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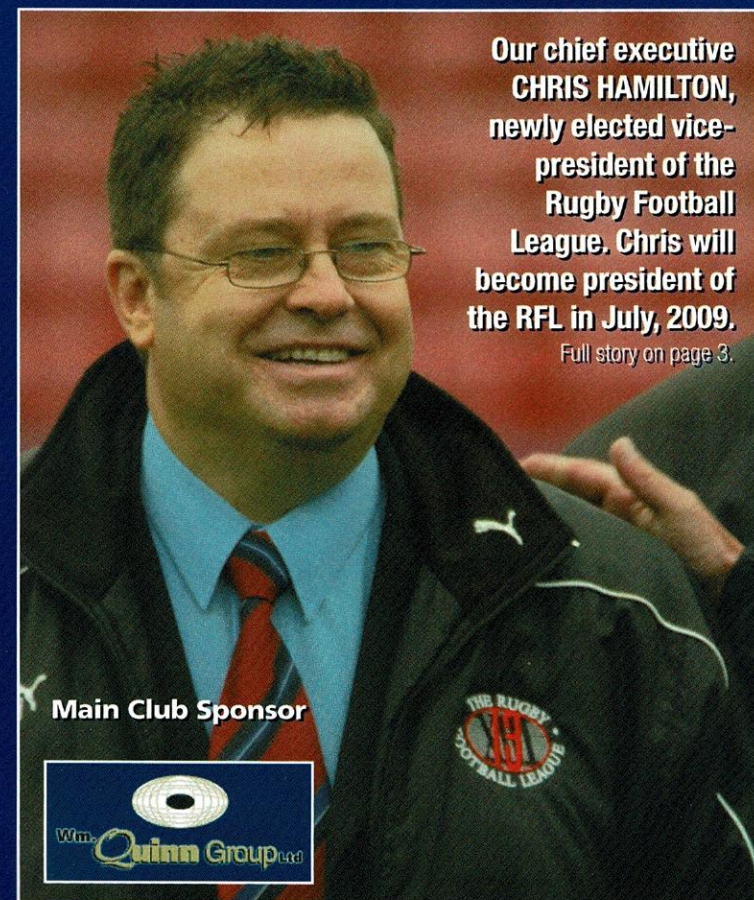
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Our chief executive
CHRIS HAMILTON,
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League. Chris will
become president of
the RFL in July, 2009.

Full story on page 3.



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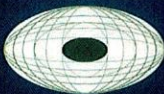
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WELL DONE CHRIS - REWARD FOR A DECADE OF TRUE GRIT IN THE SERVICE OF ROUGHYEDS

BY Roger Halstead

EVERYONE at the Roughyeds has been celebrating the election of Chris Hamilton into the role of vice-president of the Rugby Football League.

The club's chief executive and former chairman, a founder member of Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd, was honoured by his fellow Rugby League Council members at the annual general meeting of the RFL in Warrington last week.

Kevin Nicholas, the Batley chairman, becomes the new president and Chris

will be his right-hand man for the next 17 months before succeeding him as president in July, 2009.

"This is a tremendous honour for the club and also for the people who have supported me in my efforts on behalf of Oldham Rugby League Club over the past ten years," said 45-year-old Chris.

"They are too many to name personally, but I must mention my partner

Gillian and my fellow director Sean Whitehead, both of whom have been with me over many long years. There are many, many other people, too, and their backing and support has always been, and always will be, deeply appreciated.

"A lot of sacrifices have had to be made over those years just to make sure we had a rugby league club, and I will forever be grateful to those people who have stuck with us through thick and thin.

"From a personal point of view it is obviously very nice to be recognised in this way and very nice to know that I have the support of people within a sport that I love. I have only to look back at the contributions of people who have held similar roles at RFL level to know I have much to live up to. That puts it very much into perspective for me.

"But my appointment is more about our club than anything else. It is an honour for Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd and recognition for all the many battles that we - board, players, fans, coaches, staff - have won both on and off the field over the past decade."

Arguably the greatest of those battles was keeping the club alive in 2005 and 2006 when, with Sean Whitehead

by his side, Chris spearheaded the fight to keep his beloved Roughyeds in business despite an Inland Revenue winding-up order and debts which, with penalties and interest, ultimately totalled £250,000.

They met those liabilities without going into insolvency measures to earn the admiration of many in the sport's corridors of power at the RFL, not to mention the admiration of the new owner and chairman Bill Quinn, who joined the club a little more than a year ago with a pledge to take it forward to new levels.

As full-time chief executive Chris Hamilton is still playing a leading role in the club he founded with three other directors in the autumn of 1997 following the demise and liquidation of Oldham Bears. Even in the darkest days and hours of 2006 Chris and Sean were determined that would not happen again to the new club.

Chris has been the new club's RL Council rep ever since those early days of 1997 when he was very much the new boy at League HQ. And commenting further on his appointment he said: "I am privileged to have had the chance

to contribute a little bit to our great game."

He has contributed more than "a little bit". A founder member of Oldham RLFC (1997) Ltd, he was chairman for more than nine years. He has been, and still is, chief executive of the club from day one.

He has been the club's RL Council rep, and still is, from day one; and he has also filled several roles at League level over the past few years.

He was deputy chairman and then chairman of FASDA (the first and second divisions association) and then FASDA's rep on the Operational Board of the RFL - bodies which are no longer in existence.

He was also a member of the RFL board (now constituted in a different way with members who are independent of clubs).

On the playing side he was England manager for a game against Wales at Wrexham in 2001; National League under-21s manager in 2003 with Steve McCormack as coach; and National League manager in 2004 with Karl Harrison as coach.

When Chris becomes president of the RFL in 2009 he will be the first Oldham official to have held the post in its present format and the first in its previous format since Frank Ridgeway was chairman of the RL Council in 1958-59, then representing the former Oldham club. Well done, Chris - it's an honour fully deserved by a man whose true grit over the last ten years has ensured that professional rugby league is still alive and kicking in Oldham.

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From the Boardroom

With Chris Hamilton...



Tonight's match is the first since we played the same opponents, Salford City Reds, away two weeks ago.

Last Sunday's match at Spotland was called off due to a partly frozen

pitch meaning it will now be played 5 days after we entertain Rochdale on 29 February.

At least we were not alone in having a game postponed last week with several matches becoming victims of a severe frost. Salford maintained their impressive start to the season with another win away at local rivals Swinton before a very healthy crowd. We all hope that the Salford fans will have travelled in large numbers today for what's another local derby.

I have to say that the set up down at the Willows last week was very slick and it bodes well for their license application that everything seems to be falling into place with the new ground situation now moving forward after what, from the outside, seemed like lengthy delays and with the team keeping its full time status and looking healthy on the pitch.

The attendance of over 3700 at the Willows was also very good and the marketing of the club is also very evident.

We know from that game just what a tough task we have tonight to try and get points from this game but we will be doing our utmost to try and cause an upset.

As we have made clear from the start we want 2008 to be the year when the club makes progress in the Northern Rail Cup and if we can't finish top of our group then we want to claim the second spot which

also gets you through to the knock out stages.

There is no substitute for winning games and the sooner you get into the habit the better.

It is also particularly pleasing tonight to be able to introduce to you at half time the Reserve Team squad who will shortly be starting their league season. As we speak we have arranged a friendly for 6 March away against Keighley and will hopefully have another warm up game sorted for the week before.

We know from previous experience the benefits of running a second team, not only for the obvious ones of First Team match practice etc but equally, if not more importantly, from the point of view of identifying talent not yet signed up professionally who can hopefully progress to become first team players of the future.

The Oldham club has a successful track record of doing this in the past with the likes of Lee Doran, Gavin Dodd, Adam Sharples, Andy Gorey and Danny Nannyn amongst others to have come up through the ranks and played first team rugby.

We are currently finalising negotiations for our home ground for these matches - which is always subject to the minimum standards set out by the RFL and will hopefully have more news on that front in the next few days.

As ever, once the season starts, we are continually busy with our focus being matches each week and tonight is a big challenge for the team so please show your support for their efforts and please get behind them - it really does make a difference.

Enjoy the game

Chris Hamilton

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CoachesComments

With Steve Deakin...



Welcome to tonight's game against Salford.

Sadly we
couldn't play
against
Rochdale last
week and
find
ourselves

once again playing many peoples favourites
for both the Northern Rail Cup and NFP I
title in what will be our first game since the
forty points to twelve defeat at the
Willows. If our players can replicate the
effort, enthusiasm and skill we displayed in
that game then I am sure that tonight will
see an equally outstanding competition and
one that our fans will appreciate as we
look to progress and improve not only as a
team but as a club.

When looking at the opposition it is a bit
ironic that they contain three Oldham
players - Highton, Jewitt, and Turner - and
although Paul Highton has had a successful
Super League career with over 250 first
team appearances both Jewitt and Turner
are at the start of their careers and are the
type of players that this club need to
attract in the future if we are to
continuously progress and achieve our
ultimate objective of applying for a Super
League franchise and being successful.

To that end the launch of a Reserve grade
under the guidance of John Hough and Leo

Casey is the first step in not only building
meaningful relationships with the local
clubs but also a vehicle that can facilitate
the identification of local and national
talent and put in place an infrastructure at
the club that can see a progression from
schoolboy scholarship to first team and
hopefully international standard player.

Looking at our first team squad Gareth
Langley is back in full training and available
to play Lee Wingfield has been given the
clearance to start running and within three
weeks can start light contact whilst this
week Lucas Onyango had his shoulder
brace removed and started training and will
hopefully be available by the end of March
giving a bit of competition to the squad and
keeping all the players on their toes. This
type of competition is healthy and keeps us
focused on our objectives of hopefully
qualifying for the play-off stages of the
Northern Rail Cup for the first time and
ultimately promotion from NFP 2.

I hope you enjoy tonight's game and are
vocal in your support of the players.

Deaks

IT'S A FAIR COP!

Roughyeds are delighted to announce the
signing of our former player Alex Wilkinson. It
was felt he would have to retire from the
sport when he began training to be a police
officer, but new regulations have enabled him
to put on the rugby boots again and he is
back at the club on a contract to November
30 this year.

Welcome back, Alex!

Visit our website today! - www.roughyeds.co.uk



OLDHAM'S LINK WITH CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL SPANS 100 YEARS OF 'GOLD CUP' HISTORY

Roughyeds officials at green plaque ceremony to commemorate New Zealand's epic first tour

by ROGER HALSTEAD



Kevin Nicholas (left) and Brad Tindall unveil the plaque.

A Cheltenham Festival with a difference is coming up in May . . . one that isn't about turf, silks and thoroughbreds but about rugby, history and the prestige of Oldham Rugby League Club in Victorian and Edwardian England.

The Cheltenham RUGBY Festival will be held on Friday, May 2 in the beautiful Regency town's council-owned Prince of Wales Stadium and will comprise two separate competitions for the All Golds Cup and the 1908 Cup.

Both trophies have been commissioned by Cheltenham Borough Council, the Tourist Board and the Gloucestershire County Rugby League in partnership with the local Civic Society and with the full support of Gloucestershire Warriors RL Club and Cheltenham RUFC, whose home base is the Prince of Wales Stadium.

It is purposely called the RUGBY Festival (not League, not Union, simply RUGBY), but both competitions will be nine-a-side events and played to rugby league rules.

The All Golds Cup, competed for by eight as yet unnamed senior teams, is named in honour of the famous New Zealand touring side that beat the Northern Union (England) 8-5 in Cheltenham on February 15, 1908 to win the first-ever rugby league Test series in this country by two Tests to one.

A century later, the player of the floodlit tournament will receive the William 'Massa' Johnston award, named in honour of the New Zealand forward who scored the winning try for the All Golds in the last few minutes of the game.

Competing for the 1908 Cup over the afternoon of May 2 will be eight schools from the Gloucester-Cheltenham area and the top player in that tournament will receive the Arthur Smith Award in memory of the Oldham and Northern Union (England) player of that name, who was born in Gloucestershire and who was one of three Oldham players in the England team beaten by the All Golds.

This latest initiative to recognise Cheltenham's role in rugby history was announced after the unveiling of a green plaque last Friday (February 15) on the site of the former ground in St John's Avenue, the Athletic Ground, where the famous Test took place exactly 100 years ago to the day.

Oldham had three players in the Northern Union side, more than any other club. They were Arthur Smith, who had been signed from Cinderford in Gloucestershire; stand-off Tom White, another West Country man who made 224 appearances for Oldham; and Oldham-born winger George Tyson, who topped the Oldham try-scoring charts for three years in a row between 1907 and 1909.

Arthur Smith earned the nickname 'Mad'. He signed for Oldham in 1905 and his 247 appearances in the red and white hoops of Oldham produced 21 tries. He played in all three Tests against the All Golds in 1908.

In the Cheltenham crowd for the third Test was

English RU international Alf Wood. He was recognised and approached by a delegation from Watersheddings and he signed for the start of the 1908-09 season, going on to play 244 times for the Roughyeds during which time he kicked 342 goals in a 12-year career.

The Oldham link didn't finish there. Referee for the Test was former Oldham player Bill McCutcheon, who later became a leading official of the Watersheddings club and the club president.

The trip to Cheltenham was indeed a fruitful one for the Oldham contingent who, immediately after the match, signed the All Golds vice-captain George W Smith. He had been to England on the 1905 All Blacks tour and it was then that he became interested in the Northern Union game, or Rugby League as we know it today.

One of New Zealand's top all-round sportsmen, George settled in Oldham and lived out his life here. His last surviving daughter, who lived in Royton, died only three or four years ago.

The Oldham club was invited to last Friday's ceremony to reflect the club's "outstanding contribution to this historic occasion" and so it was that Roughyeds chairman Bill Quinn and chief executive Chris Hamilton headed the local delegation.

Chris, who had been elected to the role of Rugby Football League vice-president only two days earlier, was one of several invited guests to make an address at the unveiling ceremony. He spoke eloquently of the Oldham club's contribution to the first Test series to be held in England and made the point that today's officials were privileged to represent Roughyeds on such a historical occasion.

The unveiling was carried out by Kevin Nicholas of Batley, new president of the RFL, and the New Zealand Rugby League's rep, Brad Tindall.

Many other civic, parliamentary and sporting dignitaries were present while former Great Britain international forward Denis Betts, now on the coaching staff at Gloucester RU club, turned up later.

The recurring theme throughout the speeches was the sheer scale of the achievement of the New Zealand tourists, who sailed for ten weeks to get here after being kicked out of the game at home for accepting money to play. They didn't even know the rules of the 'new' code.

Tony Collins, professor of the Social History of Sport at Leeds Met. Carnegie University, said the All-Golds' adventure "was unparalleled in sport" and ensured that rugby league would become established in New Zealand from a position of strength.

Despite the tragic death from pneumonia on the way home of tour organiser Albert Baskerville, the tourists helped to establish rugby league in Australia.

What the plaque says:

"Here until 1982 was the Athletic Ground, home to Cheltenham Rugby (Union) club. World rugby history was made on February 15, 1908 when the pioneering rugby league touring side, the New Zealand All-Golds defeated the Northern Union (England) 8-5 to win the first-ever rugby league Test match series.

"Born in 1883, Albert Henry Baskerville from Wellington, New Zealand, was the prime advocate and organiser of the ground breaking tour by the All Golds to England. The team returned home via Australia where the first ever Test match between the two countries was played on May 9, 1908 in Sydney.

"New Zealand won 11-10, Baskerville playing a leading role. Shortly afterwards, he contracted pneumonia and died on May 20, 1908."


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January

Sun 13th	LEEDS RHINOS	A	3:00pm	4-50	6,340
Sun 20th	HULL KR	H	3:00pm	Postponed	
Sun 27th	ROCHDALE	A	3:00pm	20-26	1,108

February

NRC Fri 1st	SWINTON	H	8:00pm	22-20	848
NRC Fri 8th	SALFORD	A	8:00pm	12-40	4,224
NRC Sun 17th	ROCHDALE	A	3:00pm	Postponed	
NRC Fri 22nd	SALFORD	H	8:00pm		
NRC Fri 29th	ROCHDALE	H	8:00pm		

March

Sun 9th	CHALL CUP 3rd ROUND				
NRC Sun 16th	SWINTON	A	3:00pm		
NL Fri 21st	ROCHDALE	A	3:00pm		
NL Mon 24th	HUNSLET	H	3:00pm		
NL Sun 30th	YORK	H	3:00pm		

April

Sun 6th	NORTHERN RAIL CUP QR				
NL Sun 13th	KEIGHLEY	A	3:00pm		
Sun 20th	CHALL CUP 4th ROUND				
NL Sun 27th	ROCHDALE	H	3:00pm		

May

NL Mon 5th	BLACKPOOL	H	3:00pm		
NL Sat 10th	LONDON	A	3:00pm		
Sun 11th	CHALL CUP 5th ROUND				

NL Sun 18th	SWINTON	H	3:00pm
NL Sat 24th	GATESHEAD	A	6:30pm
Sun 25th	NORTHERN RAIL CUP QF		
NL Fri 30th	DONCASTER	A	8:00pm

June

Sun 1st	CHALL CUP QF		
NL Sun 8th	LONDON	H	3:00pm
NL Sun 15th	HUNSLET	A	3:00pm
Sun 15th	NORTHERN RAIL CUP SF		
NL Sun 22nd	BLACKPOOL	A	3:00pm
NL Sun 29th	GATESHEAD	H	3:00pm

July

NL Sun 6th	WORKINGTON	A	3:00pm
Sun 6th	NORTH RAIL CUP FINAL		
NL Fri 11th	BARROW	A	7:30pm
NL Thur 17th	DONCASTER	H	7:30pm
NL Sun 27th	KEIGHLEY	H	3:00pm
Sun 27th	CHALLENGE CUP SF		

August

NL Sun 3rd	YORK	A	3:00pm
NL Sun 10th	BARROW	H	3:00pm
NL Sun 17th	SWINTON	A	3:00pm
NL Sun 24th	WORKINGTON	H	3:00pm
Sat 30th	CHALLENGE CUP FINAL		

September

Sun 7th	ELIMINATION PLAY OFFS		
Sun 14th	QUALIFYING/		
	ELIMINATION SEMI-FINALS		
Sun 21st	FINAL ELIMINATOR		
Sun 28th	N L GRAND FINAL		

October

Sat 4th	S L GRAND FINAL		
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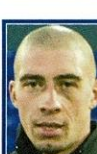
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BORN TO BE A RUGBY LEAGUE HALF-BACK... ...and tough enough for the Paras!

Player Profile: **JAMES COYLE**

by **ROGER HALSTEAD**

James Coyle, the Roughyeds' talented No 7, was born to be a rugby league half-back.

When your grandad and your dad, both called Bernard, played for Wigan at scrum-half it's a fair bet you are going to follow in the family footsteps and maintain the Coyle tradition.

The third generation Coyle did exactly that ... and to maintain consistency and further increase the chances of the dynasty stretching to a fourth generation in years to come there is yet another Coyle, James's 19-year-old brother Thomas, currently playing at scrum-half for the Warriors.

Big brother James, just 22, has been there, done that and worn the Warriors tee-shirt. Now, he has left full-time rugby behind and, instead, he is studying for a degree in civil engineering, working full time for British Nuclear Fuels at Risley, near Warrington and playing part-time rugby league for the Roughyeds.

And what does "part time" rugby involve? Training in Oldham three nights a week and on Saturday mornings, doing solo sessions near home in Wigan and playing on Sundays - little room for manoeuvre in a crowded schedule.

When he isn't on site at Risley, James is studying civil engineering at Bolton University where he is nearing the end of year one in a four-year course which demands one-day-a-week attendance and many, many hours of study at home.

Employed by BNFL, he probably learns more on site than he does in university lectures.

"I'm required to get the degree," he explained, "but BNFL demand that I spend as much time as possible at Risley. Most of the work is specific to them -- and although it's a civil engineering degree they make the point that, working for them, if I were to get something wrong it could be rather more serious than just a wall falling down!"

James is used to "falling down" or being tackled. It's been happening to him since he first handled a rugby ball at Wigan St Pat's as a seven-year-old. It toughened him up, got him used to taking hard knocks -- and those early years in rugby getting bashed as a little scrum-half stood him in good stead when he took on the might of the Army at Catterick Camp a couple of years ago.

Back at Wigan for his second stint with his

hometown club, he was one of ten young players -- eight from Wigan, two from Batley -- who were sent to Catterick to be tested mentally and physically on a course designed for paratroopers. Of the ten, only four finished the course and, of those, only three picked up enough marks in endurance and other tests to pass with flying colours.

James was one of the three - and that certificate was a huge addition to a CV that included selection for the NW Counties under-16s tour of Fiji, New Zealand and Australia in 2001; player-of-the-year awards in three successive seasons while playing Academy rugby at Wigan; five appearances for England at international academy level; and five games in Super League for his hometown club.

In the younger of the two squads that NW Counties took Down Under in 2001, Coyle played alongside James Roby at half-back in a side that remained unbeaten on tour. Shortly after getting home he signed for Wigan and a couple of years later, aged 18, he became a full-time pro with the Warriors.

He played for England Academy twice against France; twice against New Zealand on tour Down Under; and once against Australia in Penrith when the English boys made history by becoming the first side to beat the Aussies at that level.

Back home, he was player of the year in his first season of Academy rugby at Wigan; supporters' player of the year in his second year; and player of the year again in his third year.

It was Ian Millward, the Aussie coach who had stunned the sport by moving from St Helens to take command at Wigan, who

advised James to seek first-team rugby elsewhere. Recalled James: "He said he didn't think I would get a lot of Super League opportunities at Wigan, but he felt I needed a higher standard of rugby than academy football."

So it was off to Widnes Vikings for the young Coyle, who signed a one-year contract and played in 31 of the Vikings' 32 games in 2006. He was offered a new deal for 2007, but he was looking for a move and he ultimately accepted an invitation to return to Wigan, by then under the command of Brian Noble.

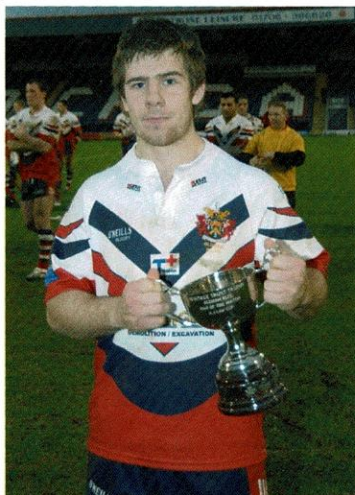
"I didn't really enjoy my rugby at Widnes," he said, "so I went back to Wigan when Stuart Wilkinson (Noble's No 2) gave me a call, but then I had some serious thinking to do about my future and when the opportunity arose for me to take employment with BNFL I decided to go down that route."

"That's when I was looking for part-time rugby, and that's where Oldham came in. I spoke to Chris (Hamilton) and Deaks (Steve Deakin) and several players who were already here told me they were very happy and it was a good club to join."

"I am happy to say I definitely made the right decision. I signed initially for half a season, but then I signed again for 2008 and later it was extended to take in 2009."

"There are a lot of new players in the squad just now and it will take time for us to gel properly, but Deaks is a very experienced coach and I am absolutely sure that everything will come right soon."

Roger Halstead



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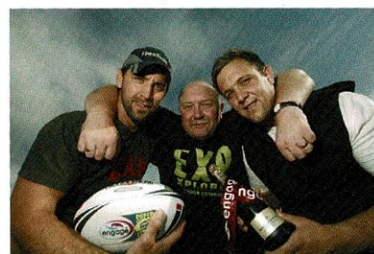
GuestWriter..

No 2: Ian Wilson

Roughyeds match reporter for League Express and lifelong Oldham fan.

Re-forming a Reserves team is of crucial importance to long-term planning.

Chris Bridge, Matt Calland, Iestyn Harris, Paul Highton, Paul Deacon, Danny Sculthorpe, Barrie McDermott, Paul



Paul Sculthorpe of St Helens (cap) and brother Danny of Wakefield Wildcats with their dad, Doug

Sculthorpe, Kevin Sinfield, Jordan Turner, Kyle Eastmond. Not a bad list of players, I am sure you will agree. And of

course its basis is that it is made up of current, future or recent past top-level players who either come from the town or played their formative junior rugby here, but who were or are largely lost to the town's professional club because of its reduced status compared with the "good old days". I am certain too, that readers of this programme will be able to add names of their own to the list. For example, what about the two local youngsters who have just signed for Salford's Academy side, Gareth Owen and Matthew Fogarty?

I am equally certain that I do not have to make the point to readers that the town still continues to be a thriving centre of rugby league, and to produce quality both in its amateur and youth sides and its individual players, even though it is now more than 10 years since we had either a top level pro club in the town, or indeed even an RL-dedicated ground.

This is surely why the decision by messrs. Quinn, Hamilton and Whitehead to re-form an

Oldham RLFC academy side is of such crucial importance. It is also why it is so good to be able to welcome John Hough and Leo Casey - two Oldham RLFC stalwarts if there ever were such people - as the initial coaching staff for what has now become the Reserves side.

Of course, it has never been the case that all local players play for their local side - witness the number from the Leigh area who were amongst the stars in our 1950s team, for example. But it is surely absolutely vital, if we are ever to have a realistic chance of making progress towards the promised land - if such it can be called - of a Super League licence/franchise in the future, that there is a clear route available for local lads to progress in the game via their local professional club as the starting point.

The creation of a Reserves side, alone, of course, will not be enough to stem the tide of local youngsters who currently, quite understandably, sign up for other clubs. But it does represent a beginning, at least. That is why the town's supporters' trust, Rugby Oldham, is so keen to help the pro club in every way it can, I know, to make the Reserves venture a success. It is also aiming to help to generate the necessary co-operation between the pro club and the local Service Area which will enable the town to see its first ever RL scholarship scheme in place, in order to cement the club's role in the game in the town at earlier age groups.

Long-term goals require long-term thinking - and that is what we seem to be beginning to get, at last, among the town's RL fraternity. Good news indeed.

Ian Wilson



Salford's Jordan Turner.

Luke Adamson (Second Row) D.O.B. 17/11/87

Having progressed through the ranks at Salford, Luke made his debut as substitute for the first team in the Reds victory at Wakefield Trinity in 2006. Having acquitted himself well so far he will now be looking for a regular place in the Reds pack this season. Luke played for the England U18 academy side against the Australian combined HS side in 2006 and was voted U18 players' Player of the Year at Salford for 2005.

Luke Ambler (Prop) D.O.B. 18/12/89

Having represented Yorkshire Academy in the Under 17's Origin match against Lancashire in 2007, Luke scored for the first team in the 2007 pre-season defeat at Swinton.

Andrew Ballard (Winger) D.O.B. 10/05/86

A goal kicking winger, Andrew has worked his way through the club's Academy ranks. Voted U21 Players' player of the Year in 2007, he scored a try for the first team in the pre-season 40-34 defeat at Swinton in 2007.

Stephen Bannister (Second Row) D.O.B. 10/10/87

Signed on a one year deal from Harlequins R.L. prior to this season Stephen has represented his country at all age groups before making his first team debut for St Helens against the Catalan Dragons in 2006. He joined Harlequins R.L. in 2007.

Chris Borgese (Utility) D.O.B. 28/03/87

Signed from Canberra Raiders prior to the 2008 season, Chris is a former U18 captain and NSW schoolboy's star. Holding an Italian passport he does not count on the overseas quota.

Andrew Brocklehurst (Second Row)

D.O.B. 06/03/83

Andrew has been at the Willows since 2004, when he arrived here from a stint at London Broncos. Previously at Halifax, he was highly rated touring Australia and New Zealand with the GB Academy side in 2001, playing in four of the Test Matches. He missed out on the England 'A' tour in 2002 due to suspension but gained selection for the subsequent World Sevens Tournament.

Karl Fitzpatrick (Full Back) D.O.B. 13/09/80

Karl will be hoping for better luck this season after a very serious ankle restricted him to just three appearances last term. He made his debut for Salford in 2003, following spells at Widnes, Tonneins (France) and Swinton, starting at scrum half before making a successful switch to full back. In 2004, Karl represented Ireland in the European Nation's Cup and has been a regular for them since.

Matt Gardner (Winger) D.O.B. 24/08/84

Barrow born, Matt represented the England academy side against the Australian Schools side in 2002, before beginning his professional career at Leeds Rhinos. During an on loan appearance for Castleford in 2004 he scored a try in their 48-

18 defeat at Wigan. Matt joined Huddersfield Giants in the 2005 before joining Salford prior to the 2008 campaign. He has also represented Cumbria.

Paul Highton (Prop) D.O.B. 10/11/76

A hard grafting forward, Paul has given Stirling service to the Reds culminating in his award of a testimonial year in 2008. Oldham born, the former Waterhead A.R.L. Club prior to turning professional with Halifax in the 1994-95 season. Having represented the GB academy on the 1996 tour down under, and following a 4 match stint at Featherstone Rovers, Paul signed for Salford in 1998. A well respected member of the Reds squad. Paul played for Wales with distinction in the 2000 World Cup.

Lee Jewitt (Prop) D.O.B. 14/02/87

Lee signed from Wigan Warriors prior to the 2007 campaign, having made his first team debut for Wigan in 2005. A 2006 trip to Australia, where he was highly regarded, resulted in a broken thumb and he returned to Wigan, playing for their under 21 side. Having made a promising start at the Willows last season and making 15 appearances before breaking his leg, Lee should make a big impact in 2008.

Phillip Leulual (Prop) D.O.B. 16/07/77

Phil signed for the Reds on a two and a half year deal towards the latter end of last season. Auckland born, he began his career at Newtown jets before making his debut with Cronulla Sharks in 2005 winning the 'Rookie of the Year' award in the same year. Phil represented Samoa in the 2008 World Cup Qualifiers competition.

Stuart Littler (Centre) D.O.B. 19/02/79

Formally with Leigh Miners Rangers A.R.L., Stuart has played his entire professional career at the Willows after joining in 1998. Having worked his way through the ranks to first team status and his 30 tries in the 2003 season saw him equal the long standing club record for tries from the centre position set by David Watkins. Stuart was the Reds top try scorer in the 2004 and 2005 seasons and having represented Ireland on numerous occasions has now been installed as their skipper.

Richard Myler (Stand Off) D.O.B. 21/05/90

Richard joined Salford from Widnes prior to the current season on a three year deal. A tremendous prospect, he has represented Lancashire and England at U17 Academy level and scored three tries for England Academy U17's against their Australian counterparts in a thrilling 38-22 victory that squared the series in 2007.

Steve Nash (Prop) D.O.B. 14/01/86

Big things are expected from the young prop forward, who made his debut for Widnes during the 2005 season when only 19 years old. Salford snapped him up prior to the 2007 campaign in which he made ten appearances for the Reds and

he looking like a good prospect who should go well this term.

Stefan Ratchford (Utility Back) D.O.B. 19/07/1988

A product of the Reds Academy, Stefan was voted the U21 Coaches Player of the Year for 2007. Having come on as substitute for the first team in a pre-season friendly against Swinton in 2005, he debuted against Gateshead Thunder in a R.L. Challenge Cup 4th round tie at the Willows in 2007. Making six first team appearances last season, Stefan scored a try in the 27-26 defeat at St Helens when he was selected on the wing.

Ian Sibbit (Second Row) D.O.B. 15/10/80

Ian signed at the end of the 2004 season from Warrington Wolves, where he was mainly used as a centre. Highly rated in the Warrington Academy team, he attracted the attention of Aussie NRL side Melbourne Storm. Having improved no end with this experience he eventually a better player. A quality player who has been unlucky with injuries whilst at the Willows, Ian has scored several classy tries for the Reds and will be looking for a big season in 2008.

Adam Sidlow (Prop) D.O.B. 25/10/87

Signed on a one year deal from Widnes Vikings prior to the 2008 season, Adam played for Lancashire Academy and was in the 2006 England Academy train on squad. Having made his first team debut for Widnes in 2006 he went on to loan to Workington Town in May 2007 until the end of the season.

Craig Stapleton (Prop) D.O.B. 13/08/78

A big 2008 signing for the Reds, Craig signed on a two year deal from Cronulla Sharks. One of the best and most highly respected props in the NRL, Craig is no stranger to these shores, having spent the 2005 season at Leigh where he played in every one of their 31 matches.

Jordan Turner (Stand Off) D.O.B. 09/01/89

Jordan is another youngster who has come through the ranks to deservedly earn a place in the first team squad. An England School Boys representative he has gone on to play for both Lancashire Academy and England Academy. Voted academy player of the year 2006 and Young Player of the Year 2007, Jordan made his first team debut at Harlequins in the final round of the 2006 Super league season.

Leon Walker (Second Row) D.O.B. 27/12/88

Another talented youngster from the club's Academy ranks, Leon was voted Academy U18 Players Player of the Year for 2007. Having played at loose forward for Yorkshire Academy U18 against Lancashire he was also substitute for the England U18 Academy side that beat the French Cadets side 40-12 at St. Esteve in July 2007.

Jason Walton (Centre) D.O.B. 13/06/90

A powerful running centre who hails from Yorkshire, Jason has

represented his country in the U17 Origin match against Lancashire. Selected for the England Academy U17's in both tests against the Australian Institute of sport, Jason was substitute on each occasion.

Paul White (Winger) D.O.B. 07/12/82

Paul was signed from Wakefield Trinity in November 2007, but began his career at Huddersfield Giants in 2002, making a try scoring debut against Gateshead Thunder. Playing with the Giants until the end of the 2005 season, when he joined Wakefield Trinity, Paul is a pacy winger who knows where the try line is.

Daley Williams (Winger) D.O.B. 15/05/86

Signed from Keighley Cougars, the dashing winger made his debut for Salford in the away fixture at St Helens in 2006. Making a comeback after a sporadic 2007 season, Daley has the build and pace to make it at the top level.

John Wilshire (Winger) D.O.B. 05/05/78

Another great season for John in Salford's colours saw him pick up the major awards at the clubs end of season presentation evening. The Papua New Guinea Test player joined us from Leigh prior to the 2006 campaign and has had vast experience playing with the likes of Perth, Melbourne, Brisbane Easts, Penrith, St George-Illawarra, Warrington and Leigh. Representing Papua New Guinea in the 2000 World Cup and whilst at Salford, John has developed his goal kicking skills.

Robbie Paul (Scrum Half) D.O.B. 03/02/76

Signed from Huddersfield Giants during the close season, Robbie has won every honour in the game whilst at Bradford Bulls, including being the first player to score three tries in an R.L. Challenge Cup Final at Wembley that earned him the Lance Todd Trophy. Having skippered the Bulls to Grand Final wins in 2001 and 2003, a World Cup Challenge Victory in 2002 and the R.L. Challenge Cup in 2003, he joined Huddersfield Giants in October 2005. Robbie is also a former NZ test star who played 30 times for his country.

Malcolm Alker (Hooker) D.O.B. 04/11/78

Club skipper, Malcolm had a well deserved testimonial year at Salford last season, joined the club from Wigan St Pats in 1995. A tireless worker who always leads by example, he was the first player to complete over 1000 tackles in a Super League season. Malcolm holds the club record for tries in a match (4) and also in a season (22) by a hooker, both attained in 2003. He has represented both England and Lancashire county.

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CHANCE TO MEET ...

Roughyeds stars in Spindles tomorrow

Oldham RL supporters will be able to meet their heroes and get their autographs when the club stages a meet-the-fans session in the Spindles Town Square Shopping Centres tomorrow (Saturday) from noon to 2pm.

The full squad, including the club's eight new signings for a season in which Roughyeds will be hell bent on automatic promotion to NLI, will be present in Spindles after taking on Salford City Reds at Boundary Park in the Northern Rail Cup this evening.

Despite the 40-12 defeat at The Willows a fortnight ago, Steve Deakin's men played well enough to ensure that the full-timers knew they had been in a game, especially in the first half.

Since then, Salford have had a comfortable win against Swinton on the day our derby clash at Rochdale was postponed due to a frozen pitch and rearranged for Wednesday, March 5 (kick off 7.30pm).

Making their first appearances in Spindles will be new boys Tommy Goulden, Danny Halliwell, Tommy Grundy, Mick Nanyn, Marcus St Hilaire, Daryl Cardiss, Simon Baldwin and Phil Joseph --

eight major signings whom the club hope will play leading roles in beating off strong competition to finish top of NL2 in the campaign that starts with a derby clash at Rochdale on Good Friday, March 21.

Among others present will be French forward Said Tamghart, up and coming scrum-half star James Coyle, club captain Robert 'Two Bobs' Roberts, Kenyan wing flyer Lucas Onyango and 2007 player of the year Richard Mervill.

Roughyeds players will be involved in joint initiatives with Spindles throughout the year and this is the first of those.

Spindles Town Square Shopping, who sponsored the club for the first time last year, have extended their backing in the 2008 season to include player-of-the-month and player-of-the-year awards schemes.

"We were delighted with how our link-up worked out in year one," said Spindles manager Mike Flanagan, "and I had no hesitation in recommending to my board that we should do a new, extended deal in 2008.

"We are working for the community and, in partnership with the Roughyeds, we will be fostering community links."



Roughyeds on the defensive in the last home game against Swinton Lions. Picture by Pete Green and the Swinton Supporters Trust.

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HOUGHYANDLEO...

A DREAM TEAM FOR OUR NEW RESERVES SQUAD

by Nigel Marland (programme editor)

After spending a month in Lanzarote it was with eager anticipation that I returned Thursday ready for the Rochdale game.

Once again "Summer Rugby" denied me the rugby fix I was craving. It would be interesting to look at the stats of the number of postponed games when we played winter rugby and compare it to the number in summer rugby. I bet there's little difference. Going abroad for a month used to mean complete Rugby starvation as the National Press coverage was and still is pitiful, especially if you're not in Super League. The advent of web sites however and the inclusion of P C's in most amusement arcades and cyber cafes means a "saddo" like me can keep in touch with everything that is happening.

Flying over we were on the same plane as Warrington Wolves who were in Lanzarote for warm weather training and they certainly have some big strong lads who were definitely struggling to fit into the small space provided on an X L airways charter flight.

I thought I'd concentrate today on the new reserve side who will be paraded before you at half time at today's game. It's formation is in my opinion one of, if not the biggest, step forward this season. This is a view coincidentally excellently outlined by Ian Wilson on our Guest Page earlier in this programme. With Houghy and Leo in charge not only have we two people who know much about the game but also true Oldham lads who have been round and about the local amateur game for some time now.

I spoke to Houghy earlier in the week and he was upbeat about the progress so far. He has got around 24 regular trainers who train on a Monday night with the first team squad at Radcliffe School and Saturday mornings at

'Noddy's Field'. Obviously the lads can't be named yet as no contracts have been signed. The 24, who Houghy would like to see rising to 26, are made up of local amateur players chosen, mainly from St Annes, Saddleworth and Waterhead, where he and Leo have been going along to training sessions.

But they have not only been looking at the local scene and have had their noses to the ground for talent outside the local area and with the help of contacts at other clubs have 'cherry picked' some excellent prospects from outside Oldham.

There has been some criticism from other clubs that the season is not long enough with only 16 games, albeit rising to 24 if you progress through the knock out stages to the Final. But as Houghy said to me, "Anything is better than not having a reserve side at all." And as Oldham doesn't have a massive first team squad it's not likely that there will be many not getting a game. The Reserves, said Houghy, will be where previously injured or out of favour first team players can get back to match fitness and impress Deaks they are ready to return to the first team but also, and perhaps more importantly, where youngsters can also impress and make a play for inclusion in the first team squad. As Houghy said, "There are plenty of teenagers playing in Super League so why not in the National Leagues. We will give them the opportunity and it is then up to them to grasp the bull by the horns and push for a place."

So overall everything seems to be going to plan and I know there will be many fans other than myself who can't wait to see the Reserves in action and recreate that excellent atmosphere there used to be at Manor Park when the old Academy side was playing. So here's to a bright future for Houghy, Leo and all the new Roughyed Reserves.

Nigel

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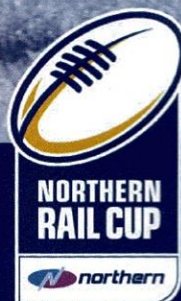
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