

# 1956-57 RFL Champions Shirt



To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Oldham winning the 1956-57 Rugby League Championship, both Rugby Oldham and the Oldham Rugby League Heritage Trust have combined to make available to all Oldham fans, the traditional and fondly remembered red and white hooped shirt which was introduced to coincide with the opening of Watersheddings in 1889 and which remained Oldham's trademark for almost 100 years



**Adults £39.99**

S – 34-36  
M – 38-40  
L – 42-44  
XL – 46-48  
XXL – 50-52

**Children £29.99**

S – 26-28  
L – 30-32



## IDEAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT!

**Hurry While Stocks Last!**

Embroidered with both town crest and Oldham FC Rugby League Champions 1956-57

Can be purchased from the Rugby Oldham webshop [www.Rugbyoldham.org](http://www.Rugbyoldham.org). Alternatively it can be purchased direct from Saddleworth Sports in Greenfield or ordered by ringing 0161 620 9583, 07738 818915, 0161 620 6005 or 01457 875084

## BOARD UPDATE

Along with many other RL organisations, Rugby Oldham lost an invaluable presence when Don Yates died, given that he represented the Oldham Service Area on the Trust's board. However, we are delighted that Garry Hepworth has now been nominated by the Service Area to join the board. Most people involved in the game at junior level in the town will know how much Garry contributes, and we have no doubt that his presence on the board will ensure that the interests of the Service Area are fully represented when decisions are being made. The Board now comprises the following:

<b>Iain Taylor</b> Chair	<b>Geoff Cooke</b> Community Relations	<b>Phil Bradbury</b> Oldham Amateur League
<b>Ian Etchells</b> Vice-Chair/ Membership	<b>Linda Mills</b> Administration	<b>Roger Halstead</b> Oldham RLFC
<b>Michael Ackroyd</b> Treasurer	<b>Brian Walker</b> Ground Development	<b>Michael Turner</b> Heritage Trust
<b>Iain Ashworth</b> Marketing	<b>Simon Winnard</b> Media Relations	<b>Garry Hepworth</b> Oldham Service Area
	<b>Ian Wilson</b> Secretary	

Of course, the more people who not only join the Trust but who are also able to get involved actively in its efforts, the better, and already there are five others playing such a role - **Dave Blackburn** and **Charlotte Deakin** helping with the membership group, **Steve Brown** with corporate membership, **Phil Whitworth** on community relations and **Tim Hughes**, Trust solicitor who is also a member of the Grounds development committee.

If you would like to help or get involved, particularly with regard to helping drive the membership forward then please get in touch with one of the board members (contact details at [www.rugbyoldham.org](http://www.rugbyoldham.org)) or write to: Cuttle & Co Solicitors, 115 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1RU.

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[www.rugbyoldham.org](http://www.rugbyoldham.org)

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## FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

Is it really only twelve months since Rugby Oldham was formed? We seem to have packed so much into such a short period of time! Obviously, a lot of that activity has surrounded the ground issue, a detailed update of which is included elsewhere within this newsletter.

The board has met regularly on at least a monthly basis with apologies a rarity and significant progress has been made on several fronts. There is now an excellent working relationship with both the amateurs and the service area via their respective co-opted board members plus a healthy relationship with the Roughyeds that is represented on the board by Roger Halstead. Also, we have now begun to get our act together on the commercial front which, hopefully, should begin to generate some extra funds.

Our website [www.rugbyoldham.org](http://www.rugbyoldham.org) has been up-and-running for sometime now, receiving a surprising high number of hits, many from ex-pats throughout the world. If you haven't done so already--log-on!

I was invited to attend a meeting of the Leigh Centurions Supporters Club last month to talk about Rugby Oldham and the benefits that a Trust like ours can bring to the game. They see the formation of their own Trust as a way forward and have chosen Rugby Oldham as a role model. This, I feel, is something for which we can all feel a great deal of pride.

Having chatted to many people about the workings of Rugby Oldham, what is obvious is that the support for the game of rugby league itself in Oldham has not waned and that the will to succeed in the quest for a designated community rugby league stadium is stronger than ever. It is, therefore, important that you, our members, continue to support the Trust and re-new your membership in the New Year. Without your backing we would never have got this far.

That being said, we still need more people to become members so spread the word to both friends and family and persuade them to join. You can further support the Trust by taking advantage of our web-shop which provides us with additional income - or by purchasing one of the new red and white hooped retro shirts, an ideal Christmas present.

The New Year should be an exciting one on all fronts. There appears to be light at the end of the tunnel, I just hope its not another train coming!

Your board will continue to work very hard on your behalf, whatever obstacles are placed in its path. We will be in contact in the New Year with another newsletter to update you further on the progress made, but also with details of the AGM and news of a possible Rugby Oldham dinner.

All that remains is for myself and the board of Rugby Oldham to wish you all,

**A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.**

Iain Taylor, Chairman

# GROUND NEWS

The last 18 months has proved to be just what we expected – an arduous haul. From the outset we set ourselves the task of exploring every avenue in order to achieve our goal – providing the town with a community RL stadium that could be held in Trust for future generations.

At times we have been encouraged and at others frustrated. Because of the confidential nature of many of the projects discussed it's been sometimes difficult to keep you – our members – as up-to-date as we would have liked. We thank you for staying patient.

That being said, it's taken Salford Reds six years to finally obtain planning permission for their new stadium! The bottom line is that whilst OMBC is cash strapped and has a genuine shortage of available land when compared to other nearby towns, and whilst the town's professional and amateur clubs have no assets to throw into the pot, we, your board, believe the project is still deliverable.

As a result, we feel the time is right to take the opportunity to update you - in some detail - regarding the hard work that has been going on behind the scenes.

As you would expect, we have met with many of the town's leading politicians and officers. The list is a long one but includes chief executive Andrew Kilburn, leader David Jones, cabinet members Hugh McDonald, David Hibbert and Phil Harrison, directors and assistant directors John Bland, Tom Flanagan, John Mitchell (all Regeneration), Claire Fish (Partnership and Performance) and Ian Hughes (Business Development) as well as other officials throughout the relevant departments - Planning, Estates, Highways etc.

We have also met with representation from the Lib/Dems and they too have come up with a number of interesting suggestions. The value of building relationships cannot be underestimated and we have worked tirelessly to sell the benefits of what we are proposing.

As a result, we have now built up significant political backing that both believes in and supports what we are trying to achieve. In fact, we would like to put on record our thanks to the local authority, which has provided a huge amount of resource to work with us.

As a result of our early meetings, we were very quickly able to rule out many of the rumoured sites in the town such as Higginshaw Gas Works, land at rear of Seddon Atkinson, Chadderton Power Station, Broadbent Rd, Beal Valley, Orb Mill site (Waterhead) etc.

We thought we might be in for a 'quick win' when we took a close look at Melrose Playing Fields on Fields New Road, Chadderton, a piece of land owned by the RFL and which was originally acquired in exchange for the Joseph Platt Memorial Fields – part of the deal that facilitated the building of the Daily Mirror and later Morrisons. After carrying out some detailed background work, we approached the RFL and asked whether we could investigate options around using the land. After discussions with their chief executive Nigel Wood and in-house lawyer Rod Findley permission was granted.

Unfortunately, the current tenants, Hollinwood ARLFC, who feared they would have had trouble finding a suitable temporary or alternative site, turned us down - a decision which we found disappointing but which we fully respected. It did, though, prove beneficial inasmuch that after a full presentation by the Trust's ground committee, Oldham ARL announced publicly its support for Rugby Oldham with their secretary, Phil Bradbury, being co-opted onto the Rugby Oldham board. (continues....)

# GROUND NEWS (cont)

Moving on, and after extensive meetings, we eventually ruled out land in the private sector located close to Coal Pit Lane. Unfortunately, this was part of a larger tract of land, the owners of which, it appeared, have other plans for its eventual development.

Land in Failsworth, Greenacres, Higher Lime and Hollinwood were offered for consideration via OMBC Estates but sadly none were appropriate mainly due to size.

We have also focused on an ex RL ground at Granby St, Hollinwood. A number of RL teams have played there – most recently Royton Tigers, but other issues aside, there were access problems, which made the project unworkable.

During this time, Rugby Oldham has also held meetings with other stakeholders such as Oldham Community Leisure and Oldham Athletic and this has also been important in terms of getting an overall perspective on the ground front.

For some time, Regeneration officials had been pointing us in the direction of a large piece of council owned land at Snipe Clough (off King's Rd, adjacent to Alexandra Park), which led us to review the site in some detail.

The land, just below Hope Playing Fields - which the Oldham club is hoping to develop for training facilities - is already used for sport - there are a number of football pitches marked out on the land – and there are relatively few close-by residents. At this stage, both the authority and the ground team were very positive about the possibilities.

However, we already knew of an extremely large sewage culvert and two large waste tanks underneath the plot. We also knew that the land had been used for tipping waste and would therefore possibly require a large grant in order to clean it up prior to development. We believed that access to funds to clean up the land was available so the council agreed to carry out a feasibility study. The early signs were encouraging – an access review by highways was positive and there were no restrictive covenants on the land.

We were, to say the least, then hugely surprised to find that the land was designated green belt. To submit outline planning permission for Snipe Clough would have cost us at least £10,000 and possibly as much as £20,000. We therefore took professional advice. Because the land is designated green belt any planning request would almost certainly be 'called in' by the government and coupled to the other inherent problems the advice given was that it would have - in all probability - less than 40% chance of success.

All things considered, we had a big decision to make. After carrying out a detailed risk analysis we felt it necessary to make a recommendation to the board that the risk of investment (both financial and time) versus the risk of failure were simply too great. Whilst we are all actively trying to pursue our shared dream, we have a duty to our members to so do in a carefully considered and professional manner. As a result, we reluctantly made the decision to look at other options.

If we are completely honest, we were just a little disheartened at this point but OMBC remained upbeat in their support and have now thrown an exciting new possibility into the ring.

This new option is particularly interesting as it's looking to develop a council owned facility. We have held preliminary discussion surrounding this project, albeit it is still in the very early stages. However, it's clear to see the potential and not just for RL but also the local community. At this stage we cannot say any more about this new option, but we shall as soon as we can.

Finally, please rest assured that we will continue to work tirelessly towards achieving our goal and your support is crucial..... together we make all the difference.

## CORPORATE MEMBERS

We are proudly supported by the following corporate members:

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

VAT No. 606 4862 32

Falcon Business Centre  
Victoria Street, Chadderton  
Oldham OL9 0HB  
Office Tel: 0161 678 6306  
Fax: 0161 678 7019  
Website: www.frelswood.com

0161 366 6535  
[www.amhaccounts.com](http://www.amhaccounts.com)

[www.oldham-chronicle.co.uk](http://www.oldham-chronicle.co.uk)

0161 877 7808  
[www.mason.biz](http://www.mason.biz)



**Interior Door Systems**

enquiries@interiordoorsystems.co.uk  
[www.interiordoorsystems.co.uk](http://www.interiordoorsystems.co.uk)  
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Fax: +44 (0) 192 581 4300

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[www.cheshiretelecom.com](http://www.cheshiretelecom.com)

## RUGBY OLDHAM WEBSHOP

**You'll find the perfect gift in our webshop this Christmas!!**

Take the hassle out of buying all your presents this Christmas and generate commission for Rugby Oldham at the same time! Simply click on the link at [www.rugbyoldham.org](http://www.rugbyoldham.org) and you'll be presented with a range of great gift ideas. Every purchase counts—from now until the end of January, the Trust will receive an extra **25p** for every transaction no matter how small.

The retailers involved pay commission on everything you buy - but only if you do it through our webshop

- Shop from the comfort of your home,
- escape the hassle of parking and queues,
- find great prices and gift ideas all in one place,
- save with online discounts,
- many retailers offer free delivery.

[www.buy.at/Rugbyoldham](http://www.buy.at/Rugbyoldham)

### Stuck for Ideas?

- Buy your loved ones jewellery and watches from **Goldsmiths** and generate a whopping 12% commission
- Get your chocolates and champagne from **Thorntons** (10%)
- Flowers and teddy bears from **Teleflorist** (8%)
- Big brand perfume and aftershave from **BuyCosmetics** (10%)
- Books from **Waterstones** (6.5%)
- Games and Consoles from **GAME** (5%)