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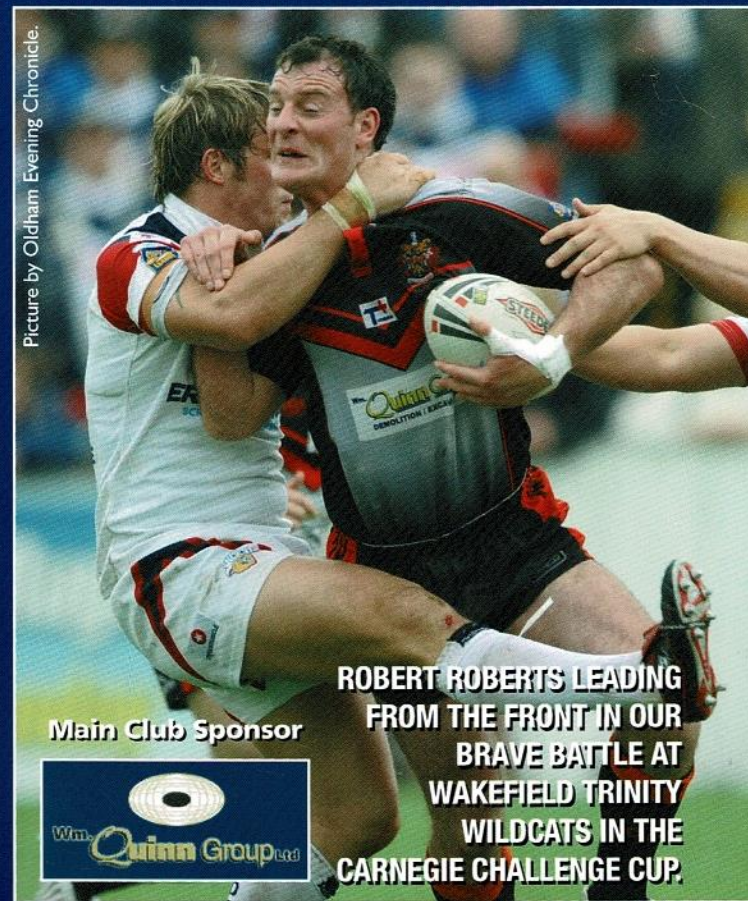
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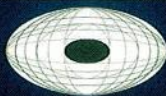
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# OldhamNews

## WELL DONE CHRIS, MAN OF OLDHAM 2008

by **ROGER HALSTEAD**

**CHRIS Hamilton and Oldham Rugby League Club (1997) Ltd received a huge fillip on May 22 when Chris was named Man of Oldham in the prestigious annual award scheme run by Dr Kershaw's Hospice in association with the Oldham Evening Chronicle.**

It was a "gobsmacked" Roughyeds chief executive who received the trophy from the new Mayor, Councillor Shoab Akhtar, at a presentation dinner at The White Hart, Lydgate.

There had been eight nominees, but the adjudicating panel had narrowed it down to two for recognition on the night - Chris Hamilton and Dave McGealy, the station manager of Oldham Community Radio and a man with 35 years of local radio work in Oldham behind him. They happen to be good friends with a close association through work and, in the ultimate irony, Dave put on his radio hat as soon as the announcement was made and the formalities were completed in order to interview Chris for Oldham Community Radio.

"They've got the right man," said Dave, returning a compliment made by Chris in his acceptance speech when he referred to Dave as "a good friend of mine and a man I respect" and added: "And I know how hard he works for the good of the people of Oldham."

Accepting his award, supported by members of the Roughyeds staff, coach Steve Deakin and club captain Robert Roberts, Chris said: "This is a massive honour and I am very touched. I am proud of my home town, as the citation read.

"We have our problems in this town, but one of the things we tend to underplay in Oldham is the strength of character of the people in it and I'm sure that together

we can work our way through these problems.

"I am just gobsmacked, but I would like to thank everyone associated with this award. I came here tonight believing I was coming to a birthday party, but I did begin to wonder what was going on when Deaks (Steve Deakin) and 'Two Bobs' (Robert Roberts) walked in and joined us.

Having received the personal congratulations of many of the guests, Chris was interviewed for Oldham Community Radio. And he told his fellow award nominee: "I can't begin to tell you how proud I am to be an Oldhamer. I am proud to have done my bit for Oldham Rugby and very humbled to receive this award.

"I was gobsmacked and I should have said many things I didn't say, like paying tribute in all this to my partner Gillian, who is



my inspiration. She is the one who cops the hard words and the anger, but she always comes up smiling in private and in public.

"Would I do it all over again if I could turn back the clock? I'm not so sure that I would. It has affected me financially as well as my health and my general lifestyle. People close to me have also been affected. It has been a battle. Stubbornness has probably helped to get me through, just as stubbornness helped Gillian to get through her battles (against breast cancer). It was often a battle of wits between the two of us.

"I didn't do it for the money, that's for sure. But I'm proud of Oldham and I didn't want Oldham not to have a professional rugby league team. There have been dark days, but hopefully Bill Quinn (the new chairman and majority shareholder) will be at the club for a long time to come.

"Things are on the up, that's for sure, and hopefully the people who have stuck with us through the years can now start to get some rewards.

"The team is capable of winning promotion and capable of doing well in the first division. That's why most of the lads are on two-year contracts, depending on us being in division one next year. We wouldn't be out of place in NLI.

"We have a very honest group of players and hopefully everyone will get the rewards they deserve."

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

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## From the Boardroom

With Chris Hamilton...



**Hello and welcome to our semi permanent home here at Sedgley Park for the first of two home matches "on the road".**

A big thank you once again to Geoff Roberts and all concerned for making us welcome and

for allowing us to play here once again.

Although these notes have had to be written before the game up at Gateshead I have to pay tribute to the effort the players put in against Wakefield last week in the Carnegie Challenge Cup.

A 46-4 scoreline does no justice at all to the contribution made to that game on behalf of our club by all 17 players. It was a case of the rub of the green going with the home side to say the least and an early injury to Ben Seru who was making his debut disrupted the balance of the team.

Although we made some errors with the ball in the first half which meant we had to do more defending than we would have liked to have been in front after 20 minutes and only 8-4 behind after 35 minutes was a fantastic effort.

For me, even though we conceded more points in the second half than the first, we played even better in the second 40, never let our heads go down, and the kick chase virtually on the final hooter where we tackled the defender on the 10 metre line epitomised the willingness to work and the desire the players had on the day.

We were certainly worthy quarter finalists and the players and fans earned great credit for the club - well done to everybody.

Having gone out of the two cup competitions in the last two games we can now fully focus on our main aim of the season which is to try to get out of this division.

Having said that a lot of people are only

just beginning to realise just how tough this division is and all of the teams have improved beyond recognition over the last two seasons.

Our opponents today, London Skolars, have had a difficult start to the season after a great Northern Rail cup group stage and they were one of my tips to be up at the top of the division on the back of that but their league form has not been as good with injuries certainly playing their part.

With tonight being the third game in six days we need to be aware that the players will be tired and regardless of the opposition to get a result will be a big job.

The players are all switched on to what we want to achieve this season and weeks like this will certainly be important in shaping our destiny and as such we all have a part to play.

The players bodies will be tired and drained and the training and rehabilitation schedule in weeks like this become an even more important part of the preparation.

Make no mistake we want to be successful and in terms of National League Clubs nobody has done better overall in the two cup competitions than us - and long may it continue - but it does have consequences - and this week is one of those.

There is no doubt whatsoever though that this group of players have all the character needed to do what is needed and we ask that you play your part by showing your support for the team tonight throughout the game.

On behalf of the club we would also like to thank you for your support of the team in a busy period and for understanding the clubs position with regards to the two matches being played here at Sedgley Park. Be loud and proud!

**Enjoy the game**

*Chris Hamilton*



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# CoachesComments

With Steve Deakin...



## Welcome to Sedgeley Park for our first "on the road" home game against today's opponents, London Skolars.

We come into  
the game on the

back of what will have been the toughest week that I have been involved in as a coach after playing a quarter final against Wakefield last Sunday, travelled up to Gateshead on Wednesday and then prepared to play tonight. Needless to say the training has consisted of ice baths, stretching, massage and rehab. The players are flat out trying to put everything in to get us up this year and their efforts in the last month have been outstanding, now we are going to see the mental strength, resolve and squad hopefully pull us through this period of seven games in 28 days and get us into a position from where we can kick on.

I cannot write this article without giving the praise to our players that they deserve following the cup runs and subsequent losses to Batley and Wakefield. They were magnificent in their efforts, gave all they had and deserved all the applause that you gave them at the end of the games a gesture that was reciprocated by the players who recognized the support that you gave them, fed off it and helped them produce the performances that they did.

You too were truly magnificent in your vocal support of the team and showed exactly where the word "supporter" comes from and what it means. I can only ask that you continue your support as this is vital for the team - no, the club - and we can all play our part in the successes that are coming.

On a down side the fact that we again lost a player, Ben Seru, shows that if we didn't have bad luck then we would have no luck at all. The lad was making his debut, twisted his knee after 3 mins, carried on but then had to leave the field after only 12mins. Leaving us with a problem of having to shuffle the side around, still we saw in that brief time that he has some game sense, made a break outside "Junior" and looked to get involved when he could. More training getting to know his new team mates and he could be a gem.

**Get behind the boys from the off tonight, help them to raise their game and above all, enjoy yourself.**

*Deaks*

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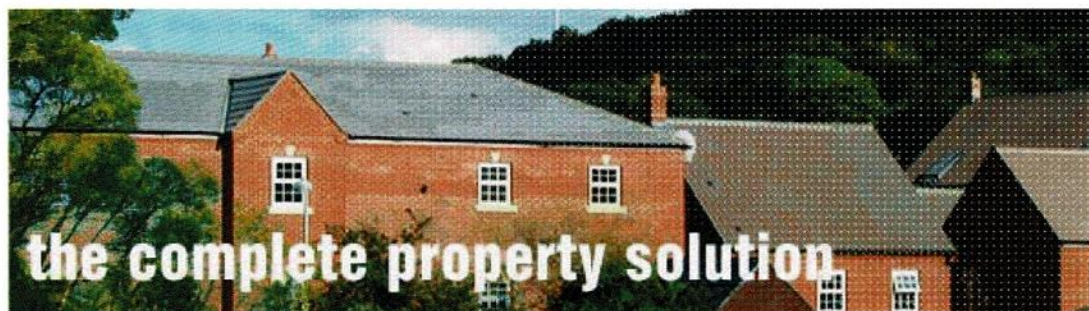
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# SkolarsHistory

## A THESIS ON THE SKOLARS

Roger Halstead reports



LONDON Skolars may be propping up the rest in NL2 right now, but the club has never lacked ambition since it was created in 1995 for post-university graduates in the capital and, true to form, it has recently been in talks about a stunning move to London's Olympic Stadium after the 2012 Games.

The 80,000 capacity stadium will be reduced to 25,000 after the Olympic Games, and Skolars are targeting a Super League licence for 2015 with the aim to give London a Super League presence on both sides of the city.

Skolars chairman Hector McNeil has been quoted thus in the Daily Mail: "London Rugby League is crying out for a second top-flight team in the capital, and everyone would be happy if we had a situation in which we had a London derby with the Harlequins."

"We've had talks with the Olympics consultants and we are going through to the next stage on a shortlist basis. It would have to be a new set-up at the club, in which we would be aiming for a 5,000 average crowd, and we would aim to ramp up all our capabilities."

Skolars are investigating the possibility of sharing the ground with either a rugby union club or perhaps with Leyton Orient FC and with that in mind talks have taken place between the RFL and the London Development Agency, which is handling negotiations over tenants for the venue. A spokesman for the LDA said the agency was looking at options to create a sustainable legacy for the Olympic Stadium and as part of that process they were having preliminary discussions with a number of potential occupiers, the Skolars being one of them. He added: "We have met the Rugby Football League, but things are at a very early stage." More immediately, Skolars are keen to lift themselves off the foot of the second division in a bid to at least equal last season's final placing of ninth when Kiwi coach Latham Tawhai guided them to an end-of-season spot above the likes of Keighley Cougars, Gateshead Thunder and Blackpool Panthers.

Tawhai later crossed the capital to join the backroom staff of Quins at The Stoop, to be replaced at the New River Stadium, White Hart Lane, North London by another New Zealander in former Leigh Centurions boss Tony Benson. To date this season, the Skolars have won one and drawn one of their nine league games, picking up two bonus points to post the same number of league points as Hunslet Hawks -- seven -- but with a game in hand. Their one win came in late April when they beat Hunslet 31-24 at home, to be followed a month later with a highly creditable 20-20 draw at York. However, Doncaster, Rochdale, Barrow, Keighley and

Gateshead have all rattled up 50 points or more against the Londoners to give them the poorest defensive record in the division with 397 points conceded at an average of 44 per game.

In a bid to try to turn things round, Skolars have signed Australian forward Mark Meredith and have taken Doncaster winger Joe Brown on loan to the end of the season. Meredith, who has had spells in the past with Souths, Wests Tigers and Penrith in the NRL, was due to arrive yesterday, but at the time these notes were penned it wasn't known whether he would be considered for this evening's game -- probably not, one suspects.

Benson told Gareth Walker in League Express: "He's big, strong, aggressive and agile. He has played prop in the past, but we are looking at playing him in the back row. He has a high work rate and he also scores a few tries -- basically, he's a very good player."

Brown, who can play wing or full-back, is originally from London and he has moved back down to the capital from South Yorkshire with his parents. He is now in training with Skolars and is said to be "very quick and skilful", attributes which he no doubt put to good use when he made a try-scoring debut off the bench in last week's 38-45 defeat by Workington Town in London.

After the previous week's draw at York, Benson would have been hoping for a second league win of the season in this one, but it wasn't to be. He said: "We showed good intensity, but our defence was too loose. We had an opportunity to win, but we took our eye off the ball."

Skolars lined up like this: Jermaine Coleman; Corey Simms, Namila Davui, Chris Shears, Austen Aggrey; Stevie Gibbons, Paul Thorman; Richard Louw, Gareth Honor, Puna Rasabale, Matt Thomas, Dene Miller, Alan Barker. Subs: Joe Brown, Michael Chan, Wayne Kerr, Rubert Jonker.

Centre Namila Davui was one of the five nominees for a centre spot in the RLW's NL2 form team for May, while loose-forward Alan Barker was unsuccessfully proposed for the No 13 shirt in the mythical team that went to Dave Armistead of Barrow.

Despite their difficulties this season, Skolars have come a long, long way since their early years when they were founder members of the Southern Conference in 1997, winning the competition in its inaugural season. Later that year they entered the National Conference League and, for four years, existed as the only club south of Sheffield in that league.

In 1999 Skolars toured Tatarstan and Russia in a ground-breaking tour to the former Soviet Union, thus paving the way for the 2001 Europa Cup played in Kazan.

In 2002 the club's application to join the National Leagues the following year was accepted, Skolars becoming the first club in 80 years to make the jump from the amateur ranks to the professional leagues.



  
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# Oldham **Fixtures '08**



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Comp	Opp	V	KO	Res	Att
January					
	Sun 13th	LEEDS RHINOS	A	3:00pm	4-50 6,340
	<b>Sun 20th</b>	<b>HULL KR</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>	Postponed
	Sun 27th	ROCHDALE	A	3:00pm	20-26 1,108

February

<b>NRC Fri 1st</b>	<b>SWINTON</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>8:00pm</b>	22-20	848
NRC Fri 8th	SALFORD	A	8:00pm	12-40	4,224
NRC Sun 17th	ROCHDALE	A	3:00pm	Postponed	
<b>NRC Fri 22nd</b>	<b>SALFORD</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>8:00pm</b>	18-14	1,350
<b>NRC Fri 29th</b>	<b>ROCHDALE</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>8:00pm</b>	38-8	1,350

March

ccc3 Sun 9th	BRITISH ARMY	A	1.30pm	56-10	500
NRC Sun 16th	SWINTON	A	3:00pm	52-10	549
NL Fri 21st	ROCHDALE	A	3:00pm	46-32	1,003
<b>NL Mon 24th</b>	<b>HUNSLET</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>	40-12	1,168
<b>NL Sun 30th</b>	<b>YORK</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>	36-26	1,049

April

<b>NRC Sun 6th</b>	<b>WHITEHAVEN</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>	16-6	966
NL Sun 13th	KEIGHLEY	A	3:00pm	26-12	1,276
ccc4 Sun 20th	SWINTON	A	3:00pm	20-8	591
<b>NL Sun 27th</b>	<b>ROCHDALE</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>	24-14	1,107

May

<b>NL Mon 5th</b>	<b>BLACKPOOL</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>	38-26	1,115
ccc4 Sun 11th	DEWSBURY	A	3:00pm	58-12	1,103

<b>NL Sun 18th</b>	<b>SWINTON</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>	30-20	1,191
<b>NRC Sun 25th</b>	<b>BATLEY</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Noon</b>	16-24	885

June

ccc6 Sun 1st	WAKEFIELD	A	3.30pm	4-46	2,966
NL Wed 4th	GATESHEAD	A	7.30pm		
<b>NL Sat 7th</b>	<b>LONDON</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>6:00pm</b>	(At Sedgley Park)	
NL Sun 15th	HUNSLET	A	3:00pm		
NL Wed 18th	LONDON	A	7.30pm		
NL Sun 22nd	BLACKPOOL	A	3:00pm		
<b>NL Sun 29th</b>	<b>GATESHEAD</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>	(At Sedgley Park)	

July

NL Sun 6th	WORKINGTON	A	3:00pm		
NL Fri 11th	BARROW	A	7.30pm		
<b>NL Thur 17th</b>	<b>DONCASTER</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>7:30pm</b>		
<b>NL Sun 27th</b>	<b>KEIGHLEY</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>		

August

NL Sun 3rd	YORK	A	3:00pm		
<b>NL Sun 10th</b>	<b>BARROW</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>		
NL Sun 17th	SWINTON	A	3:00pm		
<b>NL Sun 24th</b>	<b>WORKINGTON</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>3:00pm</b>		
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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### NEW RECRUIT WILL EARN HIS STRIPES ON OLDHAM'S WING

#### Player Profile: BEN SERU

by ROGER HALSTEAD



PICTURE BY OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE

**THE Roughyeds' signing of the British Army's dualcode Fijian winger Peniasi 'Ben' Seru has successfully concluded two months of talks with Army and player.**

The 30-year-old speed merchant, who has signed a deal with the Roughyeds to November, 2009, will continue his career as a serving soldier with the Royal Engineers, stationed at Ripon in Yorkshire. He serves as a sapper with 15 Field Support Squadron, 38 Engineer Regiment. He came to the attention of Oldham officials and coach Steve Deakin when he scored a length-of-the-field try, had another disallowed, added a second try and also stopped a certain Roughyeds try with a magnificent cover tackle on Danny Halliwell in the Army's 56-10 defeat by Oldham in a third-round Carnegie Challenge Cup tie at Aldershot on March 9. Club officials made their interest known as soon as

the tie was over and now, some ten weeks later, Roughyeds have completed their first-ever signing from the Armed Forces.

Seru, who likes to be known simply as 'Ben', has recently been in South Africa on a two-week training camp with the British Army Rugby Union squad. On their return they beat the Royal Navy at Twickenham in front of 50,000 spectators.

Later he played for the Army's seven-a-side RU squad that won the Rosslyn Park Sevens, beating Harlequins of the Guinness Premiership in the final, Ben scoring a length-of-the-field try and selling a dummy to England RU man Andy Gomarsall on the way.

Describing Ben's capture as "an exciting signing for the club", chief executive Chris Hamilton gave the inside story of how Roughyeds completed this unique deal.

"Ben made a huge impression on us at Aldershot in March," he said, "and we opened talks with the player and his officers immediately after the game. We have retained contact ever since, but we have had to wait for the Army to complete their formalities and for Ben to get the green light from his commanding officer.

"A lot of our fans watched Ben down at Aldershot and they, like us, will know that he has two qualities that can take a player a long way in rugby - pace and power.

"His capture will put pressure on one or two people at the club, while providing Deaks (coach Steve Deakin) with more options as we look ahead to a very important and very demanding three or four months in the development of our club.

"From the Army's point of view they are keen to demonstrate the sort of opportunities that can present themselves to soldiers in the British Army. Ben has played at a high level in Armed Forces rugby union, and the Army was keen to get him playing League as well, in which he made an immediate impact.

"This is a hugely exciting signing for us and we are grateful to the Army for their help in making it happen. They are keen to get the message across that joining the Army can open doors and, hopefully, we'll be able to give them some profile with that in mind."

Ben is married with two little girls, aged four and two. Lieutenant Colonel Roger Lewis, Commanding Officer 38 Engineer Regiment, said: "Ben will remain a soldier first and foremost, ready to deploy on operations when called to do so, but I am delighted he now has the chance to further his passion for rugby by playing for Oldham Rugby League Club."

### A LONG WAY FROM FIJI - AND HOME

**Thanks to the British Army - and sport - 30-year-old sapper Ben Seru has come a long way since he left his native Fiji in 2003 to start a new life as a serviceman 12,000 miles away on the other side of the world.**

He has been to South Africa with the Army's rugby union squad and he has twice played at Twickenham against the Royal Navy in front of massive crowds - 40,000 last year and 50,000 this year.

There was another red-letter day for Ben when he scored a scorching length-of-the-field try for the Army in their defeat of Harlequins in the Rosslyn Park sevens.

It was with a similar effort against Oldham back in March in the third round of the Carnegie Challenge Cup that the Army's dual-code winger caused Oldham officials and coach Steve Deakin to sit up and make a mental note. Not long afterwards Seru came up with a sensational last-ditch cover tackle to deny Danny Halliwell a try in the corner, and the Roughyeds top-brass made another mental note.

There were more notes to follow in the second half - first when the Fijian raced clear from half way only to be hauled back for a previous infringement and then when he scored a second try near the end.

"I enjoyed that game a lot," said Ben, speaking to Oldham fans from his base in Ropon, where he has been stationed for the past two years following stints at other Army bases in Devon and Kent.

"I would have had a hat-trick if I hadn't been called back for an offence at the other end of the pitch. Oldham were just too good for us, but it was great to score my first try from close to our try line. Now I can't wait to start scoring tries for Oldham, instead of against them.

"I have read all about the Oldham club on the internet. It has a great past and a great history and I am really looking forward to playing rugby league for the club. I've played a lot more union than league, going back to when I was a schoolboy back home in Fiji, but I am getting to like rugby league a lot. I find I get the ball more as a winger, especially when I go inside looking for work.

"At sevens in rugby union I am given a roving commission, but sevens is different to the real game and while playing both rugby union and rugby league for my regiment and for the Army I have always played on the wing.

"It wasn't always like that, though. Back home in Fiji, when I was growing up in schoolboy rugby (union), I was often asked to play in the centre and I enjoyed playing there."

To get to training, family-man Ben will meet up in Leeds with the Roughyeds' assistant boss Mark Cass and several Oldham players who live in that area before completing the journey across the Pennines.

There was a hitch in the travel arrangements on Thursday night which meant he missed the team bus. Chief executive Chris Hamilton drove him to Widnes where he made his debut

in the reserves off the bench. He took the field for the first time in an Oldham jersey 22 minutes into the first half. Though not scoring, he made a pleasing debut, much to the satisfaction of club officials.

"He looked sharp, he was dead keen, he went inside off the wing to look for work and he displayed all the potential we knew he had when we made the decision to sign him," said Chris.

Ben was noncommittal after the match when I talked to him about his own performance in an Oldham jersey for the first time at the Stobart Stadium. Little did he know then that he had done enough to be called up to a much bigger Roughyeds stage only three days later.

### WELCOME TO RUGBY LEAGUE...!

**BEN won't easily forget his senior debut for the Roughyeds - even though it lasted only 17 minutes! It was generally felt last week that the new boy wouldn't be allowed to play in the Carnegie Challenge Cup quarter-final tie at Wakefield because he had played for the Army in the same competition in earlier rounds. When club officials looked into the rules and regulations, however, it emerged that normal rules of eligibility on that score didn't apply because the British Army was not a member club of the RFL.**

What DID matter was whether Seru had signed for the Roughyeds in time to beat the second registration deadline covering the quarter-final and subsequent ties. He had, so he was in the clear. Coach Steve Deakin took the opportunity to give his new recruit the sternest possible test against a Super League side. And with barely a couple of minutes gone the soldier was put to the test when Danny Brough sent a low, teasing kick in his direction. As it scorched across the grass the ball took a wicked high bounce which Ben cleaned-up admirably at full stretch, only to be hit by a two-man tackle just short of the Oldham line.

Welcome to senior rugby league! Whether the tackle was complete or whether big Wakefield prop Richard Moore was within his rights to bundle Seru back over the line is open to some debate. Either way, Oldham's new winger went down with strained knee ligaments. He continued after treatment and did well to track Marcus St Hilaire and to take his pass at speed and under pressure from Ryan Atkins only to find that referee Ben Thaler had ruled forward pass earlier in the move.

Not long afterwards James Coyle hoisted a high kick to the corner, Seru rose to challenge for the ball, came down heavily on the knee and suffered a severe recurrence, this time to be led off the field never to return. Hopefully, the injury is not too serious and Ben will soon be on wing patrol again, hoping to make up for lost time.

*Roger Halstead*





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# GuestWriter...

## This Week: **Geoff Cooke** **Has the magic of the** **Challenge Cup died?**

### **Attendances at Bradford and** **Leeds, well below their Super** **League averages, would suggest so.**

Yet for followers of Oldham last Sunday's game at Belle Vue, Wakefield was a throwback to better days. And the overwhelming conclusion is that Oldham's players did themselves and the club proud. Certainly the reaction I got from Wakefield fans after the match was that Oldham had performed much better than their Division Two status suggests they should. Indeed, but for some controversial refereeing the margin of defeat would have been even less than it was. To say that Oldham got the thin end of the wedge from Ben Thaler is a considerable understatement. And to say that Super League seems to have a different set of rules to the National Leagues will no doubt irritate some. But the definition of a forward pass, a knock-on, a correct play the ball, offside, lying-on after a tackle or proper grounding of the ball! For a try all seem remarkably at odds with what happens each week in N.L.2. And as for what constitutes a scrum we are now so inured to the current farce that we complain when the referee orders a re-take because it holds up the game for no apparent reason (usually because one player is not binding properly yet on other occasions this is totally ignored). Wakefield scored one try off a Sculthorpe forward pass, obtained another after a highly dubious play the ball (whereas Said Tamghart was penalised for trying to play the ball quickly (yet again!) and were awarded a try when the ball came loose in the act of touching down (shades of Mick Nannyn's touch down the previous week). Quite how the In-goal official missed this defeats me: I rather think in the absence of a Video Referee this position is just a waste of a wage. So, all in all, Oldham's performance was top notch. Hopefully, it had

not taken too much out of the players before Wednesday night's trip to Gateshead and in! deed tonight's fixture versus London Skolars as the target now must be maximum League points to put the club back into N.L.1, adivision the current crop of players have shown they can cope with in matches against Salford, Whitehaven, Dewsbury and Batley.

Hopefully, the last couple of weeks against tough opposition will have reinforced some vital lessons. The players will need no reminding that too much tackling causes fatigue which can lead to conceding tries at vital times such as the last few minutes before half-time - something that happened against both Batley and Wakefield. Usually too much tackling results from poor control of the football and/or giving away penalties. These days discipline is enormously important yet can be so hard to achieve in a physically uncompromising game like rugby league. I take my hat off to players who resist every provocation because I doubt I could do the same (or at least could have when I was young enough). And finally, a good kicking game is vital in the modern arena. Fullbacks and Wingmen have to be turned around to prevent them collecting the ball on the full and setting up the platform for another wave of attacks. At their best this season Oldham have shown they can ach!ieve all these goals but as we reach what these days is called the business end of the season they must be achieved on a consistent basis to secure the desired outcome of promotion.

## **BUS TO LONDON**

We are planning to run a bus to the Skolars game on Wednesday, June 18, but it will depend on sufficient interest. Cost is £40 per person and seats must be booked with Janet (0161 628 3677) by 5pm on Monday, June 16. The sooner people book the better because the club will be monitoring interest levels.





## LUKE LOOKING FOR A NEW CHALLENGE

by ROGER HALSTEAD

**LUKE Sutton, Oldham's new prop from Keighley, grew up in Brisbane and played most of his early rugby league for Redcliffe Dolphins in Queensland.**

Rochdale born, he moved to Australia when he was five and returned to Rochdale when he was 18, having spent the best part of 13 years playing League as a boy in the Brisbane suburbs.

Now aged 22, and a bricklayer, Luke is 6ft 3in and more than 17 stones and he lives in Whitworth with his wife Kelly and 12 months old baby girl Lexie. "And another baby is on the way," says the Oldham new boy, who is currently working in Burnley.

On returning to this area from Australia, he attended college at Hopwood Hall, Middleton where he continued to play League in the only position he has ever played -- prop.

Said Luke: "I trained a bit with Rochdale Hornets, went to Leeds Rhinos on trial, played three games for the Oldham academy side when Steve Molloy was head coach and did a bit at St Helens before I went to Keighley.

"I played for Oldham briefly right at the end of a season and I was expecting a call the following season, but Molloy left so I went to college and ultimately signed for Keighley, where I have spent the last two and a half seasons.

"I got tired of all the travelling ultimately, but it will be a lot easier for me in that respect at Oldham and I am really looking forward to a fresh start and a new challenge."

He has signed initially to the end of this year, but he has not played for several weeks so he will spend his first three to four weeks with Oldham getting himself back to full fitness and playing in the Reserves before mounting a first-team challenge.

## BELL SOON TO SOUND FOR BILL 'THE BATTLER' QUINN

**THE countdown to Bill Quinn's showdown in the ring with Kiwi tough-guy Brad Hepi is on in earnest.**

Only seven days to go now and this time next week our club chairman will be climbing into the ring at the Reebok Stadium to take on Hepi in one of the most eagerly-awaited bouts of the entire Legends of League big fight night spectacular.

As far as Roughyeds fans are concerned -- and loads more too from the wider north-west sporting scene -- the Quinn-Hepi contest will be top of the bill if only for the fact that here is a 42-year-old club chairman ready and willing to test himself in a no-hiding-place showdown with one of our sport's recognised hard men, writes ROGER HALSTEAD.

"It's for a good cause and that's the main thing," said Bill, "but I can promise you I am taking this seriously. I'm not there to make up the numbers, or to take a k.o. I'll be going out there to get the verdict. That's why I have been training seriously for the past six or seven weeks."

All money raised on what will be a unique sporting occasion will go to the Steve Prescott Foundation for the battle against cancer. The entertainment includes several bouts of boxing featuring many big names from the world of rugby league; a four-course meal, other entertainment and the presence of a galaxy of sporting stars and icons.

If you want to sponsor Bill forms are available from the Roughyeds office in Lansdowne Road, Chadderton (tel: 0161 628 3677) and for a donation of £250 companies can have their names on Bill's boxing shorts. Anyone interested in sponsorship or purchasing a ticket for the evening ay £70 per head should ring the Roughyeds office and speak to Janet.



## FROM OUR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

**I'm on holiday in Europe and it is interesting to read on the Roughyeds website how people from all over the world are linking up to the Roughyeds on a regular basis one way or the other.**

Obviously, the internet and our website is a very convenient way as I discovered the other day while sailing from Amsterdam to Bucharest. Although the ship didn't have internet facilities for passengers there was always a nearby internet cafe or shop which meant you could log on to the website, read the news and pass comment on the message board.

I realised this must be a godsend for fans who live permanently abroad, as must Oldham Community Radio, which means you can now listen to commentaries of games through your pc, by logging on to [www.oldhamcommunityradio.com](http://www.oldhamcommunityradio.com)

Unfortunately, the cafe I was in on Sunday did not have audio connection so I couldn't listen to the Wakefield commentary.

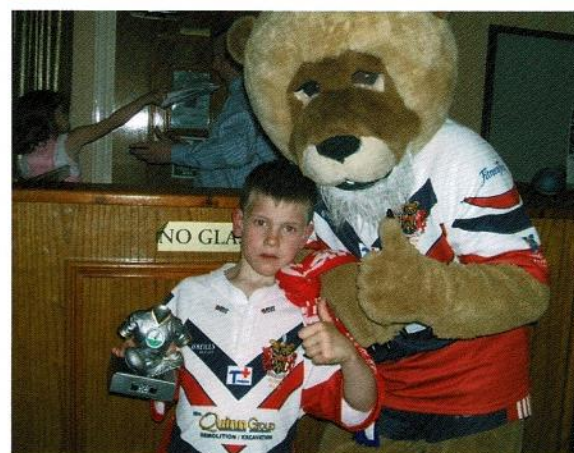
While in Melk, Austria last week I was approached by a fellow passenger, who was from the Channel Islands, and he asked me where I came from. On answering, 'Oldham', he said: "My cousin used to play for Oldham Rugby ... you might have heard of him, Bernard Ganley."

'Might' have heard of him? He was a legend, of course. Another passenger, on overhearing our conversation, asked: "Was that Bernard Ganley, the goalkicker, you were talking about? I went to university with him."

They pointed out that Bernard was a talented cricketer and a specialist fast bowler who used to play in the Central Lancashire League (deputy editor's note: with Ashton, Nigel) and that he was offered professional terms with Lancashire but decided to opt for rugby league, meaning that Lancashire had to turn to their second choice, one Brian Statham, no less. It's a small and strange world, isn't it?

*Nigel Marland*

editor and ORLFC special correspondent in Budapest.



ROUGHYEDS fanatic Owen Baldwin was proud to wear his replica jersey at the St Anne's junior section presentation night when he was named under-9s man of steel. As part of the Roughyeds' community programme, players Said Tamghart and Daryl Cardiss were there to mix and mingle with the Saints' youngsters, while Roary the Roughyed, our new mascot (pictured with Owen) was also on hand to take part in the presentation ceremony.



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### April

NLR	Wed 2nd	LEIGH CENT.	A 7:30pm	L 6-48
NLR	Thurs 10th	ROCHDALE	H 7:30pm	L 6-18
NLR	Fri 18th	SALFORD CITY REDS	A 7:30pm	L 8-46
NLR	Thurs 24th	ROCHDALE	A 7:30pm	L 28-38

### May

NLR	Thurs 1st	LEIGH CENT.	H 7:30pm	L 6-56
NLR	Thurs 8th	SALFORD CITY REDS	H 7:30pm	L 4-56
NLR	Thurs 29th	WIDNES VIKINGS	A 7:30pm	L 30-36

### June

NLR	Sat 7th	WORKINGTON	A 2:30pm	
NLR	Thurs 12th	HUNSLET HAWKS	H 7:30pm	
NLR	Thurs 19th	FEATHERSTONE ROV	H 7:30pm	
NLR	Fri 27th	HUNSLET HAWKS	A 7:30pm	

### July

NLR	Sat 5th	WORKINGTON	H 2:30pm	
NLR	Sat 12th	BARROW RAIDERS	H 2:30pm	
NLR	Thurs 17th	FEATHERSTONE ROV	A 7:30pm	
NLR	Thurs 24th	WIDNES VIKINGS	H 7:30pm	

### August

NLR	Sat 9th	BARROW RAIDERS	A 2:30pm	
	Sat 23rd	PLAY-OFF WEEK 1		
	Sat 30th	CARNEGIE CHALLENGE CUP FINAL		

### September

	Sat 6th	PLAY-OFF WEEK 2		
	Sat 13th	PLAY-OFF WEEK 3		
	Sat 20th	FIRST DIVISION RESERVE GRAND FINAL		

## NIPPY NELSON'S TRY-SCORING DOUBLE

BEN Seru's debut off the bench and two long-range tries by young centre Dwaine Nelson were the highlights of the Reserves 36-30 defeat at Widnes Vikings on Thursday night of last week.

The game was won and lost in a ten-minute spell midway through the second half when Vikings scored four tries to turn an 18-12 deficit into a 32-18 lead, but Roughyeds came storming back with two quick tries of their own to pull back to 32-30 with five minutes still left on the clock.

They were on a roll and looking capable of winning at that stage, but concentration lapsed at Widnes's restart kick when the ball was allowed to bounce and go dead. The momentum was lost and with possession gained from the drop-out, Vikings scored again on the very last play of the game.

Gareth Langley played on the right wing; new signing Luke Sutton at prop; Lee Wingfield and Ian Hodson in the second-row; Chris Baines at loose; and Seru came off the bench.

He would almost certainly have been in the starting line-up had he not been delayed en route from his base at Ripon. He was too late for the team bus, but he was taken to Widnes in Chris Hamilton's car. "It was anything but ideal preparation for Ben in his first game for the club," said Chris, "but he looked sharp, dead keen,

and he went inside often looking for work. In short, he showed exactly the sort of potential we knew he had when we signed him."

He emerged from the bench after 22 minutes to play on the left wing outside young Nelson, who had sufficient nous to use the Fijian as a foil and to capitalise himself with two superb efforts -- the first when he picked up a dropped Widnes ball to score from inside his own half and the second when he showed the ball to Seru and then glided inside the cover to score another from near half way.

Centre Steven Fisher scored the first Oldham try after good work by Hodson and Wingfield. Roughyeds trailed 12-6 at half-time, but they stormed into an 18-12 lead with the first of Nelson's pair, followed by a beauty from impressive scrum-half Patrick Toft, both improved by Ethan Langhorn.

Oldham were more than a match for the Vikings at that stage, but the visitors hit a wobble; the home side hit full power; and in the space of ten minutes Vikings had gone into a 32-18 lead.

Roughyeds, though, were not to be pushed aside so easily. Baines, who had a strong and industrious game, ploughed over for a well deserved try, which Langhorn goaled, in the 73rd minute and then came one of the best tries of the game from Oldham when good passing to the left at half way gave Nelson the opportunity to use Seru cleverly before racing away to the posts. Langhorn goaled and it was 32-30. Game on.

Unfortunately, the restart went dead; Oldham's last chance had gone; and Vikings wrapped it up with a try in the corner, after which the hooter sounded. Oldham could again take a lot of positives out of the match, not least the debut offering from Seru, who never got a chance to show his pace, but who looked a very capable player with ball in hand, especially when taking a high, teasing bomb under pressure and when moving inside looking for work. Coach John Hough said: "On the one hand I was a little bit disappointed because it was a game we could have won. On the other, I asked for more improvement from the last game, and I certainly got that. We are going to have a good session in the gym on Tuesday with conditioner, Mark Canning, and that will stand us in good stead for the trip to Workington a week on Saturday."

"Individually, lots of the boys are coming on in leaps and bounds, and I am very pleased about that as well."

Oldham: Eaton; Langley, Fisher, Nelson, Taylor; Langhorn, Toft; Eyres, Mansfield, Sutton, Wingfield, Hodson, Baines. Subs: Seru, Clarke, Schofield, Lowe. Scorers: goals, Langhorn 5; tries, Fisher, Nelson (2), Toft, Baines.

Widnes: Grady, Flynn, Kennedy, Strong, WRight; Bowman, Millington; Houghton, Hudson, Mannion, White, Simm, Gilmore. Subs: Truscott, Smith, Johnson, Banks.

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## SUPPORT ROUGHYED RESERVES

### ROARY SAYS: SHAPE-UP!

A wise old owl and a loveable lion are leading a new scheme designed to help Oldham's male population to shed those surplus pounds - and to stay healthy.



Chaddy the Owl, of Oldham Athletic fame, needs no introduction, but Roary the Roughyed is one of our latest new signings and, as such, is a comparative newcomer to the local sporting scene.

He used to be Mane Man, mascot of the Great Britain rugby league team, but according to the Roughyeds' community development officer, Sean Mellor, he has "changed his name by deed poll" so that he could sign for the Roughyeds.

Quipped Sean: "Roary loves his rugby league, and our young fans are going to love him. He was with the Great Britain team for a few years, but he's a Roughyed at heart and we are delighted to have made a signing of 'international' calibre."

Chaddy and Roary are representing their respective clubs in a joint venture with Oldham Primary Care Trust, called Shape-Up, in which fans will be given advice and guidance on nutrition, exercise and diet and shown how best to lead a healthy lifestyle. There will be eight weekly sessions at

Boundary Park. They started on May 28, but there is still time to join, although do hurry. Fans who complete the course will be rewarded with tickets for either the Roughyeds or Athletic - for use next season in the case of Latics, but for more immediate use by Roughyeds fans. To join, ring Margo on 0161 621 7150 or on 07813759886.

### ROCK ON TOMMY IN THE MERRY MONTH OF MAY!

OLDHAM have three players in the Rugby League World magazine's mythical form team of the month for May - and Tommy Goulden, one of them, doubles up also in the "other" team of the month, said to be the official Co-operative National League selection and published in RLW's rival trade paper, League Weekly.

James Coyle at scrum-half and Said Tamghart in the front-row are the other Oldham selections in the RLW's choice which reads as follows: Stuart Kain (Gateshead); James Nixon (Barrow), Dan Potter (Keighley), Ryan Esders (York), Damian Munro (Blackpool); Kyle Briggs (Doncaster), James Coyle (OLDHAM); Jason Payne (Gateshead), Dan Smith (Gateshead), Said Tamghart (OLDHAM), Martin Ostler (Barrow), Tommy Goulden (OLDHAM), Dave Armistead (Barrow).

The "official" team is: Kain (Gateshead); Nixon (Barrow), Esders (York), Potter (Keighley), Marlon Billy (Swinton Lions); Neil Thorman (Gateshead), Dan Russell (Gateshead); Andy Shickell (Keighley), Jamaine Wray (Keighley), Dean Burgess (Workington Town), Ross Divorty (York), Goulden (OLDHAM), Armistead (Barrow).

Barrow second-row forward Martin Ostler was RLW's player of the month, while the accolade in the other selection went to Keighley hooker Jamaine Wray, more often than not used as a super sub off the bench.

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# Today's Squads



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<input type="checkbox"/>	Jason <b>BOULTS</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Matty <b>BROOKS</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Daryl <b>CARDISS</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	James <b>COYLE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tommy <b>GOULDEN</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tommy <b>GRUNDY</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Danny <b>HALLIWELL</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ian <b>HODSON</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Simeon <b>HOYLE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phil <b>JOSEPH</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gareth <b>LANGLEY</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Craig <b>LITTLER</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Richard <b>MERVILL</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mick <b>NANYN</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paul <b>O'CONNOR</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lucas <b>ONYANGO</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rob <b>ROBERTS</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adam <b>ROBINSON</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neil <b>RODEN</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ben <b>SERU</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luke <b>SUTTON</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marcus <b>ST HILAIRE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Said <b>TAMGHART</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alex <b>WILKINSON</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lee <b>WINGFIELD</b>



## London Skolars

<input type="checkbox"/>	Austen <b>AGGREY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Alan <b>BARKER</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Joe <b>BROWN</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Michael <b>CHAN</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jermaine <b>COLEMAN</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Namila <b>DAVUI</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dave <b>ELLISON</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stevie <b>GIBBONS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Farrid <b>GOUTTA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gareth <b>HONOR</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rubert <b>JONKER</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wayne <b>KERR</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Richard <b>LOUW</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mark <b>MEREDITH</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dane <b>MILLER</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Glenn <b>OSBORN</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Puna <b>RASAUBALE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Corey <b>SIMMS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chris <b>SHEARS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Matt <b>THOMAS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Paul <b>THORMAN</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ashley <b>TOZER</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## OFFICIALS

Referee: Paul Carr Touch Judges: A Fossett J Roberts

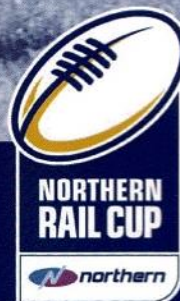


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