

## FROM THE CHAIR

The 2015 season for the professional club has got off to a winning start which is a credit to the players and coaching staff who display true dedication in difficult circumstances.

However, the off the field situation and relatively poor attendances has led to some expressions of concern. These have taken the form of postings on the Total RL Oldham Roughyeds Fans Forum, as a result of which a group of independent fans campaigned for, and obtained, a meeting with Christopher Hamilton and other club representatives.

Rugby Oldham Supporters Trust was not involved in these arrangements, taking the view that as a body in existence for 10 years, we should be well known to the professional club and, having offered help in the past which has not always been taken up, could nevertheless provide assistance if asked.

Following their meeting the independent group have asked to meet with us and we have agreed, and indicated our willingness to talk to the professional club when required.

All this will take place after you receive this Newsletter so I cannot tell you the outcome. What I can say is that we have not been inactive. In October 2014 and April 2015 we have attended meetings with senior officials from Supporters Direct and the RFL. We have also spoken to influential political figures in Oldham and joined the All Party Rugby League Parliamentary Group to emphasise our credentials.

We are involved in ongoing discussions regarding the future of professional rugby in Oldham but for the moment these must remain confidential.

What I can tell you is that the RFL has struck an understanding with Supporters Direct and will actively promote supporter involvement in the running of clubs.

The success of Hunslet, Rochdale, Hemel Hempstead, Swinton and others has shown that full or partial supporter ownership is a business model that works.

Rugby Oldham believes that this could work for Oldham too and we would encourage 'independent' supporters to join us as only one body of supporters can have official recognition. Only Rugby Oldham, through Supporters Direct, can provide access to training for official positions on a Board of Directors and only Rugby Oldham can pursue applications for grant funding through Supporters Direct.

In the meantime, Rugby Oldham has been active in sponsoring the Amateur Club Challenge and Junior Club Challenge, in sponsoring Junior Finals Day and Secondary Schools Finals week and the Ben Powell Trophy for the Man of the Match in the Standard Cup Final. In addition, in association with Jos. Parr (Alco) Ltd, we ran our Man of Steel Competition won in 2014 by Waterhead's Chris Hough. Our thanks go to Mike Cocker for his ongoing support of this award.

We look forward to providing some heartening news regarding professional rugby in the coming months, as all concerned fans in the town want to see a return to an Oldham side that can compete with the best. Meanwhile our hopes lie with a successful season for the current team as it bids to achieve the promotion that has proved so elusive in recent years.

Regards,  
Geoff Cooke, Chairman

## STANDARD CUP FINAL 2015

The Oldham Amateur League's Standard Cup Final was held on Good Friday morning, the first time in several years that the event was able to be staged in its traditional slot. In an entertaining match Mayfield overcame a spirited Saddleworth Rangers team. The final score being 36-16 in favour of the Rochdale based outfit.

Rugby Oldham again sponsored the Ben Powell Man of the Match trophy. This year's event was picked up by the evergreen Matt Calland of Mayfield. Matt was the scorer of FIVE tries including a 90yd interception effort that had the sizeable crowd wondering if oxygen would be required behind the try line!

The Mayor of Oldham, Cllr. Fida Hussain presented the cup to Mayfield and Rugby Oldham's Membership Secretary, Mike Kivlin presented the Ben Powell Trophy.

## OLDHAM RUGBY LEAGUE HERITAGE TRUST

The Oldham Rugby League Heritage Trust is in communication with the administrators at "Gallery Oldham" with a view to acquiring a space in the proposed new heritage centre if and when the project eventually becomes a reality.

At the moment the proposed development is still under discussion but when the time comes when plans are finalised, we would urge the rugby loving public of Oldham to support our efforts to make this happen so the extensive rugby league memorabilia collection is made available for exhibition.

## JUNIOR FINALS DAY 2014

Junior Finals day on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2014 was attended by over 1000 spectators across the day who witnessed some top quality rugby from the next generation of players from the Oldham amateur clubs' junior sections production line.

The Under 12s produced a nail biting, competitive game with St. Annes just pipping Waterhead to the trophy.

St. Annes outstanding U13 side had no trouble disposing of a plucky Saddleworth Rangers as befits a team of North West Counties Cup Finalists.

Waterhead took the honours at U14 level while St. Annes reversed the result at U15.

## SECONDARY SCHOOLS FINALS 2015

Oldham Secondary Schools Finals were held at Oldham RUFC's Manor Park on the 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of April. Rugby Oldham were pleased to sponsor medals and trophies and to make the after match presentations.

A feast of rugby produced some excellent displays with the close fought Year 8 and Year 11 finals the highlight.

Year 7 Saddleworth School defeated Failsworth

Year 8 Saddleworth School defeated Crompton House

Year 9 The Blue Coat School defeated Saddleworth

Year 10 Waterhead Academy defeated Failsworth

Year 11 Saddleworth School defeated Failsworth

From L to R: Saddleworth School on the attack in the Year 11 Final against Failsworth, Saddleworth School Year 8 in action against Crompton House, Waterhead's winning U14 side at Junior Finals Day November 2014



## RUGBY OLDHAM AMATEUR CLUB CHALLENGE

Rugby Oldham Amateur Club Challenge									
Team	P	W	D	L	L (u12)	ABP	DBP	Tot	%
St Annes	22	10	1	11	3	42	22	99	4.5%
Saddleworth	22	8	1	13	5	44	18	93	4.2%
Hollinwood	16	5	1	10	-	30	8	55	3.4%
Higginshaw	8	3	-	5	-	11	6	26	3.3%
Waterhead	22	5	1	16	2	28	13	60	2.7%
Fitton Hill	22	4	2	16	1	20	10	47	2.1%

ABP = Attacking Bonus Points  
DBP = Defensive Bonus Points

Table as at 14/09/14

Oldham St. Annes took the honours in the 2013/14 competition having the best record of 10 win and a draw from their 22 fixtures.

The 'summer' rugby fiasco continued to create problems as the previous year's winners Higginshaw were unable to complete their fixtures.

## RUGBY OLDHAM JUNIOR CLUB CHALLENGE

Rugby Oldham Junior Club Challenge									
Team	P	W	D	L	L (u12)	ABP	DBP	Tot	%
Saddleworth	37	19	2	16	5	58	58	182	4.9%
Waterhead	54	27	3	24	10	87	75	259	4.8%
St Annes	46	23	1	22	8	72	62	213	4.6%

ABP = Attacking Bonus Points  
DBP = Defensive Bonus Points

Table as at 30/11/14

As ever the junior challenge was fiercely contested with the leaders changing on an almost week by week basis.

For most of the season Waterhead and St. Annes vied for the lead but as Autumn struck Saddleworth Rangers hit a run of form with both junior sides and powered through to snatch the title.

## MAN OF STEEL

The Jos. Parr (Alco Ltd.) sponsored competition was as closely contested as ever. Based on Man of the Match Awards made by the opposition in club league fixtures the overall winner is the player receiving most nominations in the course of the season.

Leading contenders from Saddleworth Rangers were Josh Bradbury and 2013 winner Dale Lowe (then of Waterhead), while St. Annes most featured players were Adam Walker and the evergreen Kiel Lancashire.

## MAN OF STEEL (Cont)

Powerful centre Darren Nixon was in the running for Waterhead but in the end the winner was Waterhead's player/coach Chris Hough who will collect the £500 prize at an awards date still to be finalised.

*Competitions administered by Geoff Cooke*

## NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY

Geoff Cooke in his 'From the Chair' notes has covered many of the main activities of Rugby Oldham over the past year, as well as the major issues that currently confront us. Here I will fill in a few gaps.

Details of board membership for the next year will be given under item 3 at the AGM, but the number of nominations was not greater than the number of vacant positions, so no election was required. It would be remiss, though, not to mention Phil Whitworth, who has now stood down as he is no longer able to attend meetings. Phil has been involved in and committed to Rugby Oldham since its early days, and we are very grateful for the contributions he has made during his six years as a board member.

Amongst the aims of Rugby Oldham are to celebrate the achievements of rugby league in the town and to represent the game in the town to the outside world, and we have recently made a notable stride in each area.

Kevin Sinfield, of course, has never played for the professional club, but still regularly recounts how proud he is of his beginnings at Waterhead ARLFC, as well as how he is merely one of many high-achieving products of the amateur game in Oldham. To acknowledge the significant achievement which Kevin's award of MBE represents, the Trust is pleased to announce that Kevin has accepted the offer to become an honorary life member of Rugby Oldham.

One of the most prestigious of lobbyists for the game of rugby league at national level is the All Party Parliamentary Rugby League Group [APPRLG], and we have recently been accepted as an associate member of the group, the first professional club – linked supporters trust to be so. In fact, we have been invited to speak to the group at Westminster later in the year.



# RUGBY OLDHAM TRIPLE CELEBRATION DINNER - REVIEW

The Rugby Oldham "Triple Celebration" dinner held at The White Hart, Lydgate on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014 has been hailed as a great success. Amongst the guests on the "top table" were the Mayor and Mayoress and representatives from Oldham RLFC, the Rugby Football League, Supporters Direct and Rochdale Hornets.

The diners enjoyed an excellent dinner at the prestigious local venue with just under 200 in attendance, many of whom commented on the superb presentation of the occasion. The three events being celebrated were:

125 years since the opening of Watersheddings – 100 years since the famous 'Rorke's' Drift test match – 30 years since five Oldham players represented Great Britain on the tour to Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

During the evening a film covering the three anniversaries was screened for the ensemble. This was put together by the Oldham Rugby League Heritage Trust and included a tribute to the nine Oldham players who were killed in World War One.



Some of the diners enjoying the Triple Celebration Dinner at the White Hart on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014.

The presentation was well received by the gathering as was the question and answer session with three of the Oldham players who were on the 1984 tour namely, Des Foy, Mick Worrall and Terry Flanagan. Also in attendance, and added, to the Q & A panel, was Neil Holding who played for St Helens at the time but subsequently had a brief career with the Roughyeds.

There was an excellent atmosphere in the room as supporters, ex-players and officials exchanged memories and anecdotes of days gone by at Watersheddings.

## NOTICE OF AGM

### Notice of Annual General Meeting, Sunday June 7, 2015

The AGM will be held at the Famous King George, commencing at 1pm, with the following AGENDA :

- 1 Welcome and Introductions
- 2 Minutes of 2014 AGM
- 3 Board Membership
- 4 Financial / Membership Summary
- 5 Approval of Accounts for year ended Dec. 31, 2014
- 6 Proposal to replace audit by review of accounts for year ending Dec. 31, 2015
- 7 Report on Trust activities
- 8 AOB

Although the first part of the meeting involves conducting the normal required AGM business, there will be plenty of time for representatives of the Trust's elected board to update members on what has been done in their name during the year since the last AGM.

Members present will also be cordially invited to express their views and to make suggestions for the future direction in which the Trust should progress. The club are at home on June 7 to North Wales Crusaders, and it is planned that the AGM will be completed in plenty of time for attenders to get to the ground in time for the match if they so wish.

We hope to see as many of you there as possible, and thank you for your continued support.

Ian Wilson, Secretary.



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