
D. Williams	4	3	0	12
T. Kilgannon	4	1	0	4
M. Bottom	7	1	0	4
C. Jones	6	0	0	0
S. Williams	2	0	0	0
A. Sharples	2	0	0	0
P.O'Connor	1	0	0	0
P. Farrell	1	0	0	0

# the bootroom

OLDHAM RLFC SQUAD LIST 2006 & PLAYER SPONSORSHIP

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# Roughyed

**Kids & Co**

*Hi Kids*

Well kids, today sees the start of the long summer break for most of you.

If you are going away on holiday, don't forget Carole and myself would love to get a postcard from you. Just send it to the club offices and it will get to us ok.

Hopefully we have three mascots out on the pitch today which is unusual but two of them are going to live in New Zealand and this is their last time watching Oldham before they go. No doubt they will find a rugby team to follow out there but I'm sure they will still be getting the news about how Oldham are doing.

Daniel Foster is the oldest of the three at eleven years old, Dylan and Ella Trow are aged two and five. We hope they all enjoy the game and bring the team some luck.

See you soon.

**Carole and Janet**

## Today's

**Daniel Foster**

*Age: Eleven*

**Dylan Trow**

*Age: Two*

**Ella Trow**

*Age: Five*

## SUPPORT GROUP NEWS

The role of the Support Group is to do just that - SUPPORT in whatever way is necessary. Oldham R.L. Club needs more support, be it financial or practical. I hope that this week's statement from the Club goes some way in improving that support.

There was nothing in the statement that had not been revealed over the past 9 years, but it is obvious that factors that led to our present problems, have been dismissed from the memories of many people. If nothing else, it should be a reminder to everyone who has any concern, that we need to pull together in the common cause of this proud Club.

QUIZ NIGHT will return in September, following a summer break. Watch this space for details.

*Sheila*

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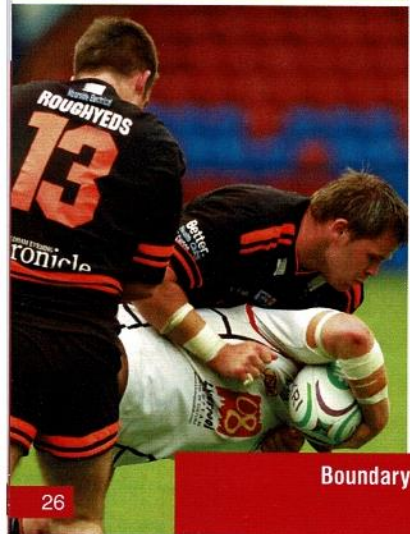
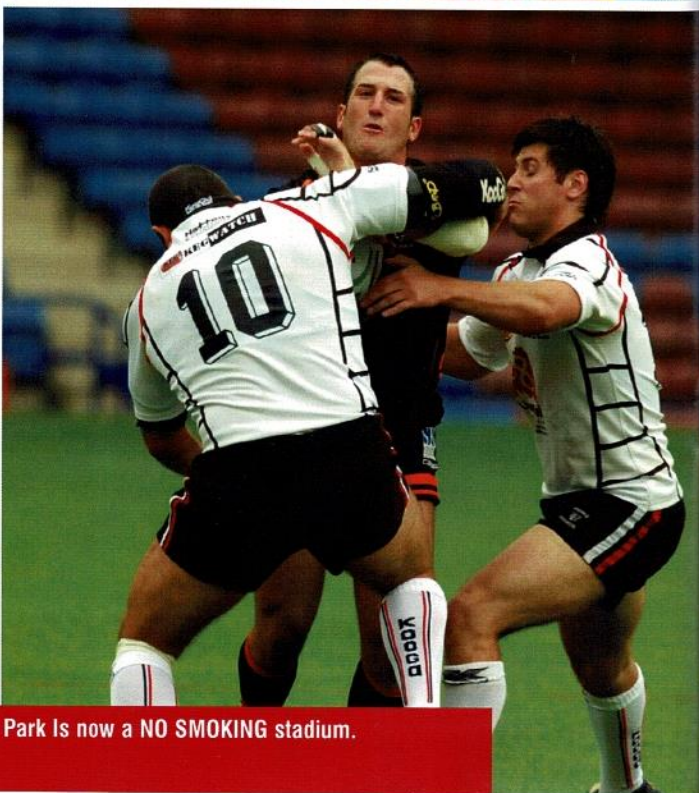
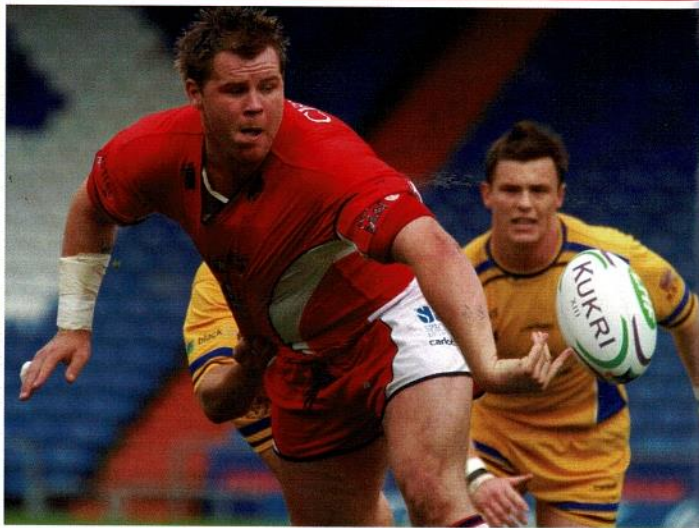
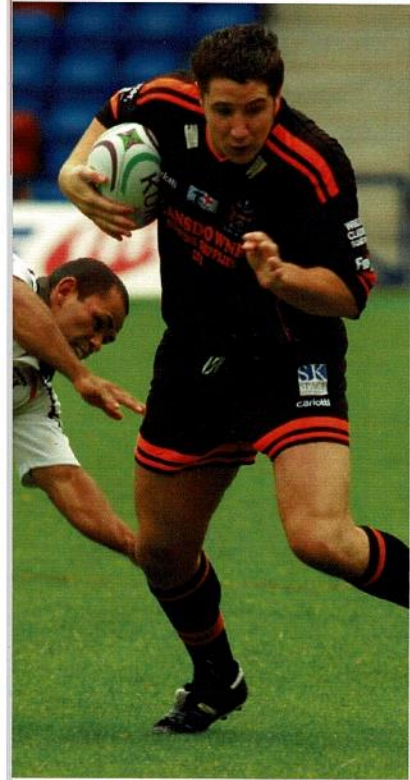
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# MATCH ACTION

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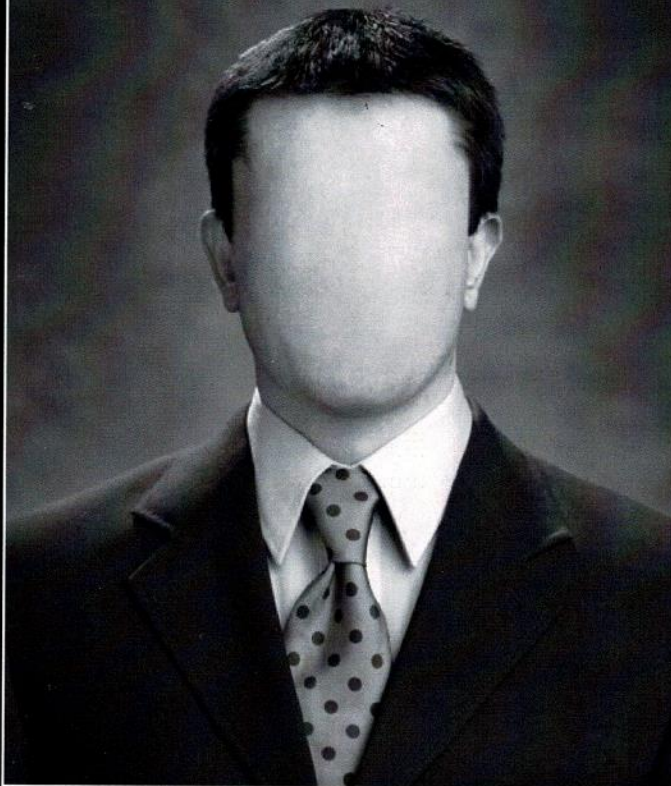
- Indoor team bowling** - every Tuesday
- Games night snooker** - every Thursday
- Bingo** - Friday, Saturdays and Sundays
- Live entertainment** - see notice board
- Ladies darts** - every Monday

All enquires to THE CLUB STEWARD on 0161 627 2128

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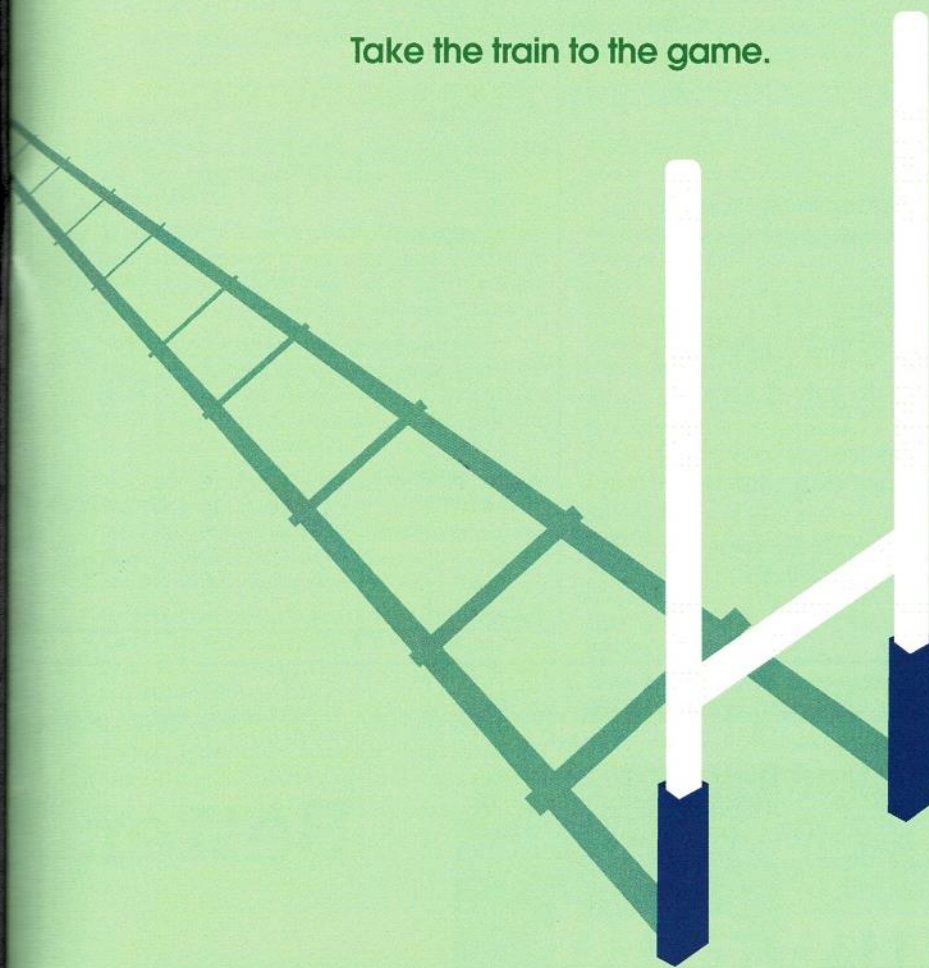
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# NATIONAL LEAGUE TALK

with GARETH WALKER of RUGBY LEAGUER & LEAGUE EXPRESS



## CENTURIONS BASK IN SEASIDE SUCCESS

LEIGH Centurions' stunning Northern Rail Cup win over Hull KR was the result of the National League season so far.

The Centurions were massive outsiders before the game, against a team that had won all 24 matches this season – including beating Super League Warrington in the Powergen Challenge Cup.

After 25 minutes Leigh looked set to be on the receiving end of a heavy beating, as they trailed 16-2 after Rovers dominated the opening exchanges.

But against all the odds, Tony Benson's side battled back, inspired by their fullback Scott Grix. The former Halifax and Doncaster number one – later named man of the match - created one brilliant try and scored another himself.

By half-time Leigh were level, and although Gareth Morton edged the Robins back in front, Dana Wilson's 60th minute try for the Centurions proved decisive.

It was a remarkable win that not only underlined Leigh's credentials for the LHF Healthplan NL1 title – but gave hope to a few other clubs as well.

Hull KR had looked near unstoppable at time this year, but the Centurions proved their fallibility in a big game.

Make no mistake about it – Rovers will be back, and quite probably stronger.

Their coach Justin Morgan will now be looking for them to react positively to what was a hugely disappointing defeat.

They will also welcome back their captain and talisman James Webster for the crucial run-in, starting with today's home meeting with second placed Widnes Vikings.

Rovers believed they could beat Leigh without the flamed-haired Australian – but there is no doubt that they are a different proposition when Webster is on the pitch.

The 22-18 result at Blackpool's Bloomfield Road – which again provided a terrific venue – has set up the remainder of the season perfectly.

It was the same when Hull KR themselves beat title favourites Castleford Tigers in last year's NRC Final.

Now Rovers will be seeking to bounce back in the same way the Tigers did.

And Leigh will be looking to prove that last Sunday wasn't a one-off.

It should be fascinating.

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# 2006 fixtures

DATE	OPPONENTS	CUP	VENUE	K. O.	RESULT	W/L	ATT
22/1/06	Rochdale Hornets	Law Cup	A	14:00	42-8	L	1,114
27/1/06	Leeds Rhino's	Friendly	H	20:00	16-8	W	3,191
15/2/06	Rochdale Hornets	NR Cup	A	19:45	18-16	L	920
19/2/06	Halifax RLFC	NR Cup	H	15:00	26-42	L	1268
26/2/06	Keighley Cougars	NR Cup	H	15:00	25-24	W	764
8/3/06	Halifax RLFC	NR Cup	A	19:30	66-8	L	897
12/3/06	Saddleworth Rangers	POWERGEN CC 3RD RD	H	15:00	32-10	W	804
19/3/06	Rochdale Hornets	NR Cup	H	15:00	10-22	L	783
26/3/06	Keighley Cougars	NR Cup	A	15:00	32-28	W	946
2/4/06	Barrow Raiders	POWERGEN CC 4TH RD	A	15:00	8-40	L	975
9/4/06	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL1	H	15:00	8-48	L	1658
14/4/06	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	A	15:00			
17/4/06	Doncaster Lakers	NL1	H	15:00	10-56	L	820
30/4/06	Leigh Centurions	NL1	A	15:00	44-22	L	2215
14/5/06	Whitehaven	NL1	H	15:00	10-48	L	813
28/5/06	Hull Kingston Rovers	NL1	A	15:00	80-6	L	2859
4/6/06	Halifax RLFC	NL1	A	15:00	34-28	L	1274
10/6/06	York City Knights	NL1	H	19:00	0-62	L	684
25/6/06	York City Knights	NL1	A	15:00	56-14	L	2220
2/7/06	Rochdale Hornets	NL1	H	15:00	18-22	L	713
9/7/06	Widnes Vikings	NL1	A	15:00	72-18	L	3213
21/7/06	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	H	19:45			
30/7/06	Doncaster Lakers	NL1	A	15:00			
	POWERGEN CHALLENGE CUP SEMI FINALS	POWERGEN CC					
6/8/06	Halifax R L F C	NL1	H	15:00			
13/8/06	Batley Bulldogs	NL1	A	15:00			
20/8/06	Widnes Vikings	NL1	H	15:00			
26/8/06	POWERGEN CHALLENGE CUP FINALS	POWERGEN CC					
3/9/06	Leigh Centurions	NL1	H	15:00			
10/9/06	Whitehaven	NL1	A	15:00			
17/9/06	LHF Healthplan Play Offs						
24/9/06	LHF Healthplan Play Offs						
1/10/06	LHF Healthplan Play Offs						
8/10/06	LHF Healthplan Grand Final & Play Off Final						

## Key

NR Cup - Northern Rail Cup  
 Powergen CC - Powergen Challenge Cup  
 NL1 - National League Division 1

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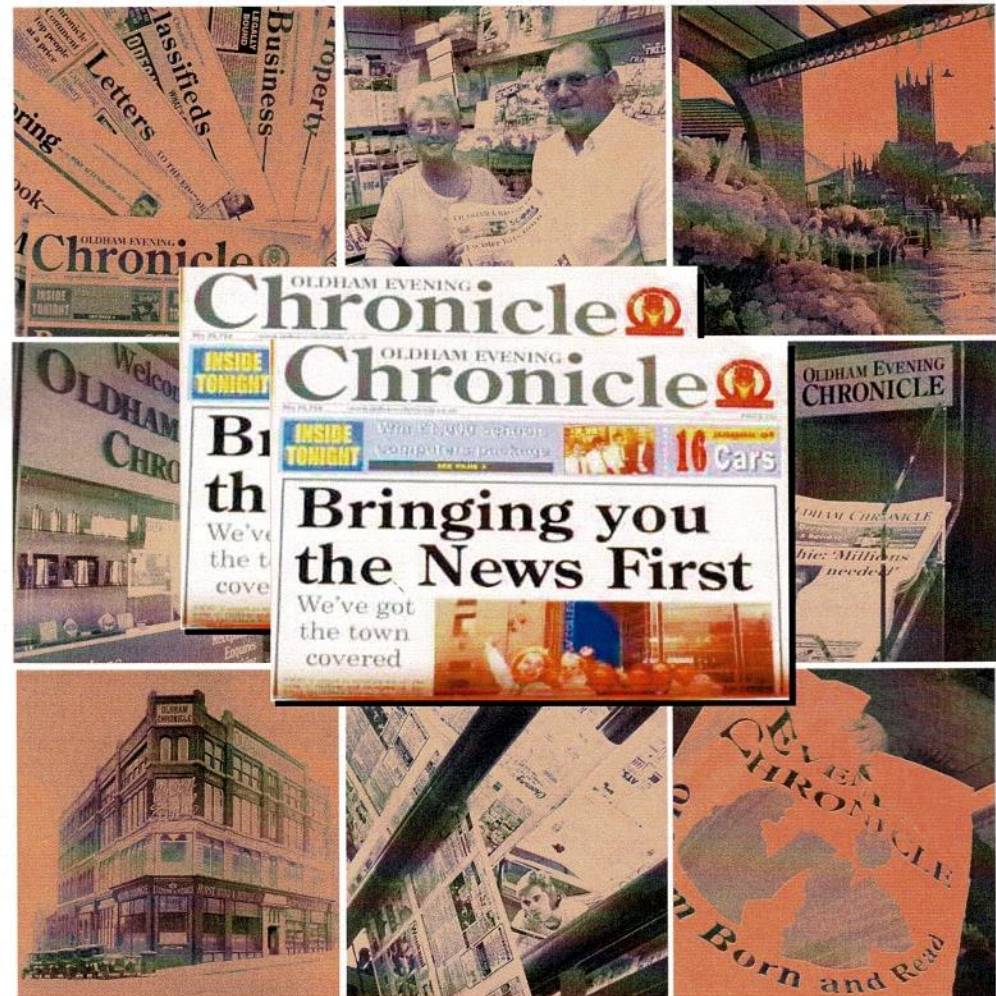
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PLAYERS AFTER MATCH REFRESHMENTS

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