



Squad Check



SWANSEA CITY

MANAGER

BRIAN FLYNN

- 1 Roger Freestone (GK)
- 2 Lee Jenkins
- 3 Leon Hylton
- 4 Kristian O'Leary
- 5 Jason Smith
- 7 Andrew Mumford
- 8 Matt Murphy
- 9 James Thomas
- 10 Steve Watkin
- 11 Jonathan Coates
- 12 Alan Tate
- 14 Marc Richards
- 15 Kevin Nugent
- 17 Terry Evans
- 18 Gareth Phillips
- 19 John Williams
- 20 Michael Howard
- 21 Neil Sharp
- 23 Kieron Durkan
- 24 Lenny Johnrose
- 25 Jamie Wood
- 26 Richard Duffy
- 27 Roberto Martinez
- 28 Stuart Jones
- 29 Antonio Corbisiero
- 30 Jamie Rewbury
- 32 Craig Stiens
- 33 Neil Cutler (GK)
- 35 Leon Britton

TODAY'S MASCOT

Today's mascot is seven-year old **KIERON HARDMAN**. He attends St. Joseph's Primary School, Heywood, and lists his hobbies as chess and playing on his computer. He also admits to being a supporter of Rochdale Hornets!

Kieron's favourite Dale players are Neil Edwards, Michael Oliver and Patrick McCourt, while one of his lifetime ambitions is to play tennis at Wimbledon.

Have a great day, Kieron!



ODEON
FANATICAL ABOUT FILM

TODAY'S OFFICIALS

REFEREE

Frazer Stretton

ASSISTANTS

Craig Barker
Stuart Wilson

4TH OFFICIAL

Colin Harwood

ROCHDALE



MANAGER

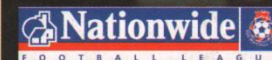
PAUL SIMPSON

- 1 Neil Edwards (GK)
- 2 Wayne Evans
- 5 Gareth Griffiths
- 7 David Flitcroft
- 8 Chris Beech
- 9 Michael Oliver
- 10 Matt Doughty
- 11 Lee Hodges
- 13 Matthew Gilks (GK)
- 14 Paul Simpson
- 15 Michael Taylor
- 16 Gavin Melaugh
- 17 Patrick McCourt
- 18 Lee McEvilly
- 19 Kevin Townson
- 20 Lee Duffy
- 21 Clive Platt
- 23 Stephen Hill
- 24 Richard Jobson
- 25 John Baker (GK)
- 26 Simon Grand
- 27 Paul Connor
- 28 Rory Patterson
- 29 Scott Warner
- 30 David Edwards
- 31 Darren Hockenhull
- 33 Neil Bennett (GK)

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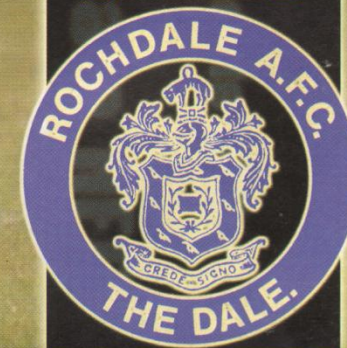
Rochdale v Swansea City

Saturday
26th April 2003
Kick-off 3.00pm

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MANAGER'S NOTES

Paul Simpson

"The side that played at Hartlepool on Monday had a good blend of youngsters, and this season has certainly been a good one for introducing our younger players."

DESPITE the enforced changes we had to make going into the game at Hartlepool United on Monday, I was delighted with the performance and subsequent point we gained.

In many respects we went into the match on a hiding to nothing, but the players gave a good account of themselves and certainly deserved at least a share of the spoils.

Mathematically we still weren't safe going into the Hartlepool fixture, but results did go our way on the day and it now means it will take a minor-miracle for us to be relegated. The fact Hartlepool were celebrating promotion meant the pressure wasn't really on us, and this allowed us to relax in the build-up. I felt we passed the ball around nicely throughout the game and created some good chances. We did come under sustained spells of pressure during the 90 minutes, but you don't go to a side celebrating promotion and not expect this. We weathered these storms and finished strongly, and we must take great encouragement from this.

The side that took to the field on

Monday had a good blend of youngsters in it and this season has certainly been a good one for introducing our younger players to first-team football.

There have been a lot of disappointments throughout the campaign, but I would like to think that this particular aspect of the club has developed tremendously. Hopefully these young players will benefit from their experience this season and come back next year even stronger.

Looking back on our last home game, it was obviously a major disappointment to lose to Bury. We have suffered too many set-backs at home this season, but the reason we lost to Bury was that we didn't take the chances that came our way. I felt we had opportunities to win the match, particularly in the first-half, but we didn't take them and therefore eventually lost the game.

Today we welcome Swansea City to Spotland and their current predicament means they will come here and scrap for everything. They are likely to bring a

good travelling support with them, but it will be our job to quieten this support and send them back to South Wales disappointed.

Enjoy the game.

Paul



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The Voice of Spotland

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Assistant Manager: Jamie Hoyland
Physiotherapist: Andy Thorpe
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Internet/Press Officer: Stuart Ashworth
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Football in the Community Officer: Keith Hicks
Centre of Excellence (Director): Keith Hicks
Centre of Excellence (Administration): Colin McLaren
Accounts Manager: Nicola Toolan
Office Junior: Chelsea Banham

CONTACT NUMBERS

Club Office: (01706) 644648
Commercial Office & Club Shop: (01706) 647521
Advertising & Sponsorship: (01706) 631460
Football in the Community: (01706) 643836

OFFICIAL WEBSITE
www.rochdaleafc.co.uk

DALE FANS AROUND THE WORLD

IT'S now over 30 years since Dave Thomas and his father Vernon left Rochdale for Taupo, New Zealand. Both are avid followers of Dale via the Internet, and Dave still keeps the locals

enthralled with tales of our 1968/69 promotion season. Here we see the two gentlemen, with Dave proudly wearing his Rochdale shirt. If you look close enough you will also see that 'Rochdale Hornets' is written on the car registration plate.



DAVID JACKSON

THE club was saddened to hear about the recent death of lifetime Rochdale supporter David Jackson. Mr. Jackson, who was a butcher in Wardle, was a regular on the Sandy Lane end of the ground until his untimely death in January. We pass on our deepest sympathies to wife Mavis, son Matthew and daughter Melissa.

in an attempt to visit all the Premiership and Football League grounds. One of their aims was to collect an item of merchandise from each club, which would then be auctioned off for the Comic Relief charity.

Dale were only too happy to contribute to the collection, and this picture shows 'Chappers' and Dave outside Spotland with a signed Rochdale away shirt.

COMIC RELIEF

IN the week leading up to Red Nose Day on 14th March, Mark Chapman and Comedy Dave from BBC Radio 1 travelled the length and breadth of the country



NEXT SEASON

THE Football League have announced that the 2003/04 season will kick-off on the weekend of Saturday 9th August. The first round of the League Cup will also revert back to the first midweek of the season.

PROGRAMME REQUIRED

COLLECTOR David Cull is trying to obtain every League programme that was published on the date of his birth - 14th April 1962. He has managed to purchase all bar two of the relevant programmes, but one of those he is missing is from the Rochdale v Chester match. If any Dale supporters can help Mr. Cull complete his collection, he would be delighted to hear from you on 01284 706633.

NEXT SEASON'S PROGRAMME

THE programme team will soon be sitting down to plan out next season's The Voice of Spotland. We want to know what YOU, the fans, would like to read in your programme during the 2003/04 campaign. Are there any fea-

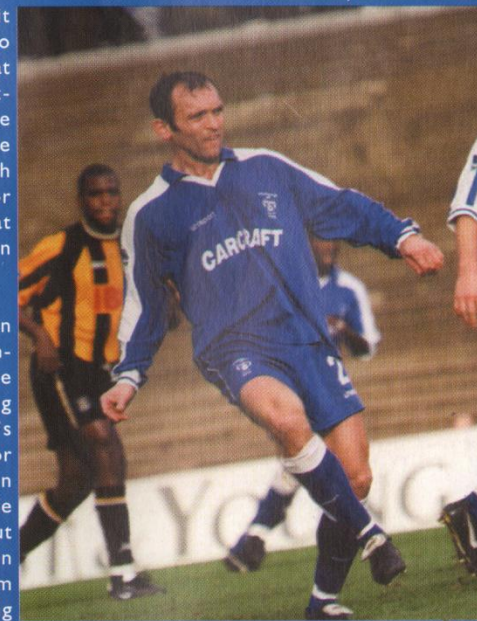
tures you particularly like or even dislike? Have you any ideas of your own for articles we could include? Have you seen something elsewhere that we could replicate at Spotland?

If you want an input into next season's programme, drop the editor a line at the club or by e-mail to rochdale_programme@hotmail.com.

DOUBLE CENTURY

WE felt that it shouldn't go un-noticed that Dale's right-back, Wayne Evans, made his 200th appearance for the club at Hartlepool on Monday.

'Evo' has been a model of consistency since becoming Steve Parkin's first signing for Rochdale in June 1999. He made his debut in our 2-0 win at Cheltenham on the opening



The Voice of Spotland

The official matchday programme of Rochdale AFC

Editor: Mark Wilbraham

Contributors: Richard Wild, Les Duckworth, Steve Ashworth, Keith Hicks, Mike Floyd, Richard Bott, Frank Bishop, Steve Jones, Mike Commins, Norman Taylor, Karen Bond, Scrutator

Photography: Daniel Youngs (DY Sporting Photos), EMPICS

E-mail: rochdale_programme@hotmail.com

The views expressed in The Voice of Spotland are not necessarily those of the editor or the club.



The importance of Goldbond

DURING the course of last week the club released its audited accounts for the years ending 31st May 2001 and 31st May 2002. These reports show the club made an overall trading loss of £146,405 for this two-year period.

These figures were taken during the club's most successful period - results wise - in recent years, yet we still show a considerable trading loss. The figures that were published highlight the constant battle the football club faces against an ever-flowing tide of outgoings, whilst income obviously doesn't always match the levels required to match this expenditure.

A quick delve inside the Financial Statement reveals one or two very interesting facts. Firstly these figures have taken into account the £131,500 the club received in compensation for the departure of Steve Parkin and Tony Ford, and also the £220,000 received from the subsequent sale of Gary Jones. Also within these reports, donations totalling £532,829 can be found from the Development Association. Now if you are wondering what the Development Association is and how can it donate over half a million pounds in the space of two years, well this is Goldbond!

Throughout the course of the year club staff work extremely hard to maximise the profit of our weekly draw competi-

tion, and we receive excellent help from our army of agents. In total we have over 200 agents who act on behalf of the club every week, and as you can see by the donations made to the club on a yearly basis, it is well worth the effort. I hope every supporter inside this ground today is appreciative of the work done by fellow fans that act as our agents.

The Commercial Department is constantly asked by staff from other clubs how we manage to sustain such high membership to our lottery; the simple answer is by working extremely hard. Only three weeks ago we had a member of the Torquay United Supporters' Club spend an hour with us picking our brains about running a lottery. In her words: "Our Chairman says it's too much hard work running a lottery, so we've decided to run one on behalf of the club." How on earth a club of the size and stature of Torquay United can afford NOT to run a lottery is beyond belief!

Club staff are always looking at ways of expanding the income we receive via the Goldbond Weekly Draw, but our geographical location means we cannot expand the boundaries of where we collect because we impose on the territory of other clubs. I've got to be honest and say this isn't something that particularly bothers us, because at the end of the day we are a business and competition is competition, but it's finding collectors and agents in these areas that

is an impossibility. A football supporter living in Bury or Oldham isn't going to collect on behalf of Rochdale - they would rather collect on behalf of the club's they support.

The biggest hurdle we have found in recent years has been recruiting Dale supporters who work in factories or Dale supporters who work in an office who could act as agents for us. We can go and knock on people's front doors every night of the week and ask them to join to Goldbond, but we cannot simply walk into an office or factory.

This is where we need your help; we need supporters to come forward and take up the mantle themselves. Only this week Scott Goulding, from the newly formed Supporters Club in South Manchester and Cheshire, came forward and had recruited 59 new members for the club. This will bring in revenue of over £1200 in a single year and it all counts. So if you work in an environment where you think you could recruit a few new members for us, it doesn't matter if it's just three or four, then make a visit to the club shop after the game today. Our doors are always open.

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The Chrome Domes

You may be forgiven for taking a second look at the sponsor's title. The reason that is given is that most of the guests present today are in the stage of bald, near bald or grey in the 'barnet' stakes. This observation has been made by Ian Wright, who is the organiser of our sponsorship party. One thing that cannot be taken

away is that each and every one of them are dedicated supporters of the club and have been for many years! So to the four Daves - Colley, Juddy, Garty and Eagan - along with, Brendan, Trevor (Grey not bald), Basil (Bald not grey), Suggy and 'Clanger' (who!), plus 'Wrighty' himself, a most sincere thank you. Have a great day.

Matchball Sponsor

The Grumpys

The 'Crazy Gang' are back in the form of the Grumpys. Having sponsored in big style early in the season, they return to continue their support with this Matchball Sponsorship today. Interest is always abundant when the Grumpys visit; the Police check their wanted records, mothers lock up their daughters and Man City always lose! But we love them all.

A big Dale thank you to the lads and lassies - have a super day.

DALE ON THE ROAD

**Saturday 3rd May 2003
Macclesfield Town**

WHEN the fixtures were released last summer, we all hoped this game would mark the end of our long stay in Division Three. We had visions of thousands of Dale fans converging on leafy Cheshire for one massive party, but alas it isn't to be.

It did look, at one stage, as though the Silkmen might need a win in this game to preserve their League status, but they embarked on a run that has seen them take two-points per game since mid-February.

So the only notable action next Saturday could be the sweepstake to see how many times GMR and The Pink refer to this game as 'The big local derby in Division Three'!

Directions: Take the M62 west-bound until Simister Island, where you should join the M60. Continue on the M60 until the junction with the A34 (s/p Congleton), and the

follow the A34 until you see the exit signposted Prestbury B5087. Follow these signs until you pick up signs for Macclesfield. Once you enter Macclesfield the ground is well signposted, but if you follow signs for Leek A523 you will eventually end-up at the ground.

Away Area: Dale fans have the choice of 1,500 places on the open terrace behind the goal, or 400 seats in the new stand to the right.

Admission Prices: Terrace - £11 adults, £6 concessions; Seating - £14 adults, £9 concessions. Disabled supporters in a wheelchair are admitted free in the away stand but they will need to book in advance (01625 264686). Their companions will have to pay £9.00.

Cost of Programme: £2.50 for 60 pages. It's certainly a much-improved programme, but I think you are paying for the glossy cover more than anything else.

COACH TRAVEL

Departure Time: 12.30pm

Cost: £9 adults, £6 under 16s
(Season ticket holders get £1 discount on these prices)

For all coach bookings and away travel enquiries, contact the club shop on (01706) 647521.



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DALE ON T'INTERNET

A Fan's View

A depressing time on-line

FOLLOWING our 1-0 home defeat to Kidderminster, Harriers-online.co.uk reported: 'The Harriers came out with all guns blazing knowing that nothing other than all three points would do. Rochdale seemed to have lost interest now and their only chance of a goal came from McCourt but he couldn't connect with Hockenhull's cross and failed to convert it (sic.).'

'Dean Bennett went close for us with a shot that went wide after a great run from him but a few minutes later we had wrapped the game up.

'Scott Stamps had come on for Adie Smith ten minutes earlier and it was from his long throw in that we scored. Griffiths could only half clear it and it fell for Shilts, who made no mistake with a half volley from the edge of the box. The ball beat the keeper and gave us a well deserved win to get us 'back on track'.

It's been a familiar pattern online for a few weeks now, with little of encouragement to share with you. The Rushden and York away performances were greeted with due praise by our fans online, especially the manager's professionalism when having decisions to make regarding Matthew Gilks' injury at York.

The pro-management supporters online have mainly used the insult as a supporting case. A loss of 1764 HOME fans in 12 months between Hull at home on 9th April 2002 and Bristol Rovers at home on 8th April 2003 has been a talking point. Another has been one young fan's constant promotion of his side's appearance at Spotland for the Dennis John Trophy last Wednesday night!

Protests and banners and the consequences thereof have been frequent topics of discussion online between fans. The manager said such actions had a detrimental effect in the build up to the Bristol Rovers game. Fans took heed. After the home defeat by Kidderminster Harriers he told the official site: 'The supporters were fantastic tonight, they stuck with us and kept behind us, but sadly we were flat

second half and we couldn't take the game onto them and give the supporters a lift.'

One angle of discussion on the message board has surrounded the forthright comments Richard Bott made in his notes for the bury game. Mr Bott wrote: 'If we suffered a hangover from last season's failed promotion bid, we might just have suffered another from the FA Cup adventure.'

With this in mind I visited two websites of the other teams who missed out on the play-offs last season to see how they were getting on.

www.thediamondsfc.co.uk said: 'Rushden & Diamonds celebrated their promotion to the Second Division by returning to the top of the league following this 2-1 victory over Carlisle United at Brunton Park. This win means that promotion to the Second Division has been achieved at only the second time of asking. It's a wonderful milestone for the club and a fantastic achievement from the players.'

Their manager Brian Talbot said: 'We have only had a squad of 20 players all season and the kids that have come in have been superb. I could not have done it without them but the senior players have been the cornerstone. We have gone top and that's nice but we must focus ourselves on the remaining games and not take our foot off the pedal. We all want to go on and win the title.'

Up at The Vic, **www.inthenet-hufc.net** reported with amazing irony: 'Only Hartlepool United could win promotion like this. A 4-0 defeat at the hands of Scunthorpe United saw Pools promoted to the Second Division as Bournemouth failed to win away at Hull City. It's a crazy world we live in when the fans of the team leaving the bottom division through automatic promotion are chanting the name of the previous manager in the final minutes of the penultimate away game of the season.'

Their message board was full of Poolies moaning!! However one voice of realism said: 'Would only believe it from this board though. By the way, we did it by winning more games than most others over the season. We have two home games coming up, which

we should win. Then we can win the championship! C'Mon Pools!'

One of those games to come was against Rochdale. Why this Pools fan's optimism after the thrashing they got at Spotland in December?

Perhaps he had a look at some of the in depth statistical material available at the **www.football365.com** site in their 'interactive stats' section. One feature lets you look at league tables and results from a different perspective. Taking Division Three from 1st October 2002 to 19th April 2003, Rochdale are firmly in 24th place. We, along with Exeter, have a mere five wins from the last 31 League games, gaining 27 points in the process. Rushden and Diamonds have won 18 from 32 played, Hartlepool have won 17 from 32 played, earning 63 and 58 points respectively.

Over the last eight games, Dale are 23rd in the form table, with no wins, four draws and four losses. Only Shrewsbury have done worse in this spell. We are 22nd in the home form table, 11th in the away form table. We are 22nd in the form table for April as a relegation threat looms. We have won two of the last 14 games, both of those 1-0 through penalties.

The 'hangover' is enough to make you give up, like the 1764 Dale fans who did on 8th April.

WEBSITE LISTING

Official Site - www.rochdaleafc.co.uk

Supporters Site - www.rochdaleafc.com

'Belgian Blue' Dale site -

www.angelfire.com/my/rochdale/main.html

Dale Programmes/memorabilia -

www.daleprogs.co.uk

BURKS (Bath University Keen Rochdale

Supporters) <http://www.theburks.org>

Rochdale Observer -

www.rochdaleobserver.co.uk/sport/

Rochdale Online (Info + local league football) -

www.rochdaleonline.org/

Local History site -

www.dunning94.freereserve.co.uk

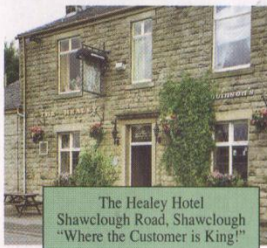
Third division fans message board -

www.the-barrel.co.uk

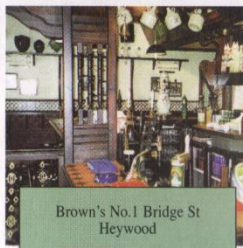
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The Voice of Spotland

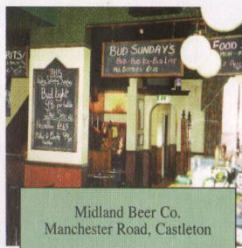
Pubs supporting THE DALE



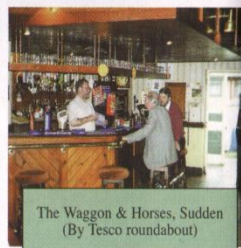
The Healey Hotel
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Heywood



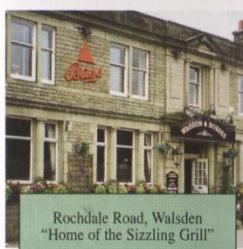
Midland Beer Co.
Manchester Road, Castleton



The Waggon & Horses, Sudden
(By Tesco roundabout)



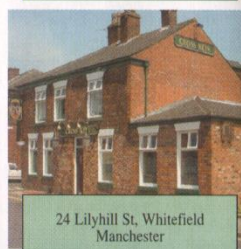
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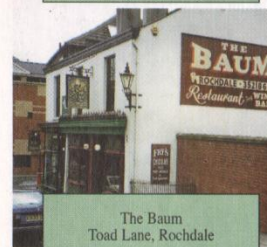
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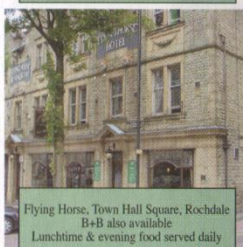
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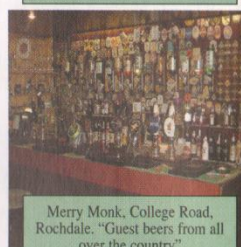
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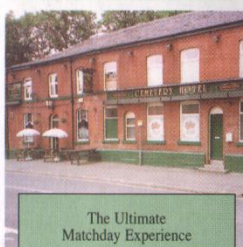
Edenfield Road, Norden
"The only pub in which to watch
and discuss football"



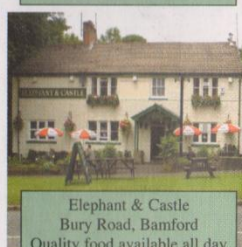
Merry Monk, College Road,
Rochdale. "Guest beers from all
over the country"



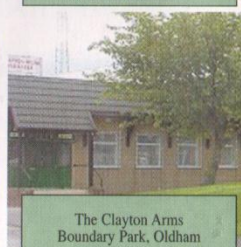
Horse & Farrier
Edenfield Rd, Norden
Rochdale. Tel: 01706 648728



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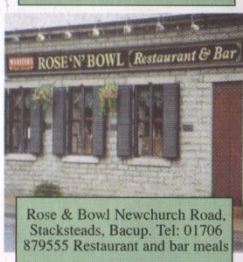
Elephant & Castle
Bury Road, Bamford
Quality food available all day



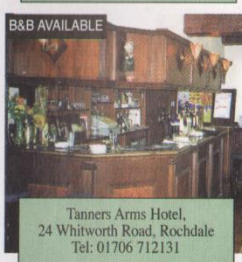
The Clayton Arms
Boundary Park, Oldham



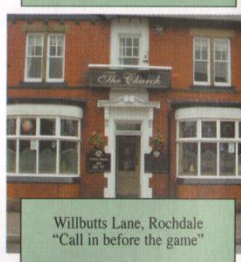
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APRIL 1998

Rotherham United 2, Rochdale 2
Division Three

Dale hadn't won at Millmoor for almost 60 years, but at half-time in this game that record looked to be ending. Gary Jones fired in a low shot from the edge of the area on 32 minutes, and then just before the interval Robbie Painter doubled our lead from the penalty spot.

Rotherham still had an outside chance of the play-offs, and Ronnie Moore had obviously had words with his players at half-time. They came out all guns blazing after the break, and soon reduced the arrears through Jason White. The pressure continued but it looked as though Dale had held out when the fourth official signalled two minutes of injury time. Unfortunately referee Roy Pearson decided to play four extra minutes, in which Lee Glover scored United's equaliser.

Dale: Edwards, Fensome, Barlow, Hill (Bailey), Bayliss, Gouck, Jones, Painter, Carden (Scott), Farrell, Stuart
Attendance: 3463

Swansea were held to a goalless draw at home by already-relegated Doncaster.

Swansea: Freestone, Price (O'Gorman), Lacey (Phillips), O'Leary, Walker, Bound, Cusack, Jenkins, Alsop, Watkin (Newhouse), Coates

Elsewhere in football ...

* Macclesfield won promotion to Division Two in their first season as a League club.

* WBA terminated Shane Nicholson's contract following his admission of drugs misconduct.

* Attilio Lombardo stepped down as coach of relegated Crystal Palace.

APRIL 1993

Rochdale 1, York City 0
Division Three

This was a strange afternoon at Spotland. York were playing their last game of the season even though there

was still a fortnight remaining for other teams. This was due to there initially being an odd number of clubs in the division, followed by Maidstone resigning from the League.

The right combination of results could have seen The Minstermen gain promotion, but Jon Bowden's goal three minutes into the second half meant the play-offs were the route they would have to take.

Dale: Rose, Thackeray, Graham, Reid, Reeves, Butler (Jones), Snowdon (Ryan), Bowden, Flounders, Whitehall, Doyle
Attendance: 3920

Swansea recorded a 3-0 home win over Hartlepool thanks to goals from Andy Legg, Keith Walker and Andy McFarlane.

Swansea: Freestone, Lyttle, Jenkins, Walker, Harris, Ford (Cullen), Bowen, Coughlin, McFarlane, Cornforth (Hayes), Legg

Elsewhere in football ...

* Bolton scored four goals in the last eight minutes to clinch a 5-0 win over Chester.

* Tony Naylor found the net five times as Crewe thrashed Colchester 7-1.

* Brian Clough announced his retirement as Nottingham Forest manager.

APRIL 1988

Rochdale 1, Leyton Orient 3
Division Four

This was The O's first visit to Spotland under the name Leyton Orient, but the outcome was the same as when they had travelled here previously - a heavy defeat for Dale! The result was better than the eight-goal thrashing at Brisbane Road earlier in the season, but it still meant Dale finished the game pointless.

Ernie Moss (pictured) scored his second goal for Dale soon after Ian Juryeff had shot the visitors ahead. But Juryeff added his second after the break, and then Steve Castle - who had netted four times at Spotland two years earlier - made it 3-1.



Dale: Welch, Smart, Stanton, Mellish, Bramhall, Lomax, Seaman (Holden), Simmonds, Moss, Warren, Harris
Attendance: 1390

Swansea went down to a 2-0 defeat against champions-to-be Wolves at Molineux.

Swansea: Guthrie, D.Lewis, Harrison, Melville, Knill, James, Davies, Raynor, Allon (McCarthy), J.Lewis (Hutchison), Bodak

Elsewhere in football ...

* Liverpool clinched their 17th League title after a 1-0 win over Spurs at Anfield.

* Despite Oxford's impending relegation, their new manager Mark Lawrenson had won a championship medal for Liverpool!

* Luton won the Littlewoods Cup after a 3-2 defeat of Arsenal.

APRIL 1983

Rochdale 2, Colchester United 1
Division Four

First half goals from Andy Higgins and Micky French sealed a comfortable win over promotion-chasing Colchester. Ian Allinson reduced the arrears after the interval, but Dale held on for a well-earned three points.

Dale: Crawford, B.Greenhoff, Keenan, Farrell, Higgins, Taylor, D.Thompson, S.Thompson, French, J.Greenhoff, Martinez
Attendance: 1219

Swansea dropped to the bottom of the First Division after another defeat - this time 3-1 at Luton. Bob Latchford netted for The Swans.

Swansea: Sander, Marustik, Richards, Charles, Lewis, Rajkovic, Loveridge, James, Robinson (Pascoe), Kennedy, Latchford

Elsewhere in football ...

* Oxford plans staged a 'sit-in' on the pitch to demonstrate against the planned merger with Reading.

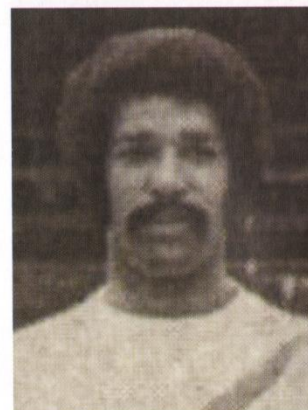
* Mexico emerged as favourites to stage the 1986 World Cup Finals.

* QPR manager Terry Venables announced plans to buy the club from out-going chairman Jim Gregory.

APRIL 1973

Rochdale 3, Grimsby Town 2
Division Three

Easter Monday action saw Dale race into a three-goal half-time lead against The Mariners. A Clive Wigginton own goal, plus further strikes from Bill Atkins and debutant Leo Skeete (pictured) put Dale in the driving seat, although Grimsby did cause a few palpitations with their second half fight-back.



Dale: Morritt, Smith, Renwick, Downes, Blant, Marsh, Skeete, Darling, Atkins, Gowans, Kinsella
Attendance: 7911

Swansea didn't play on Easter Monday, although they did have games on Good Friday and Easter Saturday. Their Saturday fixture ended in a 2-0 defeat at Bournemouth.

Swansea: Millington, Jones, M.Evans, Ingram, Williams, G.Davies, Johnson, Thomas (D.Davies), Gwyther, B.Evans, Rees

Elsewhere in football ...

* Bolton clinched the Third Division title after a 3-0 home win over York.

* Burnley were Second Division champions, meaning that all four leagues had been won by Lancashire clubs. Liverpool and Southport were the other victors.

* Leeds reached the European Cup Winners' Cup Final, where they would meet AC Milan.

ON THIS DAY - 26th APRIL

1947 - Dale were beaten 1-0 at Chester.

1952 - Gateshead recorded a comfortable 3-0 win at Spotland.

1958 - Our local derby at Oldham finished goalless.

1960 - Les Spencer's goal couldn't prevent a 2-1 defeat at Watford.

1962 - The first leg of the League Cup Final ended in a 3-0 home defeat to Norwich.

1966 - Bob Stephenson (2) and Bert Lister scored in a 3-1 home win over Hartlepool.

1975 - Bob Mountford scored the only goal of the game as we defeated Swansea at Spotland.

1977 - Torquay chalked-up a 1-0 victory at Spotland.

1980 - Dale were beaten 2-0 at Doncaster, meaning we had scored just one goal in 15 games.

1983 - Andy Higgins and Micky French scored as we defeated Colchester 2-1 at Spotland.

1986 - Steve Taylor's goal earned us a 1-1 home draw with already-promoted Mansfield.

1997 - Dale's last home game of the season ended in a 3-0 defeat of Cambridge. Mark Stuart (2) and Alex Russell scored our goals.

2001 - Our play-off hopes took a serious knock with a 3-1 loss at Blackpool. Graham Lancashire scored a late consolation, while Dale also had Neil Edwards sent-off.

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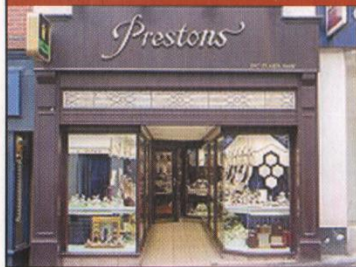
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Lee-thal from the penalty spot

York City 2, Rochdale 2

Paul Simpson Rochdale Manager

"We deserved to win this game and that showed when their 'keeper won the match of the match award. Matthew Gilks was out cold for a couple of minutes, but he went to hospital and they have given him the all clear. He came round on the pitch and we had to force him off the field, but we brought him off for his own safety.

"Lee McEvilly went on and did a good job, even though some of the things he did aren't in any goalkeeping textbooks. We know it's a gamble not including a keeper on the bench, but I think it gives us more options if we need to change things around.

"It was a hell of a battling performance today. It sounds horrible, but we aren't going to go to places between now and the end of the season and let teams enjoy a little promotion push party; I want to spoil it for every club we come up against."



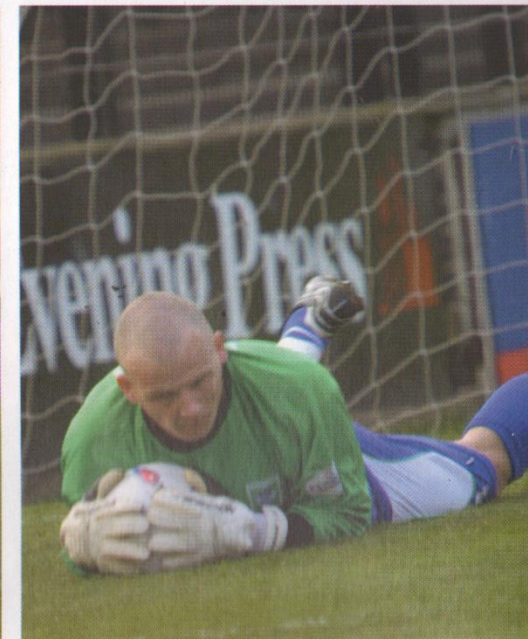
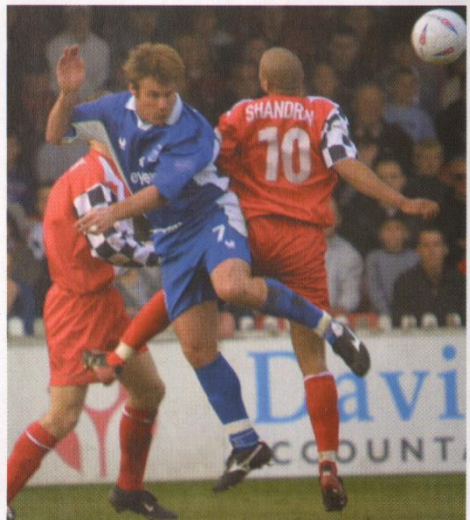
Terry Dolan York City Manager

"We simply didn't play well enough to win the game. Everybody is disappointed but when you don't play as well as you can do and you still pick up a point then you have got to be pleased with it.

"Torquay, Bury and Scunthorpe will also be disappointed because they have dropped points and that is what we have got to take out of the game.

"We knew what we wanted to do but we didn't do it well enough. We wanted to be patient and keep the ball better and when we got the second goal that is what we should have done.

"The pitch doesn't help because it is hard to pass it around but we didn't do it well enough. We played far too many long balls up to their big number five and that played into their hands."



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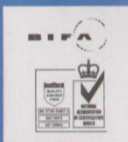
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The managerial merry-go-round

READING through fellow contributor Richard Bott's page for the Bury game, I noticed he included the statistic that Rochdale have had 12 managers in the last 20 years.

The reason for him including this statistic was to make the point that clubs don't achieve anything by chopping and changing their managers. It was a fair point to make, but it got me wondering how many managers the other clubs in our division have had over the last 20 years.

Ignoring the teams who have recently attained Football League status, there are some interesting observations to be drawn from the relevant information. The club that has had fewest different managers in the last 20 years is Wrexham, who have only had to conduct manager interviews on four different occasions. This is largely due to the excellent stint performed by Brian Flynn who took over at the Racecourse Ground in the very late 1980s.

Flynn inherited a team that would have dropped out of the Football League but for the demise of Aldershot. By 1993 he had taken a young, enthusiastic team into Division Two and kept them there for a good few seasons.

Other clubs to have had reasonably few managers are: Bournemouth 5, Bury 7, Leyton Orient 6, and York 7. Again, these are clubs who have employed a manager who has done well with the team, thus lessening the necessity to give him the old heave ho!

At the other end of the scale are Southend with 17 different managers. This is almost a rate of one every season, and in the midst of this, The Shrimpers enjoyed a memorable rise to the heady heights of challenging for promotion to the Premiership in the early 1990s. Their subsequent slide down the league ladder, though, has shown the Essex club not averse to changing the gaffer as they look to restore former glories.

Other clubs with a high turnover are: Carlisle 14, Darlington 15, Hartlepool 15, Lincoln 16, Swansea 16, and Torquay 15. Interestingly, all of the clubs, except Torquay, have enjoyed at least two promotions in the last 20 years despite the high turnover. One argument behind this turnover is that promotion is often followed by a managerial casualty because the boss cannot sustain success in a higher division. On the other hand, a successful manager is more likely to be poached by a 'bigger' club.

So what of Rochdale? With our 12 different incumbents we are typically very average for the division which slightly undermines Richard Bott's assertion that we have been changing our managers too frequently for our own good. Where Rochdale have been unfortunate is that of those 12 Managers, four left the club for jobs higher up on the football ladder. This therefore puts us at a pretty low figure of eight enforced changes. Bearing in mind that the last 20 years have seen the club make one play-off appearance and only two FA Cup



runs of any note, the levels of tolerance and patience are evident to see. Indeed, there will no doubt be people reading this today who might conclude that, given the club's history on the pitch, a higher rate of managerial turnaround might have unearthed a better calibre of manager. On the other hand, change for changes sake can lead to a lack of consistency and direction, which can do a club irreparable damage. Manchester City in the late 1990s spring readily to mind!

The crux of the debate though is down to the individual to have his own opinion. Continuity, or change and change and change again until you get a good 'un.

It's a difficult one to call, but in the days of Parkin's 12 match winless run there were no calls for his head by the expectant Rochdale public. Perhaps it's a case of stick with the one you believe will get it right, and the statistics show that the Rochdale Board tend to give the man they think can do the job sufficient time to either prove it or not. It's not a bad philosophy at all and many clubs have benefited from it over the years.

School visits and Easter Courses



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WELCOME today to everybody, and especially to members of Hopwood Ladies and Rochdale Ladies F.C. who are going to play a special challenge six-a-side match at half-time.

This is another activity put on by the Club to promote ladies football and I trust that you will all encourage the girls this afternoon.

FIVE-A-SIDE PRESENTATIONS

During half time of the above match, Rory Patterson gave out trophies to Wardle Warriors, winners of the Under-10s League, Rochdale Raiders, who were winners of the Cup, plus Milnrow who won the Under-15s League.

Anybody who is interested in entering a team, please contact Steve on 01706 643836.

HARWOOD PARK SCHOOL VISIT TO DALE

Harwood Park spent an interesting night at Spotland for the visit of Bristol Rovers on Tuesday 8th April. They were taken for a ground tour by Gareth Lee (Assistant Community Officer) looking at all the facilities at the Stadium, especially the changing rooms and dug outs.



Also, they played football on the five-a-side pitch before watching the game through the generosity of the Club, who provided a special offer for the package.

If any other schools are interested in coming to one of the matches for next season, please contact me.

EASTER SOCCER SCHOOLS

For the first week, over 130 children turned up at the venues at Rochdale AFC and Middleton Parish Primary School. The weather was fantastic and everybody enjoyed the four day Courses.

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Skills Winners:

Ben Bamford, Lucas Gale, Callum

McEvilly, Jack Simpson

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Mark Whelan, Irfan Parvaze, Steven Collins, James Ratcliffe

Personalities:

Lee Beckett, Harrison Diggle, Jason Pilkington, Marlon Moore



Middleton Parish Primary School

Star Performers:

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Skills Winners:

Chris Burn, Josh Berlyne

Most Improved:

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Personalities:

Dale Wright, Grant Dixon



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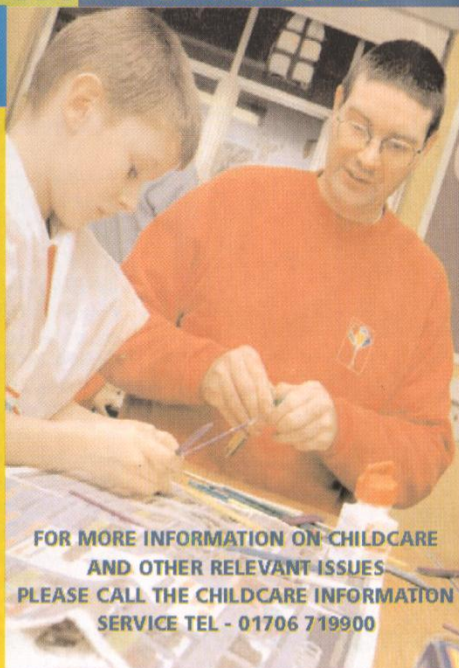
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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Darren Hockenhull

I'm enjoying my time at Rochdale

A LOT has happened in the life of 19-year old Darren Hockenhull recently. The Blackburn Rovers' youngster was whisked away from Ewood Park on transfer deadline day to spend the remainder of the season on-loan at Spotland, and since then his life has been turned upside down.

"It's a lot different to what I'm used to," said Hockenhull, when we spoke to him earlier this week.

St. Helens' born Hockenhull has been at Rovers since signing a YTS contract in 1999. Last summer he clinched his first professional deal with the club. That contract is due to expire this summer, and like many other players in that position, he doesn't know if another deal is waiting around the corner for him.

"I'm a bit in limbo really as I don't know if Blackburn are going to offer me a new deal. In many respects this is why I was happy to join Rochdale, because at the end of the day I'm putting myself in the shop window by playing first-team football."

Hockenhull was spotted by Rovers' scouts playing for non-league Burscough. At the time he was playing for the Under-18s at Victoria Park, but was quickly signed up by the Ewood Park club. Rochdale have previously raided Burscough to sign the likes of Kevin Formby, Alex Russell and Lee McEvilly, and following Hockenhull's displays since signing last month, Paul Simpson could have found another former Linnet's player capable of playing his trade at Spotland.

"I feel I've settled in really well. The lads were really friendly when I first arrived, and in many respects it helped that I came at the same time at Michael Taylor.

I've really enjoyed my time at the club so far, and if nothing is on offer from Blackburn then I'd be very interested in signing permanently, if given the opportunity.

"Prior to signing the manager told me he was looking to add a bit of quality into the side, and that he felt I was capable of doing that. It was nice to hear, and I hope I've rewarded his faith with my performances recently. Playing for Rochdale in Division Three is a lot different to playing for the reserves at Blackburn; it is a lot more physical. It takes time to adjust yourself to the pace of the game when you first arrive, but I'm learning and developing all the time."

When moving clubs there are a lot of new things you have to adjust to, but did Hockenhull envisage arriving at Spotland to find the supporters displaying banners and demonstrating at the end of games.

"I knew it would be hard. I'd obviously looked at where Rochdale were in the table prior to signing, and you have to be honest and say it doesn't help when the supporters aren't totally behind you. At the same time supporters are entitled to their point of view, so as a player you just have to get on with things."

The first goal of Darren Hockenhull's career has yet to arrive, but the recent game against Kidderminster should have seen the youngster hit the back of the net. He missed what can only be described as a sitter, and he still rues that miss today.

"I know I should have scored. It all came about a bit quickly, and I think I just stretched a little bit too much trying to score. It was a good move by the lads prior to me putting it into the stand, and it would have been nice to score. Unfortunately it wasn't meant to be on that occasion."

Today we welcome a Swansea City side that are battling to save themselves from relegation. This means our visitors from South Wales will be battling for every ball, and Hockenhull knows it will be a tough game.

"You expect nothing else when you play against teams that are scrapping for their lives. No player wants to have on his CV the fact that he was relegated with such a club, so it will be very difficult for us today. We will have supporters inside the ground that will want us to play attacking football and for Rochdale to win the game, so it will be up to us to forget about the opposition and try to please our fans. They have paid good money to watch the match, and we want to send them home happy."





DALE COLLECTION



Darren Hockenhull

the last supper

If you had to share your final supper with six people, who would they be?

Footballer - "I have to admit to supporting Arsenal, and the chance to meet Ian Wright would be too good an opportunity to miss. Therefore I'd invite the Gunners all-time leading goalscorer to the table."

Sportsman - "I'll keep with the football theme and say Pele. Unfortunately I never had the chance to see him in action, but he comes across very well on the television and it would be nice to meet him face-to-face."

Actor - "Robert De Niro is an actor I have always admired. Some of his films will go down as classics in my opinion, so I'd invite him."

Actress - "Halle Berry. Need I explain?"

Politician - "George Bush obviously has a lot on his plate. Somebody with so much power must have a few stories to tell."

A.N.Other - "Jennifer Lopez, based purely on looks alone."

If you were in 'Big Brother', which of your team-mates would be evicted first and why?

"I'm sure our fans have noticed that David Flitcroft has a new hairstyle, but I couldn't do with looking at that every day. I'd therefore say he'd get voted off first."

If you were on 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?', which team-mate would you phone to help you win a million?

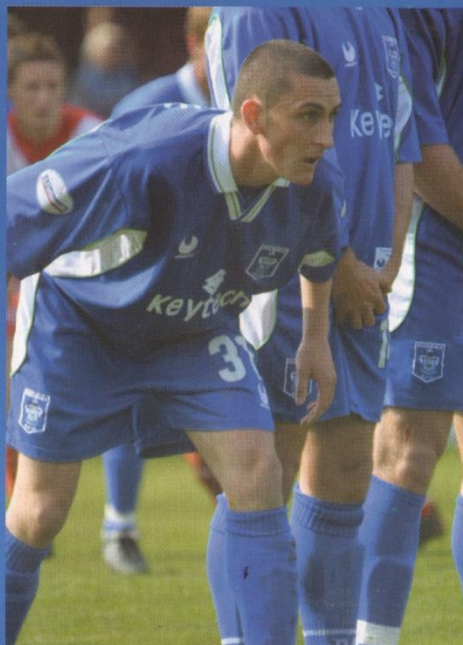
"Richard Jobson has all the experience needed to help me, so it would be his number I'd be phoning."

If you and your team-mates were contestants on 'The Weakest Link', who would be voted off first and why?

"It has to be a Scouser, and I think Kevin Townson would get my vote. It is a close call, but it would be Kev's name I was writing first."

DID YOU KNOW?

Darren Hockenhull actually joined Darlington on-loan three weeks before signing for Rochdale, but ended his loan spell prematurely when things didn't work out at Feethams.



Darren Hockenhull • Defender/Midfielder

Age: 19

History: Impressive junior who made a name for himself at Burscough. Signed YTS forms with Blackburn, but has yet to feature in the first-team.

Style: Enthusiastic, eager, energetic and keen to learn his trade further.

Do Mention: His grounding at Blackburn where he has been used to the best facilities money can buy.

Don't Mention: The commentator on DaleWorld when he said: "And I don't know how Hockenhull has missed it!"

Most Likely To Say: "Any chance I can stay behind for a bit of practising on my finishing, gaffer?"

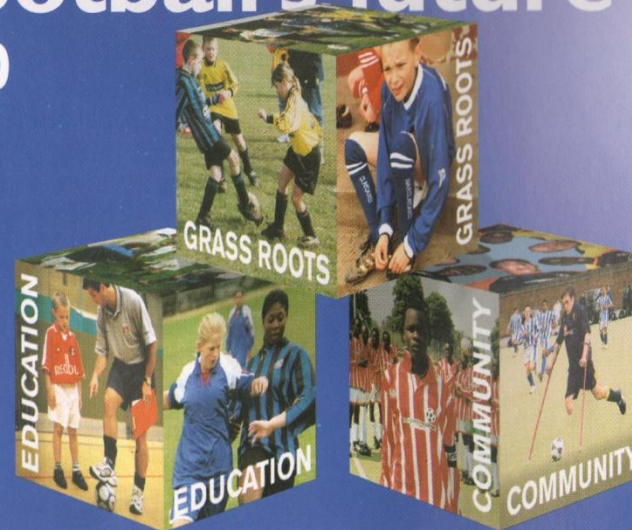
What Next?: In an ideal world Hockenhull would like the guarantee of a contract for next season. It does look as though he's going to have to wait and see if one is forthcoming from somewhere. Until then it's a case of playing for his future.

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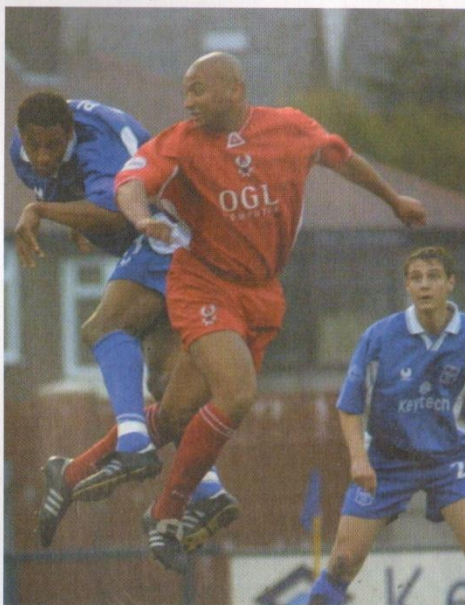
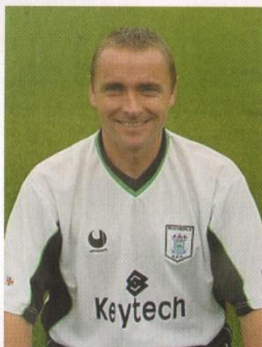
Rochdale 0, Kidderminster Harriers 1

Paul Simpson
Rochdale Manager

"I thought we started well, although we allowed them to play for the first ten minutes. After that we got on with our game and created opportunities, and when you're on top you have to punish teams, but we didn't put them away. However, I never felt they would score a goal and I thought it was going to be a 0-0 game.

"The supporters were fantastic tonight. They stuck with us and kept behind us, but sadly we were flat second half and we couldn't take the game to Kidderminster and give the supporters a lift.

"The goal was a poor goal from our point of view. I don't really know what happened with it, but it seems to have gone in very easy. I'll need to get another look at it to see just how it went in, but it was very disappointing."

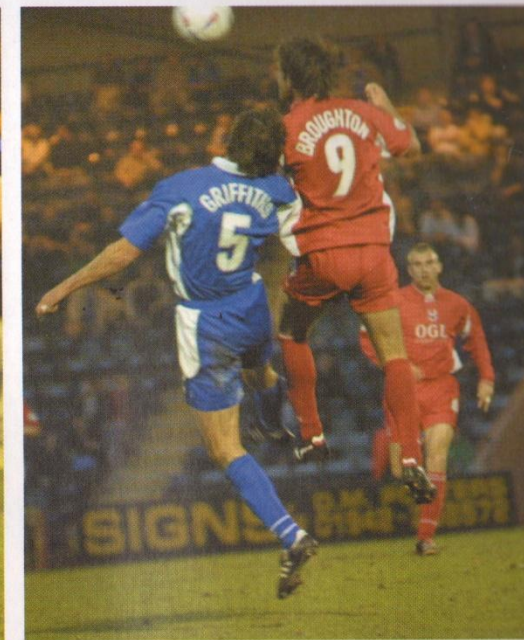
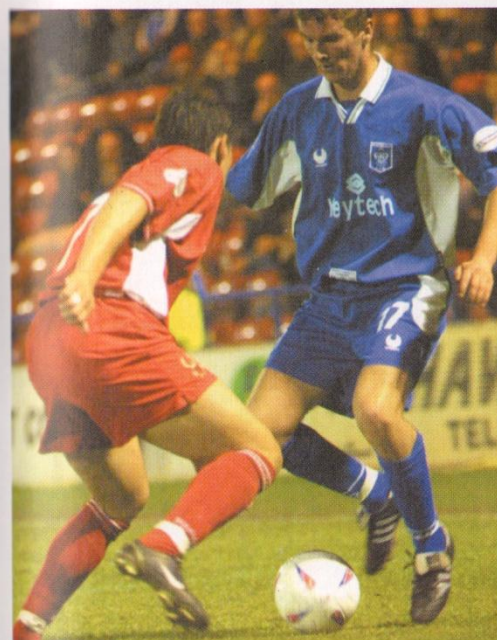


Ian Britton
Kidderminster Manager

"It was three very important points for us, especially at this stage of the season as well. The manner in which we won the game as well was pleasing. I thought we played well at times. We knocked it around well but we've doing that for the last three games without getting our just rewards. But fortunately we got that tonight.

"We decided to just 'go for it' and play football the way we want to play it. We got the goal and I thought we could have snatched a couple more if I'm being honest.

"I thought Drewie Broughton played very well. It was always in my mind to bring him back for this game to look after Gareth Griffiths, who scored twice against us last year."





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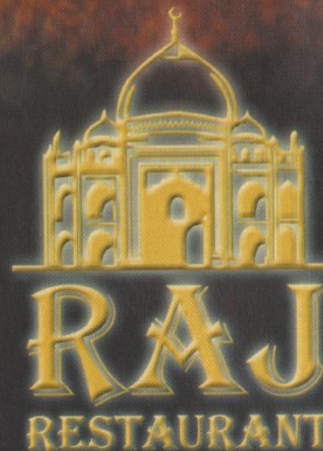


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Changes afoot in the Football League

SOME fairly radical proposals were discussed by the 72 Nationwide League clubs at their last get-together of the 2002/03 season in Leicester on Thursday.

If one of them received substantial support there could be more clubs involved in the end-of-season play-offs in future.

Another, of much greater significance, concerned the parlous state of the finances of so many clubs and how to force them to put their houses in order.

Sir Brian Mawhinney, the former Conservative Party chairman and recently-appointed chairman of the Football League, wants to wield the big stick if clubs continue to live beyond their means.

From what I understand, it was proposed that clubs that go into administration could face penalties ranging from a deduction of points to the ultimate sanction...loss of membership of the League.

League chiefs, under Sir Brian's direction, believe that unless penalties are introduced, there is no incentive for clubs to stay within their means.

League spokesman John Nagle said, prior to the meeting: "These proposals will enable clubs to use administration to restructure their businesses but we have to make sure football's finances are put on a firm footing in the long term."

The penalties for ignoring the new regulations, assuming they were given the green light on Thursday, are called 'sporting sanctions' and are quite severe.

Don't forget that no ruling can be made on any proposal until the League's annual general meeting on 5th June.

But if they did receive sufficient support on Thursday, clubs who go into administration twice in three years could have their membership of the Football League withdrawn from the beginning of the next season. In other words, they would be kicked out.

Penalties just for going into administration would range from six and 12-point deductions to automatic relegation and would come into force from the start of the 2004/05 season.

John Nagle says: "This is just the first step in raising the levels of governance within the Football League."

Similar sanctions already apply in various European countries. Clubs in Holland, for instance, must apply annually for a licence which is granted once they have given assurances that they are financially stable.

It could well be that quite a few club chairmen are going to be even nicer to their bank managers in future!

Another important proposal on Thursday concerned the end-of-season play-offs which, sadly, we are not going to be part of this season.

Crystal Palace proposed that, in future, six clubs rather than four should compete in the play-offs for promotion to the Premiership and the First Division, with the first round of games seeing the 5th-placed club hosting the 8th and the 6th hosting the 7th.

The winners would then travel to the grounds of the 3rd or 4th placed sides and the winners would meet in the final.

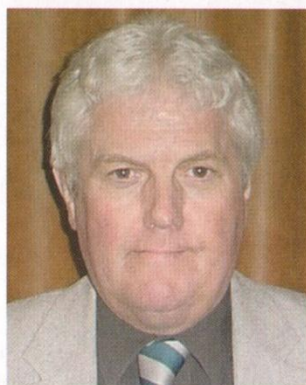
In the THIRD DIVISION, where three clubs are promoted automatically, the play-offs would involve the clubs from 4th to 9th place.

Back to finance because our accounts, for a two-year period, were released to shareholders last week.

They indicated an operating loss over a two-year period until May 2002 of £146,405.

But our financial director Graham Morris disclosed that for the year ended May 2001 the accounts showed an operating loss of £423,605 and the club actually turned things round and made a profit of £277,200 in the following period of 12 months.

Two record transfer fees, for Clive Platt and Paul Connor, totalling



£250,000, were financed from the proceeds of the ITV Digital deal which was worth £307,000 but has since collapsed, costing the club £119,000 a year.

Our chairman David Kilpatrick says, in his report to the shareholders: 'Regretfully, with the reduction in income from the television companies and the distributions from the Football League, it will be necessary for us to more closely control the contracts issued to players.'

'This is to ensure the club can meet its commitments in the future and avoid the financial difficulties which have beset many of our competitors.'

On the brighter side, of course, Graham Morris told the Rochdale Observer: 'We will make a profit this year because of the cup run and we should be straight at the end of the season.'

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to appreciate that gates of fewer than 2,000 go nowhere near providing enough money to pay the wage bill.

So the turn-out for the local derby against Bury was particularly welcome, even if it was swollen by a big following from down the road.

Bigger crowd, better atmosphere, better performance. Only the result was wrong.

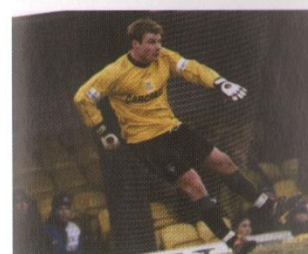
York drama breaks records

OUTFIELD KEEPERS

LEE McEvilly's introduction as Dale's replacement goalkeeper at York a fortnight ago (pictured) opened up a real can of worms over previous instances of an outfield player taking over between the sticks.

The most recent occurrence came in our game at Blackpool exactly two years ago. Dale had Neil Edwards sent-off for a professional foul late in the match, but one of the problems was that we had used all of our substitutes, meaning Matthew Gilks was unable to replace him.

David Flitcroft (pictured) had stood-in when 'Taffy' was sent-off at Southend a month earlier, but in the game at Blackpool he was one of the substituted players. Therefore, Michael Oliver took over for the closing moments, and managed to keep out the home strikers.



The last time Dale had to put an outfield player in goal due to injury was back in September 1994 - and again the opposition was Blackpool. The game was an Auto Windscreens Shield tie at Bloomfield Road when striker Paul Williams took over from keeper Chris Clarke, who had received a blow to the head in the 35th minute. Dale went on to win this match 2-1.

Twelve months earlier Martin Hodge was forced off the field in our opening game of the season at Darlington. Steve Whitehall replaced him for the

last five minutes of the first half, before Hodge returned to action after the break.

Back in January 1991 Dale travelled to Edgar Street to face Hereford. This was our first game following Terry Dolan's resignation as manager, meaning Dave Sutton was in temporary charge.

It was a bad start for Sutton, though, as Dale went down to a 2-0 defeat.

Hereford's first goal came from a penalty that had been awarded following a professional foul by Keith Welch. The Dale goalkeeper was sent-off by referee David Elleray, leaving full-back Wayne Goodison to keep goal for the remainder of the game.

GOALSCORING KEEPERS!

MANY Dale supporters were questioning whether Lee McEvilly was the first 'goalkeeper' to score a goal for Rochdale. We dusted down the club's official history to discover that the answer is "No", although you have to go back over 80 years for the evidence. However, it does appear as though 'Evil' is the first goalkeeper to score for Dale whilst wearing the keeper's jersey!

Back in the 1922/23 season goalkeeper Jimmy Crabtree turned out at inside left in a match at Hartlepool. Dale won the game 2-0, with Crabtree netting both goals! A week later we entertained the same opposition at Spotland but Crabtree found himself back between the posts!

It could be argued that Kevin Rose should also have a place in this unique club. When Dale drew 2-2 at Bury in March 1993 Rose powered a header towards goal, and to keen-eyed supporters it looked as though the ball was over the line. Unfortunately the linesman didn't concur, and it was left to Andy Thackeray to take the plaudits with two late goals.

PENALTY SAVES

WHAT is it about Bootham Crescent and penalty saves? In the last 14 years we have seen four penalties saved on that ground in fixtures between York

and Rochdale. Who recalls the following?

* September 1989 - Keith Welch saved from Steve Spooner, only for the referee to order a re-take. Spooner scored that time!

* August 1993 - Martin Hodge kept out Nigel Pepper's spot-kick.

* January 2002 - Matthew Gilks made a superb stop from Graham Potter's penalty.

* April 2003 - Michael Ingham saved from Paul Connor and Lee McEvilly. Fortunately 'Evil' blasted home the rebound.

THREE PENALTY POINTS

THE game at York saw referee Paul Robinson award three penalties, but when did that last happen in a Dale fixture?

We reckon it was back in March 1996 when Wigan were the visitors to Spotland. Steve Whitehall took two spot-kicks at the Sandy Lane end - but managed to miss both of them! It was therefore no surprise when Wigan were awarded a penalty of their own which Wayne Biggins converted with aplomb.

Whitehall was also involved in our FA Cup tie at Burnley in December 1993. He scored one penalty, but then missed another less than five minutes later. Soon after that Burnley were awarded a spot-kick, which David Eyres knocked past Martin Hodge to complete the Clarets' 4-1 win.

In November 1985 we defeated Wrexham 3-2 at Spotland, with Steve Taylor scoring two penalties for Dale and Steve Charles converting one for the Robins.

And finally, who remembers our game against Doncaster in September 1990? Dale managed to miss just one penalty that afternoon, but the problem was that they did it THREE times! It was a remarkable incident as the referee ordered two re-takes, but neither Wayne Goodison nor Steve O'Shaughnessy could find a way past goalkeeper Paul Crichton.

Rochdale AFC supports the 'Let's Kick Racism Out Of Football' campaign, and will not tolerate racial chanting directed at players, officials or other supporters.

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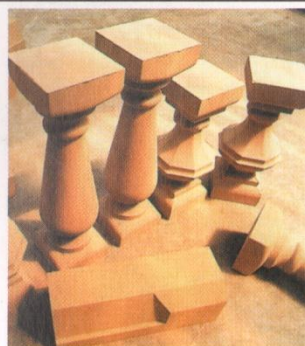
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Gulls impress Spotland faithful Plus... Brassed off by late shirt tug

TORQUAY United's 2-0 win at Spotland earlier this month was a terrible experience for everyone connected with Rochdale, but for those from Devon it was the perfect day out.

Herald Express

'Even Dale fans applaud United' was the headline in the *Herald Express*, although reporter David Thomas obviously - or deliberately - missed the more sinister reasons behind the accolade afforded to the visitors.

'As Torquay United's team coach left Spotland, a group of Rochdale fans, consoling themselves with a pint outside the Ratcliffe Arms, put down their drinks and applauded the Gulls out of the car park,' wrote Thomas.

'It was the most eloquent tribute to a performance which had been in a different class to anything their own team produced.

'And while United, a side without a visible weakness on Saturday, can look forward to the most exciting end of season they've known for at least five years, Rochdale are left only with trying to make sure they don't get dragged even deeper into relegation trouble.'

While that is a fair comment from Thomas, we take it he doesn't class Torquay's final day escape from relegation 2001 as 'exciting'.

Thomas continued: 'Only 12 months ago the roles were exactly reversed - United worried about the drop and Dale in the play-offs - which just goes to show how quickly fortunes can change in football.'

Let's hope by next April they have

changed again!

In conclusion Thomas said: 'What made United's performance all the better was that, while Rochdale had a subs' bench that would be hard to beat for experience and/or potential at this level, they had to include two trainees.'

Bristol Rovers' striker Andy Rammell produced a classic 'Noel Cantwell Moment' on the eve of our recent 1-1 draw with Bristol Rovers. 'I know nothing about Rochdale at all - not even where it is!' said a player who had a spell 15 miles away at Manchester United in the late 1980s!

We would love to bring you some comments from that game, but there are two reasons why we can't.

Firstly, we are still waiting for our ordered copy of the *Bristol Evening Post* to arrive, and secondly, there isn't a match report on that paper's website!

While Dale were fortunate to get a point from that midweek encounter, the same couldn't be said about our trip to York.

It was an amazing game, as summed up by the headline in the *Evening Press* - York's local paper.

Evening Press

'Botch-day halts City ... but point gained from weird clash may prove vital' were the words chosen by Dave Stanford to describe a remarkable clash.

'In every sense, it was not the best of Saturday afternoons for York City,' wrote Stanford. 'Scratching around for positives, an erratic City at least man-

aged to pick up a point when they barely warranted even the scantiest of returns.

'And while there was little in the way of flowing football, there was at least no shortage of incident, controversy and downright weirdness to numb the frustration.'

Stanford was, of course, referring to Lee McEvilly taking over in goal, and the triple penalty award by referee Paul Robinson.

Of the first penalty, Stanford said 'It looked harsh on the visitors', but he also contended that our first spot-kick was 'A highly questionable decision.' However, in Stanford's eyes 'There was little doubt about the decision to award Dale another penalty when Graham Potter upended Wayne Evans.'

What 'Evo' was doing up there in the first place is another question!

Stanford finished his report with: 'The visitors continued to play the better football and City were indebted to Chris Brass for his vital tackle at the death to foil Connor.'

If Stanford had had our view of that incident, he would have been asking why another penalty wasn't awarded. And if Brass wanted 'Trigger's' shirt so much, he should get in his bid NOW for the end-of-season auction!



DARLINGTON have been in the news quite a lot this season, but for all the wrong reasons.

They made an audacious bid to sign Faustino Asprilla in August, but he turned them down to return to South America. Their new stadium was due to open on 1st January, but we are still waiting. And finally, chairman George Reynolds caused a storm in February when he had a fanzine editor banned from the ground after defamatory articles appeared in his publication.

So what can we make of the latest development at Feethams? Former Carlisle chairman Michael Knighton has been appointed as the Quakers' new Commercial Manager! Does this mean they will be selling plastic aliens, wearing Darlo kits, in the Club Shop? Watch this (outer) space

THERE was sad news for the supporters of York City last week when they heard that legendary striker Keith Walwyn had passed away at the age of 47.

Walwyn, a big, strapping Jamaican, was one

of the players who always caused Dale problems in the early 1980s. He formed a lethal partnership with John Byrne as City raced to the Fourth Division title in 1983/84, and in total scored an impressive 140 goals in 291 appearances for the Minstermen. The club held a minute's silence in tribute to Walwyn prior to their fixture with Kidderminster on Monday.

SOUTHEND United have appointed former Doncaster and Colchester manager Steve Wignall as the new man in charge at Roots Hall. Wignall, 48, beat off competition from Steve Thompson, Don Mackay and Stewart Robson to become the Shrimpers' tenth manager in as many years.

Speaking about his appointment, Wignall said: 'I'm really ecstatic. This club has great potential and can go a long way. We have been in Division One before and our aim has to be to get back there.'

Wignall made a great start in his new position as Southend defeated Torquay 3-0 last Saturday.

Nationwide FOOTBALL LEAGUE

DIVISION THREE STATISTICS

Best Home Win:

6-0, Boston U. v Shrewsbury T., 21/12/02

Best Away Win:

5-1, Hull C. at Carlisle U., 1/3/03

Highest Aggregate:

7 goals

4-3, York C. v Torquay U., 17/8/02
4-3, Kidderminster H. v Exeter C., 24/8/02
4-3, Bury v Shrewsbury T., 26/8/02
2-5, Wrexham v Rochdale, 26/8/02
4-3, Rochdale v Cambridge U., 17/9/02
2-5, Shrewsbury T. v Bristol R., 21/9/02
4-3, Hartlepool U. v Wrexham, 19/10/02
2-5, Exeter C. v Kidderminster H., 18/2/03
6-1, Wrexham v Carlisle U., 21/4/03

Leading Scorers (all competitions):

34 goals - Andy Morrell (Wrexham);
25 goals - Dave Kitson (Cambridge U.);
21 goals - Martin Carruthers (Scunthorpe U.);
20 goals - Bo Henriksen (Kidderminster H.);
18 goals - Luke Rodgers (Shrewsbury T.);
18 goals - Peter Duffield (Boston U.);
17 goals - Barry Conlon (Darlington)

Highest Attendance:

22,319; Hull C v Hartlepool U., 26/12/02

Lowest Attendance:

1,583; Macclesfield T. v Oxford U., 29/10/02

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Division Three

Bournemouth v Lincoln
Boston v Macclesfield
Bristol R. v Darlington
Hartlepool v Shrewsbury
Hull v Kidderminster
Leyton Orient v Rushden & Diamonds
Scunthorpe v Oxford
Southend v Bury
Torquay v Carlisle
Wrexham v Cambridge
York v Exeter

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Mr G.R. Brierley, Rochdale £1
Mavis Shellard, Wardle 50p
Clint Firehawk £25 for every Wayne Evans goal
John Murray, Rochdale 50p
I wish I scored as often as Dale £1
The Cleggies, 50p

James Hampson, Syke 50p
Chris & Ginny Newton £1
Chris & Eric Rodgers 50p
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Dave Booth, Walthamstow, London £1
In memory of Martine Booth 50p
Joshua & Dad, Whitworth 50p
The Waltons 50p
Nick Maher, Rochdale £1
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Jarle Gunstad, Norway 50p
Richard Bott, Smithy Bridge £1
Stephen Bagley, Rochdale 50p
Val Bagley, Rochdale 50p
Peter Chamberlain, Rochdale 50p
Sean Smyth £5 for every Paul Connor goal
The Lads from the Wagon & Horses, Sudden, £5 per goal
Zaf, Swindon Dale 50p
Sean Smyth £5 per Clive Platt goal
Sean Smyth £1 per Neil Edwards clean sheet
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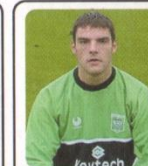
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Mabel
Away kit:



CLIVE PLATT
Home kit:
Target Fire Protection
Away kit:



KEVIN TOWNSON
Home kit:
Harry Pearce, Rochdale
Away kit:
Gareth Burke, Rochdale



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The Voice of Spotland

Steward's Enquiry Tales of yellow peril

WE'VE all got our own personal favourites of Yellow Peril and the people who control the safety of the match day crowd. I could probably fill the whole programme with anecdotes of 20 plus years watching Dale around the country, but I'll pick just a few to highlight why all Yellow Peril from around the country must be consigned to Room 101.

We might as well start at Spotland! Standing in the seats. Now there's a subject to get any WMG regular's hackles to rise! Although not a WMG person myself, I can never understand why the Yellow Peril are so insistent on every Dale fan being sat down permanently whilst away fans can stand in Willbutts Lane all match, and invade the pitch when they score, win promotion, or just feel like it.

I'm sure some away fans are ejected for rule breaking, but the pettiness directed towards our own for standing, putting a foot on a seat (I was once told off for that at a Reserve game!) or for whether you can or can't go through that gate at the front of the Family Stand is astounding. They should have made the WMG a terrace and all the bother would have been avoided! Therefore, our very own affable and friendly Yellow Peril can go to Room 101 first!

This was always a topic that I intended to avoid this season so as not to annoy our own stewards, but the events at Glanford Park recently means I have to cover the subject. A new entry as the undisputed No. 1 of terrible stewarding and organisation arose when Scunny decided that Dale fans should be situated at one end of their Main Stand... a bit like Dale used to do when Willbutts Lane was being built.

Not only did you have to queue to buy a ticket at a very small and undermanned office, you then had to queue to get in through one turnstile. I could just about cope with that, but at the end of the game Dale fans were wanting to get off sharpish in order to try and beat the congestion and get home before 11pm. Amazingly, the Scunny Yellow Peril wouldn't let us out as the designated exit had some of The Iron regulars filtering out through the same gate. Ooh, there was some vicious

stick quite rightly being given out to Yellow Peril.

Quite how Scunthorpe thought that Rochdale's diehards, who have no history of any trouble, would look to start bother with Scunthorpe's elderly 'Main Standers Massive' is beyond me. And, although Yellow Peril insisted he was under orders to keep the gate shut until all the Scunthorpe fans had gone, he then changed his mind and let us out when plenty of home fans were still filling out.

Was there any trouble? Of course not, but this was absolutely terrible organisation which led to placid fans becoming very angry.

Another incident occurred during the recent game at Exeter. Our female travelling colleague was making her first visit to Exeter, and as such she wanted to experience as much of the away end as possible. She was also under the impression that barriers were meant for leaning on in a forward direction. Wrong! As she leant on a rearmost barrier, she was approached by a fast-moving Yellow Peril. "You can't stand there love," he said in his West Country brogue. "Please move in front of the barrier."

A few minutes later, Chris Beech's wayward shot flew past us and nestled in this 'no mans land'. Everyone took a few seconds to look at the ball before exclaiming "We can't get the ball. We're not allowed behind the barrier."

Yellow Peril showed an unusual degree of initiative and decided to get the ball himself, much to the sarcastic amusement of the Dale contingent.

One of my favourites comes from Carlisle. Dale were playing there in August 1998 and, as Barrow was the manager, Carlisle had only opened one turnstile which about 200 fans had to patiently queue to get through. Added to this was the fact that the one turnstile had run out of change! The queue just got bigger and bigger and as the game kicked off there were more Dale fans outside the ground than in it.

One Dale fan standing close by is known as a scourge of Yellow Peril and he stormed to the stewards standing idly

close by at the exit gates demanding to know exactly what they were doing about the impasse at the turnstile. They obviously were not doing anything, and judging from the exploding Dale fan, I think they had just told him they weren't going to do anything either. Our angry Dale fan oiled his vocal chords and proceeded to give the stewards the biggest verbal blast they had ever had, to the point where I think one of them started looking for change in his own pocket.

In the end we all got in, but without some intervention I think we'd all be stood there now!

Our erstwhile steward basher was at it again the following season when Dale visited the Withdean Stadium, Brighton. Many of you won't be acquainted with the hassle of getting to this ground, but basically Albion operate a park-and-ride system for all 6,500 fans, with approximately four buses to do the job. We finally got to the ground and although no steward had done anything wrong, our man went to find one. On doing so he informed him that Albion were infringing on the civil liberties of man and were making what should be a pleasant day out seem more like a trip to Alton Towers.

The steward looked bemused, but the hassle of a match at Brighton certainly makes them, along with Stewards and Safety Officers everywhere a must for our least favourite room!

Five things I think of when we play Swansea City ...

1 - Sunbathing on the away end in August 1996.

2 - The ever-so predictable anti-England taunts.

3 - The awful Kenco coffee jar pie stall in the away end.

4 - The film 'Twin Town'. Set in Swansea, it's an absolute must.

5 - Graham Barrow was sacked after they beat us in May 1999.

Swans treading choppy waters Poor Easter leaves relegation doubts

TWO defeats over the Easter weekend have left Swansea City's Football League future hanging in the balance once again. The Swans were beaten at Leyton Orient last Saturday and at home by Exeter on Monday to find themselves a point above the drop zone with just two games to play.

City have been struggling in the lower reaches for the majority of the season. They won just once in their opening 13 fixtures - a 2-0 defeat of Bournemouth on 24th August - and by the onset of winter they were firmly entrenched in the relegation places.

By this time there had been a managerial change at the troubled Welsh club. Player-manager Nick Cusack had overseen the disastrous start to the season, but he left the Vetch Field following a 1-0 loss at Boston in mid-September. Former Wrexham boss Brian Flynn replaced Cusack and he has slowly improved the Swans' fortunes, despite their still precarious position.

One of Swansea's major problems has been their form on the road. They have collected just two away wins this term - the joint worst record in the Nationwide League - while 13 away fixtures have ended in defeat. Only Southend have lost more away games in Division Three.

Victories in their two remaining matches will see City steer clear of relegation. After today they face Hull at the Vetch Field next Saturday, although the picture could be much clearer by then -

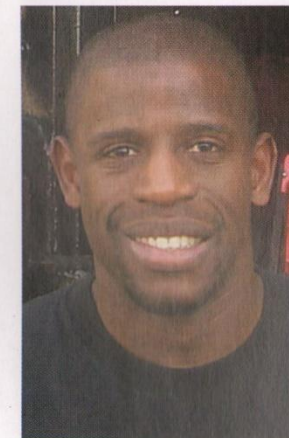
especially with Shrewsbury playing Carlisle in midweek.

Swansea have broken a club record this season by using 36 players in League action. Only two of those have been goalkeepers, with loanee **NEIL CUTLER** currently in pole position. Formerly with Chester and Aston Villa, Cutler helped Stoke gain promotion to Division One last season.

Stalwart **ROGER FREESTONE** - who is second in City's all-time League appearance list - has been relegated to second choice following some time out with a back injury. He has played 529 League games for the club, scoring three goals in the process, and is due a testimonial match against Chelsea in a couple of weeks.

MICHAEL HOWARD, JASON SMITH and **ALAN TATE** have been regulars in defence this term. Howard, who is in his fifth season at the Vetch Field, recently made his 200th League appearance for Swansea, while Smith, who had previously played in non-league football, is approaching his 150th League game for the club. Tate joined our visitors on loan from Manchester United in November having had a similar spell in Belgian football last season.

Former trainee **KRISTIAN O'LEARY** is City's longest-serving outfield player, having graduated from trainee status seven years ago. He will be looking for a start today, along with England Under-20 international **LEON HYLTON**, who is on loan from Aston Villa, and former trainee **LEE JENKINS**, who scored on his League



LENNY JOHNROSE

debut in a 4-0 win at Hereford in September 1996.

Other defenders in the squad are former Welsh Under-21 international **TERRY EVANS**, one-time Barry and Merthyr Tydfil centre-half **NEIL SHARP** and third-year trainee **STUART JONES**.



ROBERTO MARTINEZ

continued...

Brian Flynn has overhauled his midfield in recent months, and he now has the right blend of youth and experience in that position. The youth is provided by **LEON BRITTON**, who is on loan from West Ham until the end of the season, while the experience comes from Spaniard **ROBERTO MARTINEZ**, who won the Third Division title with Wigan in 1997, and former Burnley and Bury man **LENNY JOHNROSE**.

Ex-Dale winger **KIERON DURKAN** moved to the Vetch Field in January, but he has only just returned to the squad after a spell out through injury. **ANDREW MUMFORD** and **GARETH PHILLIPS**, who have both represented Wales at Under-21 level, have also been with the first team in recent weeks, while **JONATHAN COATES** rejoined Swansea on transfer deadline day having been released last May by then manager Nick Cusack.

Further midfield options are provided by former Manchester United junior **JAMIE WOOD**, one-time Oxford and Bury schemer **MATT MURPHY** and trainee **ANTONIO CORBISIERO**, who has captained Swansea's Under-19 team this season. The most familiar name in attack is **STEVE WATKIN**, an experienced striker who has now netted over 100 League goals. He spent his early career with Wrexham, playing under the management of his current boss Brian Flynn.

Blackburn Rovers provide two more of Swansea's forward players. **JAMES THOMAS**, who scored against Dale at the Vetch Field in October, joined his home town club last summer. He holds the records for most Welsh caps at Under-21 level, and was recently called-up to the full squad. **MARC RICHARDS**, who played on loan

at Halifax last season, linked-up with our visitors in November, also on a temporary basis.

JOHN WILLIAMS was once the winner of a national competition to find the country's quickest footballer, although the years have lessened his pace somewhat. He returned to Swansea two summers ago from Darlington.

Also available in attack are experienced striker **KEVIN NUGENT**, who will be best remembered for spells at Plymouth and Cardiff, and youngsters **JAMIE REWBURY** and **CRAIG STIENS**.



KIERON DURKAN

SWANSEA CITY ROLL CALL

PLAYER	AGE	SIGNED FROM
1 ROGER FREESTONE	34	Chelsea, Sep 1991
2 LEE JENKINS	23	Trainee, Dec 1996
3 LEON HYLTON	20	Aston Villa (loan), Feb 2003
4 KRISTIAN O'LEARY	25	Trainee, Jul 1996
5 JASON SMITH	28	Coventry C., Jul 1998
7 ANDREW MUMFORD	21	Llanelli T., Jun 2000
8 MATT MURPHY	31	Bury, Jul 2002
9 JAMES THOMAS	24	Blackburn R., Jul 2002
10 STEVE WATKIN	31	Wrexham, Sep 1997
11 JONATHAN COATES	27	Woking, Mar 2003
12 ALAN TATE	20	Manchester U. (loan), Nov 2002
14 MARC RICHARDS	20	Blackburn R. (loan), Nov 2002
15 KEVIN NUGENT	34	Leyton Orient, Feb 2003
17 TERRY EVANS	27	Barry T., Oct 2001
18 GARETH PHILLIPS	23	Trainee, Jul 1998
19 JOHN WILLIAMS	34	Darlington, Jul 2001
20 MICHAEL HOWARD	24	Tranmere R., Feb 1998
21 NEIL SHARP	25	Merthyr Tydfil, Oct 2001
23 KIERON DURKAN	29	Rochdale, Jan 2003
24 Lenny Johnrose	33	Bury, Jan 2003
25 JAMIE WOOD	24	Halifax T., Aug 2002
26 RICHARD DUFFY	17	Trainee
27 ROBERTO MARTINEZ	29	Walsall, Feb 2003
28 STUART JONES	19	Trainee
29 ANTONIO CORBISIERO	18	Trainee
30 JAMIE REWBURY	16	Trainee
32 CRAIG STIENS	18	Leeds U. (loan), Aug 2002
33 NEIL CUTLER	26	Stoke C. (loan), Feb 2003
35 LEON BRITTON	20	West Ham U. (loan), Dec 2002

We have given ourselves a chance

Karen Bond talks to Brian Flynn

SWANSEA City may have spent much of this season in and around the relegation zone, but manager Brian Flynn remains hopeful that an upturn in their fortunes over recent months will be enough to preserve the club's Football League status.

Flynn, who was appointed in September after turning down the Director of Football role five months earlier, is convinced the battle to avoid relegation will go right down to the wire and believes 48 points should guarantee Swansea's survival.

"We have put ourselves in with a good fighting chance," insisted Flynn before defeat at Leyton Orient last weekend left Swansea only two points above the drop zone and having played a game more than two of the three sides below them.

"Our level of consistency has been good. We needed it because with 20 games to go, just under half the season, our goal difference was very, very poor and we needed to alter that.

"We are still the lowest goal scorers in the division, but we were by a long way and that has got better. We have also conceded fewer goals in games and things have turned around.

"The main and important factor

[behind this turn around] is that the players have done what is expected of them. I am enjoying it [at Swansea]. You have got to enjoy it and relish the challenge and that is what we came here for.

"I think mathematically it will not be the case [that we are safe by today]. I hope it is but I don't think it will be. Whatever results there were over the Easter weekend, I think the only teams probably safe are really the ones on the fringes of relegation."

Flynn began his career as an apprentice with Burnley and, with less than a season of first team football behind him, he won the first of his 66 caps for Wales as a 19-year-old substitute against Luxembourg in May 1975.

The 47-year-old joined Leeds United for £250,000 in November 1977 and, having been named Player of the Year in 1978/79, he went on to make 154 League appearances for the club before returning to Burnley in November 1982.

Three years later Flynn moved to Cardiff City and then had spells with Doncaster Rovers (twice), Limerick and Bury before joining Wrexham in February 1988. The Welshman was appointed player-manager in November 1989, initially on a temporary basis.

Flynn retired from playing at the

end of the 1991/92 season and went onto become Wrexham's longest-serving manager, having been in charge for more than 600 matches before his departure in September 2001.

What then is Flynn, who took Wrexham into the European Cup Winners' Cup as Welsh Cup winners, expecting from today's encounter at Spotland Stadium?

"They were up there at the start, early in the season, and slipped slightly," concluded Flynn. "They had a good cup run and have got some good young players. I think they may be a force next season...and Swansea too."



DID YOU KNOW?

OUR first two League games against Swansea took place on 15th April 1968 and 16th April 1968!

ROCHDALE lost their first five League games against Swansea.

DALE'S 3-0 defeat at Swansea in December 1968 was followed by an unbeaten run of 15 League games, which eventually led to promotion.

DALE'S first victory over The Swans came in our ninth meeting - Reg Jenkins, Jack Howarth and Peter Gowans scoring in a 3-2 win at the Vetch Field in September 1972.

IN February 1978 Swansea appointed legendary Liverpool and Wales striker John Toshack as their new manager. His first game was a 2-1 defeat at Spotland.

IN November 1986, on-loan Leeds' striker Lyndon Simmonds (pictured) scored Swansea's goal in their 1-0 home defeat of Dale....



Our League record against Swansea City is:

	P	W	D	L	F	A
Home	16	7	4	5	20	16
Away	17	3	4	10	18	30
TOTAL	33	10	8	15	38	46

First met in League: 1967/68

Doubles achieved: 1

Doubles conceded: 3

Biggest wins:

Home: 3-0, 1997/98;

Away: 3-0, 1987/88

Heaviest defeats:

Home: 0-3, 1998/99;

Away: 0-3, 1968/69, 1977/78 & 1997/98

Last home win: 2-0, 2001/02

Last away win: 1-0, 2001/02

Last home draw: 0-0, 1999/2000

Last away draw: 1-1, 2002/03

Last home defeat: 0-3, 1998/99

Last away defeat: 0-1, 1999/2000

LAST HOME LEAGUE MEETING

Saturday 26th January 2002

ROCHDALE 2, SWANSEA CITY 0

Scorers - Oliver, Sharp (og)

DALE: Banks, Evans, McAuley, Ware, Jobson, Griffiths, Flitcroft, Connor (Townson), Platt (McEvilly), Oliver, Doughty (Dunning)

SWANSEA: Freestone, Evans, Howard, Cusack, O'Leary (Todd), Sharp, Mumford (Lacey), Brodie, Williams, Watkin, Coates

FIVE months later Simmonds scored for Dale as we defeated the Swans 2-0 at Spotland...

AND then in the 1987/88 campaign, Simmonds netted three times against Swansea - once in a 3-2 loss at Spotland and twice in our 3-0 triumph at the Vetch Field.

WHEN Dale lost 2-1 at Swansea on the opening day of the 1996/97 season, home manager Jan Molby missed a penalty and was also sent-off.

THAT game was Graham Barrow's first as Dale manager. His last was our 3-0 home defeat to Swansea in May 1999.

WHEN we drew 0-0 at Swansea in December 1998, referee Lee Cable sent-off Dale's Mark Williams for a foul committed by Paul Carden!

EARLIER this term we had Clive Platt (pictured) sent-off in a 1-1 draw at the Vetch Field.



LAST season Dale completed their only League double over the Swans.

Man City fan strips to his shorts

ROCHDALE supporters bring us their personal memories of previous games against today's visitors ...

Richard Wild: The kiosk in the away end at Swansea is very peculiar. It is the shape of a coffee jar, and is behind a wire fence. It makes you almost scared to ask for anything for fear of having your head bitten off. I also recall that on my first few trips there they didn't sell coffee. Bizarre!

I've also visited Swansea on numerous occasions and we very rarely seem to win. The only time I haven't been in recent times was when Steve Parkin was manager and we won 1-0. Paul Connor's goal there earlier this season is also something to remember, plus it's so bloody far home after we've lost.

Clive Armstrong, Whitworth: I had been watching Dale for quite a few years before I got the chance to go to Swansea. I had seen the Vetch Field on TV when Swansea were in the old First Division, but I had also read something in a book - probably one of those ground guides - about this bloke who used to watch games from the top of a ladder.

So when I eventually went to 'The Vetch' in August 1996, my first task was to look for this chap. Sure enough, there he was at the far end of the ground, his head poking proudly over the top of the wall. Maybe he was in the Free Ladder Gang!

Anyway, when we played at Swansea in October he wasn't there! I have three theories on this: (1) He has died; (2) He has had his ladder confiscated, or (3) He decided Swansea weren't worth watching! If any Swansea fans reading this know who I'm talking about, can they inform the programme editor!

Mark Wilbraham: One of my most vivid memories of Swansea is when we played them at Spotland towards the end of the 1986/87 season. Dale were battling against relegation from the

League and it was vital we won our home games - I think we had three to play. Swansea visited on a Wednesday night and the Rochdale weather was true to form - it bucketed it down! Dale were leading 1-0 at half-time, but the pitch was becoming more waterlogged by the minute. I was stood by the tunnel during the interval, and I recall the referee, who was future Premiership whistler Gerald Ashby, coming out to have a look at the worsening conditions. Suddenly, one old-time Dale fan shouted to him: "If tha' calls off this game, tha'll never get out of here in one piece!"

The ref. obviously took this advice to heart as the game continued and Dale won 2-0. Not only that, but he also gave us a penalty!

Basil Cryer, Dearnley: I think we played Swansea here in our last home game about four years ago. My abiding memory of that game is of a Swansea fan climbing onto the roof of the Willbutts Lane stand and waving his Welsh flag violently and proudly. And the annoying thing was that he was allowed to do it completely unchallenged!

Jim Delsey, Hamer: I have a great memory of a game against Swansea. It was May 1999 and it was our last home game of the season. We lost 3-0 and everyone skulked home in a depressed state of mind. The depression continued until about 10 o'clock on Sunday morning when I received a phone call. "He's gone," came the voice of a friend. "Who has?" I queried. "Barrow," replied my mate. "They've sacked him."

I whooped with delight at the thought of no more Barrowball. And then I wondered why it had taken so long!

Colin Howarth, Norden: Back in the mid-1990s a friend of mine suddenly decided that he wanted to come to Swansea for the first game of the season. This was a strange decision as he

was a Man City fan and I couldn't quite fathom out why he was prepared to travel all that way to a neutral game.

Those of you who were there will recall that it was a baking hot day. My friend, who had missed out on his summer holiday due to it clashing with the Dog and Partridge's FC end-of-season 'do', decided he wanted to get a bit of a tan. So, on entering the away end he made his way down to the front few rows of the terrace so as not to be shielded from the sun by the cavernous roof. He then proceeded to peel off his T-shirt, lay it down on the steps, and lie there wearing only his shorts and pumps.

I can't quite recall for how long he lay there, but after a while he gave up and decided to watch Dale lumber to a 2-1 defeat. I must admit I was very confused about him seemingly coming to Swansea for the sole reason of improving his pallid complexion. But a few years later I found out the real reason

My mate had his eye on a young lady - we'll call her Suzanne. He had seen her in the pubs and heard she went to Dale away games. So he figured that she would be at Swansea and he wanted to impress her.

So the carefully planned charade took place. My friend thought that his figure, honed from years playing as a cultured left-back in the Rochdale Sunday League, would beat anything that 150 generally overweight Dale fans could produce. He also thought that by placing himself in an exposed area of the terrace, Suzanne would be immediately drawn to this loner and take pity on him, while also admiring him for his gumption.

There was just one problem with this tale. Suzanne didn't go to the game!!!! Oh how we laughed when he told us the story. But there was a happy ending as they got together soon after and are now happily married.

STAT ATTACK ... Dale have lost just one of their last seven

Opponents

2002 August	Result	Pos	Att	Away								
Sat 10 LEYTON ORIENT	H 3.00	W 1-0	5	3252	478	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Macauley	Filtcroft	Beech
Tue 13 Lincoln City	A 7.45	L 0-2	12	2894	339	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Macauley	Filtcroft	Beech
Sat 17 Bristol Rovers	A 3.00	W 2-1	8	6478	172	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Macauley	Filtcroft	Beech
Sat 24 DARLINGTON	H 3.00	D 1-1	7	2834	361	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Macauley	Filtcroft	Duffy
Mon 26 Wrexham	A 3.00	W 5-2	4	4340	530	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Macauley	Filtcroft	Duffy
Sat 31 SOUTHEND UNITED	H 3.00	L 1-2	6	2852	165	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Macauley	Filtcroft	Duffy

September

Fri 6 Carlisle United	A 7.45	W 2-0	2	4501	313	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Jobson	Filtcroft	Bishop
Wed 11 Sheffield Wed (WC)	A 7.45	L 0-1	-	8815	735	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Jobson	Filtcroft	Duffy
Sat 14 SHREWSBURY TOWN	H 3.00	D 1-1	3	2914	313	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Jobson	Filtcroft	Duffy
Tue 17 CAMBRIDGE UNITED	H 7.45	W 4-3	2	2392	137	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Jobson	Filtcroft	McCourt
Sat 21 Kidderminster Harriers	A 3.00	D 0-0	3	2685	369	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Jobson	Filtcroft	McCourt
Sat 28 MACCLESFIELD TOWN	H 3.00	W 3-1	2	3090	400	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Jobson	Filtcroft	McCourt

October

Sat 5 Swansea City	A 3.00	D 1-1	4	3732	174	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Jobson	Filtcroft	Bishop
Sat 12 Hull City	A 3.00	L 0-3	4	9057	502	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Jobson	Filtcroft	Bishop
Sat 19 SCUNTHORPE UNITED	H 3.00	L 1-2	5	3442	447	Gilks	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Jobson	Filtcroft	Bishop
Tue 22 BURY (LDV)	H 7.45	L 0-1	-	2486	756	Gilks	Duffy	Doughty	Griffiths	Macauley	Hodges	Bishop
Sat 26 Boston United	A 3.00	L 1-3	10	2653	309	Edwards	Duffy	Doughty	Griffiths	Jobson	FILT CROFT	Bishop
Tue 29 EXETER CITY	H 7.45	D 3-3	11	1944	78	Edwards	Duffy	Doughty	Griffiths	Evans	FILT CROFT	McEvilly

November

Sat 2 RUSHDEN & DIAMONDS	H 3.00	L 0-1	13	2628	222	Edwards	Duffy	Doughty	Griffiths	Evans	Filtcroft	McEvilly
Sat 9 Oxford United	A 3.00	L 0-2	16	4547	230	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	C-Sherriff	Melaugh	McEvilly
Sat 16 PETERBOROUGH U.(FAC)	H 3.00	W 3-2	-	2566	441	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	C-Sherriff	Melaugh	Duffy
Sat 23 YORK CITY	H 3.00	L 0-1	16	3056	432	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	C-Sherriff	Melaugh	Duffy
Sat 30 Torquay United	A 3.00	D 2-2	15	2754	147	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	C-Sherriff	Melaugh	Duffy

December

Sat 7 Bristol Rovers (FAC)	A 3.00	D 1-1	-	4369	232	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Jobson	Grand	Melaugh	Duffy
Sat 14 HARTLEPOOL UNITED	H 3.00	W 4-0	15	3059	884	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Jobson	Grand	Melaugh	Duffy
Tue 17 BRISTOL ROVERS (FAC)	H 7.45	W 3-2	-	2206	132	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Jobson	Grand	Melaugh	Duffy
Sat 21 Bury	A 3.00	D 1-1	15	5827	1767	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Jobson	Grand	Melaugh	Duffy
Thu 26 WREXHAM	H 3.00	D 2-2	14	3727	891	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Jobson	Grand	Melaugh	Duffy
Sat 28 AFC Bournemouth	A 3.00	D 3-3	15	6240	264	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Jobson	Grand	Melaugh	FILT CROFT

2003 January

Sat 4 Preston North End (FAC)	A 3.00	W 2-1	-	8762	2031	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Jobson	Grand	Oliver	Warner
Sat 18 Southend United	A 3.00	L 0-1	17	3645	172	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Jobson	Grand	Oliver	Warner
Tue 21 LINCOLN CITY	H 7.45	L 0-1	17	2122	196	Edwards	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Grand	Oliver	Warner
Sat 25 COVENTRY CITY (FAC)	H 3.00	W 2-0	-	9156	3300	Edwards	Evans	Hill	Griffiths	Grand	Oliver	Melaugh

February

Sat 8 OXFORD UNITED	H 3.00	W 2-1	17	2764	335	Edwards	Evans	Hill	Griffiths	Grand	OLIVER	MELAUGH
Tue 11 Darlington	A 7.30	W 1-0	15	2479	208	Gilks	Evans	Hill	Griffiths	Grand	OLIVER	Warner
Sun 16 Wolverhampton W. (FAC)	A 7.00	L 1-3	-	23921	3151	Gilks	Evans	Hill	Griffiths	Grand	MELAUGH	Warner
Sat 22 CARLISLE UNITED	H 3.00	L 0-1	16	3247	775	Gilks	Evans	Hill	Griffiths	Grand	Melaugh	Warner
Tue 25 Leyton Orient	A 7.45	W 1-0	14	2633	91	Gilks	Evans	Hill	Griffiths	Grand	Melaugh	Andrews

March

Sat 1 Shrewsbury Town	A 3.00	L 1-3	16	3423	301	Gilks	Evans	Hill	Griffiths	Grand	Melaugh	Andrews
Tue 4 Cambridge United	A 7.45	D 2-2	16	2586	127	Gilks	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Andrews	Melaugh	Duffy
Tue 11 AFC BOURNEMOUTH	H 7.45	D 1-1	16	1958	173	Gilks	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Andrews	Melaugh	Duffy
Sat 15 BOSTON UNITED	H 3.00	W 1-0	15	2538	259	Gilks	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Andrews	Melaugh	Duffy
Tue 18 Scunthorpe United	A 7.30	L 1-3	15	3616	178	Gilks	Andrews	Doughty	Griffiths	Grand	Duffy	McCourt
Sat 22 Exeter City	A 3.00	D 1-1	15	4003	93	Gilks	Andrews	Doughty	Griffiths	Grand	Duffy	Beech
Mon 24 Rushden & Diamonds	A 7.45	D 3-3	15	3444	131	Gilks	Andrews	Doughty	Jobson	GRAND	Duffy	Beech

April

Sat 5 TORQUAY UNITED	H 3.00	L 0-2	17	2216	167	Gilks	Taylor	Doughty	Griffiths	Grand	Hockenhill	Beech
Tue 8 BRISTOL ROVERS	H 7.45	D 1-1	15	1658	267	Gilks	Taylor	Doughty	Griffiths	Grand	Duffy	Filtcroft
Sat 12 York City	A 3.00	D 2-2	16	3966	328	Gilks	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Grand	Hockenhill	Filtcroft
Tue 15 KIDDERMINSTER H.	H 7.45	L 0-1	17	1810	99	Bennett	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	Grand	Hockenhill	Filtcroft
Fri 18 BURY	H 3.00	L 1-2	17	4513	1766	Gilks	Evans	Doughty	Griffiths	GRAND	Hockenhill	Filtcroft
Mon 21 Hartlepool United	A 3.00	D 2-2	18	5408	188	Gilks	Evans	Hill	Griffiths	GRAND	Patterson	Filtcroft
Sat 26 SWANSEA CITY	H 3.00											
Tue 29 HULL CITY	H 7.45											

May

Sat 3 Macclesfield Town	A 3.00											
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League games at York

Platt	Townson	Hodges	McCourt	CONNOR	Oliver	Duffy	Gilks
Platt	Townson	Hodges	Connor	McCourt	Oliver	Duffy	Gilks
PLATT	McEvilly	Oliver	Duffy	Connor	Hodges	Townson	Gilks
Platt	McEvilly	Oliver	Connor	Townson	Jobson	Warner	Gilks
Platt	McEvilly	Oliver	Bishop	Connor	Townson	Jobson	Gilks

PLATT	Connor	Oliver	Duffy	Townson	Hodges	Hill	Gilks
Platt	Connor	Oliver	McCourt	Townson	Hodges	Warner	Gilks
Platt	Connor	Oliver	McCourt	Townson	Hodges	Macauley	Gilks
Platt	Connor	Oliver	McCourt	Townson	Hodges	Macauley	Baker
PLATT	CONNOR	Oliver	Bishop	Hodges	Townson	McEvilly	Gilks

Platt	Connor	Beech	Townson	Oliver	Fernandez	Jobson	Gilks
Platt	Connor	Beech	Patterson	Oliver	Townson	Duffy	Gilks
PLATT	CONNOR	BEECH	Filtcroft	McEvilly	Townson	Patterson	Gilks
Platt	Connor	Beech	McEvilly	Townson	Filtcroft	Patterson	Gilks
Platt	CONNOR	Beech	McCourt	McEvilly	Townson	Simpson	Gilks

PLATT	Connor	McEvilly	SIMPSON	Melaugh	Townson	Hill	Gilks
PLATT	CONNOR	McEvilly	McCourt	Townson	Hill	McCourt	Gilks
PLATT	Townson	McEvilly	McCourt	Hill	Griffiths	Simpson	Gilks
Platt	CONNOR	McEvilly	Simpson	Griffiths	McCourt	Townson	Gilks
PLATT	Connor	McEvilly	Oliver	Simpson	Jobson	Townson	Gilks

Platt	Connor	McEvilly	McCourt	Oliver	Patterson	Townson	Baker
Platt	McEvilly	McCourt	Oliver	Patterson	Connor	Simpson	Baker
Platt	McEvilly	McCourt	Connor	Grand	Patterson	Simpson	Baker
Platt	McEvilly	McCourt	Simpson	Patterson	Grand	Baker	Baker
Connor	McEvilly	Simpson	Platt	Townson	Evans	Beech	Baker

CONNOR	Platt	Simpson	McCourt	Jobson	McEvilly	Townson	Melaugh
CONNOR	Platt	Simpson	McEvilly	Beech	Townson	Taylor	Bennett
McEvilly	Platt	Doughty	Townson	Connor			

Nationwide League Division 3

	Pld	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Rushden	44	16	4	2	47	18	8	9	5	25	28	26	85
Hartlepool	44	15	5	2	46	21	8	7	7	21	29	17	81
Wrexham	43	11	7	4	43	26	9	8	4	32	24	25	75
Bournemouth	44	14	7	1	38	17	5	7	10	20	30	11	71
Bury	44	8	8	6	25	23	9	8	5	30	29	3	67
Scunthorpe	44	10	8	4	38	20	7	7	8	26	28	16	66
Oxford	44	8	7	7	24	20	10	5	7	31	25	10	66
Lincoln	44	10	8	4	28	17	7	7	8	16	19	8	66
York	44	11	9	2	34	22	6	6	10	18	27	3	66
Torquay	44	9	11	2	39	28	7	6	9	29	39	1	65
Kidderminster	44	8	7	7	29	32	8	7	7	31	26	2	62
Cambridge	44	10	7	5	37	23	6	6	10	29	40	3	61
Hull	43	8	10	3	30	18	5	7	9	21	28	5	56
Southend	44	12	1	9	28	21	5	2	15	18	35	-10	54
Darlington	44	8	9	5	34	25	4	8	10	21	30	0	53
Macclesfield	44	7	6	9	26	26	6	6	10	27	33	-6	51
Orient	43	9	5	7	28	23	5	4	13	21	35	-9	51
ROCHDALE	43	6	6	9	27	27	5	10	7	31	37	-6	49
Boston	44	10	6	6	32	21	3	7	12	19	33	-3	48
Bristol Rovers	44	6	7	9	23	26	5	7	10	24	29	-8	47
SWANSEA	44	8	6	8	24	23	2	7	13	18	39	-20	43
Carlisle	43	5	5	12	26	38	6	5	10	20	34	-26	43
Exeter	44	6	7	9	23	31	3	8	11	24	33	-17	42
Shrewsbury	43	5	6	10	31	34	4	8	10	28	50	-25	41

Rochdale Season 2002/03
Appearances & Goalscorers

Player	02/03 League		02/03 Cup games		Dale career		Overall career	
	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals
Andrews	8	-	-	-	8	-	63	-
Beech	13(2)	1	1	1	16	2	297	49
Bennett	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Bishop	5(3)	-	1	-	9	-	638	42
Cansdale	3	-	1	-	4	-	4	-
Connor	28(8)	12	6(1)	3	79	26	146	41
Doughty	38(1)	-	6	-	89	2	128	3
L. Duffy	19(3)	-	5	-	35	-	35	-
Edwards	26	-	6	-	223	-	441	-
Evans	37	-	7	-	200	4	429	6
Filtcroft	38(1)	2	6(1)	-	186	4	392	25
Gilks	16(1)	-	2	-	44	-	44	-
Grand	20(1)	2	5	-	26	1	26	1
Griffiths	38(1)	5	5	1	92	10	282	18
Hill	6(1)	-	2	-	9	-	9	-
Hockenhill	4	-	-	-	4	-	4	-
Hodges	3(4)	-	1	-	8	-	188	25
Jobson	14(1)	-	4	-	61	3	693	42
Macauley	6	-	1	-	7	-	346	31
McCourt	12(14)	2	(4)	1	58	7	58	7
McEvilly	24(10)	12	5(1)	1	60	18	60	18
Melaugh	16(1)	1	5	1	22	2	22	2
Oliver	17(3)	2	4	-	119	10	326	26
Patterson	1(4)	-	(1)	-	6	-	6	-
Platt	37(2)	6	7	3	191	37	234	42
Simpson	30(5)	10	4(2)	1	50	17	770	170
Taylor	2	-	-	-	2	-	14	-
Townson	5(18)	1	1(3)	-	78	18	78	18
Warner	6(1)	-	2	-	9	-	9	-