

# There's a world of nostalgia for Rugby men

FOOTBALL was a mere novelty when a group of men from Leeds and Manchester got together to play a match at Fieldhouse.

Many spectators, according to the records, went to watch the fun as the Manchester captain, who weighed 14½ stones, played at half-back and led his side to a win by two goals.

But they didn't know that they were pioneering the start of Rugby Football in Huddersfield. That was in October, 1867. A club was formed and 11 years later the first match was played at Fartown.

In the following 100 years thousands of rugby fans throughout Huddersfield and the North of England have had cause to feel grateful to that hardy bunch of sports enthusiasts.

The Fartown ground centenary holds nostalgic memories for countless numbers of Huddersfield fans over the years. Most of them have fond memories of at least one of the truly great Fartown sides who stamped their mark in the history of the game.

The first reference to a football match in the Huddersfield area, according to local historian Stanley Chadwick in his jubilee history handbook "Claret and Gold 1895—1946", was in 1848 when men from Holmfirth and a team from Hepworth played each other for a £5 stake.

The present club was born out of an amalgamation between Huddersfield Athletic Club and St John's Cricket Club at the Thornhill Arms Inn, Fartown, on November 27, 1875.

The first meeting of the

Huddersfield this year celebrate the Fartown ground centenary. IAN LAYBOURN looks at some of the names and events which hold a prominent place in the club's history.

Huddersfield Cricket and Athletic Club was held the following March but the football section continued to play on its old field in Trinity Street — until the opening of the 1878-79 season.

The ground was completed during the summer and the first match took place on November 2 against Manchester Rangers. Increased support — mainly due to the team's success in the Yorkshire "T" Owd Tin Pot" in 1889-90 — brought pressure on the club to improve the ground and 5,000 shares of £1 each were issued to raise the capital.

## Alterations

Huddersfield played their home matches away until the alterations, including terraces, were completed and on October 31, 1891, Cardiff were invited to play the first match, which was watched by a crowd of 10,000.

Another notable match at Fartown was the visit of Wakefield Trinity on September 14, 1895 — the first on the ground since the split with the Rugby Union.

The Huddersfield players turned out in new claret coloured jerseys with white collars and blue knickers.

The first season was one of disappointment and disaster but an influx of players from Wales held hope of a rosier future. The decision by the Northern Union to

adopt professionalism made the move from the Valleys an attractive one and set a trend that continued until the early 1960s. The Fartowners still have two Welsh internationals in their side.

When H T Waterfield was signed from Ebbw Vale in 1898 a third of the Fartown team consisted of players from the Principality and three more joined the ranks in 1903. £60 down and £2.15s a week were the enticements.

The rewards had to be increased for Swansea centre James Davies, who insisted on 140 gold sovereigns before moving North in 1905.

That figure was reduced by 135 when a 15-year-old centre was signed from local amateurs Underbank a year later. For just five gold sovereigns, Harold Wagstaff joined the Claret and Gold and embarked on a career that would make him the most famous ever Fartowner and probably the greatest centre in the history of the game.

A facsimile of his birth certificate was published in the Fartown programme to prove to disbelievers that Wagstaff was not yet 16 when he first began to attract attention in the Huddersfield colours.

He had played in a Test match before his 18th birthday and when 20 captained Huddersfield to their Championship win over Wigan in 1911.

He was, of course,

skipper of the all-conquering Fartown side of 1914-15 which won all four cups — the Challenge Cup, the Championship, the Yorkshire Cup and the Yorkshire League Championship.

Wagstaff was not the first Fartowner to receive international recognition (Harry Huth, who played in that historic first match at Fartown in 1878, was the first Huddersfield player to be selected for England) and certainly wasn't the last.

When Huddersfield lined up at the start of the 1909-10 season there were no fewer than eight internationals in the team, including Albert Aaron Rosenfeld, whose tally of 80 tries in 1913-14 is still the individual record for a season and there were six Fartowners in the NU team that toured Australia in 1914.

"Rozzy" was in the team of all-talents that took all before them in the decade before the First World War, which brought to an abrupt end a glorious reign at the top.

From 1911 to their defeat in the Challenge Cup semi-final in 1921 they never failed to win a cup. Sixteen was the tally. They won the Challenge Cup three times, the Championship three times, the Yorkshire Cup six times, and the Yorkshire League Championship four times.

The Fartown scoring machine was feared wherever it went and several teams found themselves on the end of a thrashing.

Huddersfield amassed a staggering 119 points against Swinton Park in 1914 when Rosenfeld scored seven of the 27 tries and Major Holland kicked 18 of the 19 goals.

On one occasion, a



The great Huddersfield "Team of All The Talents," winners of all four cups in 1914-15. Back row: A Lee, J W Higson, W Banks, E Jones, E Heyes, F Longstaff, D Clark, A Swinden. Middle row: A Bennett (trainer), R Habron, M Holland, S Moorhouse, H Wagstaff, T Gleeson, G Todd, B Gronow, H Bennett (asst trainer). Front row: Yorkshire League Cup: W H Ganley, RL Cup, A A Rosenfeld, Challenge Cup, J H Rogers, Yorkshire Challenge Cup.

# Hunter, Cooper and Devery!

League match against Keighley, the referee had to call a halt to the 70-5 scoring spree while he borrowed a pencil from a spectator. In 1911-1912 Huddersfield's phenomenal scoring reached new heights when they totalled 1,196 — and conceded just 283.

Much of the points-gathering in this period was done by Ben Gronow, a former captain of Bridgend who had the distinction of making the first kick at Twickenham when the ground was opened in 1910, shortly before moving North. He was capped four times in seven Tests after turning professional.

He had been at Fartown four seasons before his goalkicking prowess was revealed and he then went on to break all club records. In 15 seasons he amassed 1,701 points and became the only player to kick 100 goals in both the first and second halves of a season, though not the same season.

Another of the Fartown "greats" in this era went on to achieve further fame in the wrestling world. Duggie Clark won the world heavyweight championship in 1933 but not until he had spent 20 years, broken only by the war, making his mark on the rugby field.

Clark, who was awarded the Military Medal after serving his country at Ypres and Passchendaele, played in 11 Test matches and took

Huddersfield. His total try tally was just one short of the century mark.

All competitive football was suspended during the war and there was an obvious feeling that whatever fortunes Fartown enjoyed afterwards would be an anti-climax following the dizzy heights of the pre-war period.

It took some time for Huddersfield to re-establish themselves as a major force but they were never far away from honours and the team hit another purple patch at the start of the 1930s.

The acquisition of Australian wingman Ernie Mills and Coventry RU centre Len Bowkett was followed by the arrival at Fartown of another Aussie "Flier" Ray Markham, who scored a staggering 264 tries in his seven seasons in the Huddersfield colours.

All three were in the side who reached Wembley for the first time in 1933 and were presented to the Prince of Wales before beating Warrington 21-17.

## Distinction

It was the Fartowners' fourth Challenge Cup final success in only the fourth final at Wembley and a crowd of 15,000 turned out in St George's Square to welcome them home.

Mills was injured for the 1935 Silver Jubilee final against Castleford but the Fartown line-up

est-ever captains in Alex Fiddes, who scored over 200 tries and 150 goals.

Huddersfield lost for the first time in a Challenge Cup final to Castleford, but Fiddes had the distinction of leading his men to victory in the 1945 final and captained the team that won the Yorkshire Cup for the ninth time in 1938.

War again intervened but this time clubs carried on playing competitive rugby in an Emergency League.

Players were paid ten shillings a match including expenses but Huddersfield were forced to borrow 24 of the 46 men they used in the second season of war-time football in order to complete their fixtures.

But success was never far away. They reached the final of the fourth war-time Yorkshire Cup, and shortly after the arrival of peace, embarked on a new era of greatness.

The year 1947 must rank as one of the most significant in the whole of the centenary period. February saw the arrival from Australia of Lionel Cooper and Johnny Hunter and in October fellow countryman Pat Devery joined them to form the famous trio of Hunter, Devery and Cooper — the phrase still runs off the lips as easily as Tom, Dick and Harry.

They were the cornerstone of many remarkable successes along with other "greats" such as

joined the club around the same time as Devery.

The crowds flocked to see the star-studded line-up. At one time no fewer than six different nationalities were represented in the Fartown side.

They were Bawden, Nicholson, Walsh and Taylor, of England, Anderson and Valentine, of Scotland, Daly and Reid, of Ireland, Gapper, Maiden and Meek, of Wales, Cooper of Australia, and Clark, of South Africa.

## Trophies

Huddersfield won the Yorkshire League Championship three times and were runners-up four times between 1946 and 1953, they won the Championship in 1949 and were runners-up in 1946 and 1950, they won the Challenge Cup in 1953 and the Yorkshire Cup in 1950 and 1952 and were beaten finalists in 1949.

Five-figure crowds were commonplace and in 1953 more than a quarter-of-a-million people watched them in the Challenge Cup when they went on to defeat St Helens 15-10 at Wembley. A third round tie against Bradford at Odsal attracted 69,429 spectators, and 59,022 watched the semi-final against Wigan.

Devery retired in 1954 and Bawden, Cooper and Hunter stayed on a little longer before following suit and bringing to an end yet another great era, though the Fartown side still included talented in-

ternationals Frank Dyson, Peter Henderson, Billy Banks, and Mick Sullivan, whose transfer to Wigan in 1957 for £9,500 is still a club record.

Cooper scored 432 tries in his 350 games for Huddersfield, including a record ten in one match, while Devery also amassed over 1,000 points for the club. Statistics, however, tell only half the tale of the contributions made by the past stars of the Claret and Gold.

There was, of course, another flicker of success in 1962 when Tommy Smales scored a last minute try against Wakefield to bring the Championship Trophy back to Fartown and to avenge the defeat by the same opposition at Wembley a week earlier.

The Fartown ground still ranks as one of the best in the League and is always considered when the venue for representative games and Challenge Cup semi-finals are chosen.

The first Test match on the ground was in 1909 when 5,569 people paid £248 to watch England and Australia, while the ground record was set in 1947 when a crowd of 35,136 watched the Challenge Cup semi-final between Leeds and Wakefield.

The latter attendance seems out of reach today, as do the chances of emulating the magnificent achievements of the past. But they probably said that after the 1911-1919



## Baseball

## soccer at Fartown

Clark, who was awarded the Military Medal after serving his country at Ypres and Passchendaele, played in 11 Test matches and took part in 18 Cup Finals for

THE Fartown ground has not always been used purely for Rugby League.

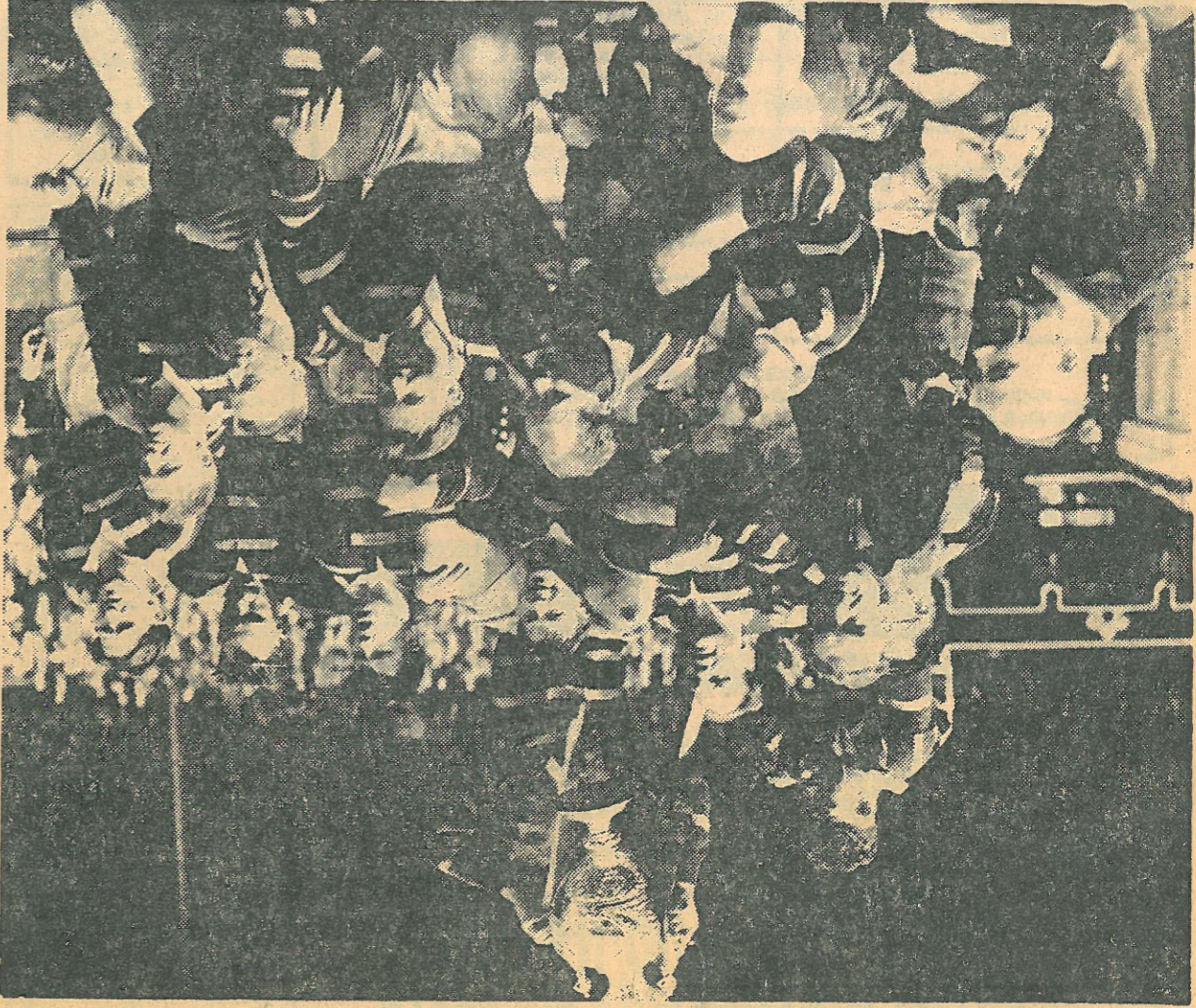
The Football Association chose Fartown for the FA Cup semi-final in 1882 between Blackburn Rovers and Sheffield Wednesday. It was fifty years before another FA Cup semi-final was brought to Huddersfield — the 1932 game between Newcastle and Chelsea at Leeds Road.

There has also been Rugby Union at Fartown since the split. In December 1920 the

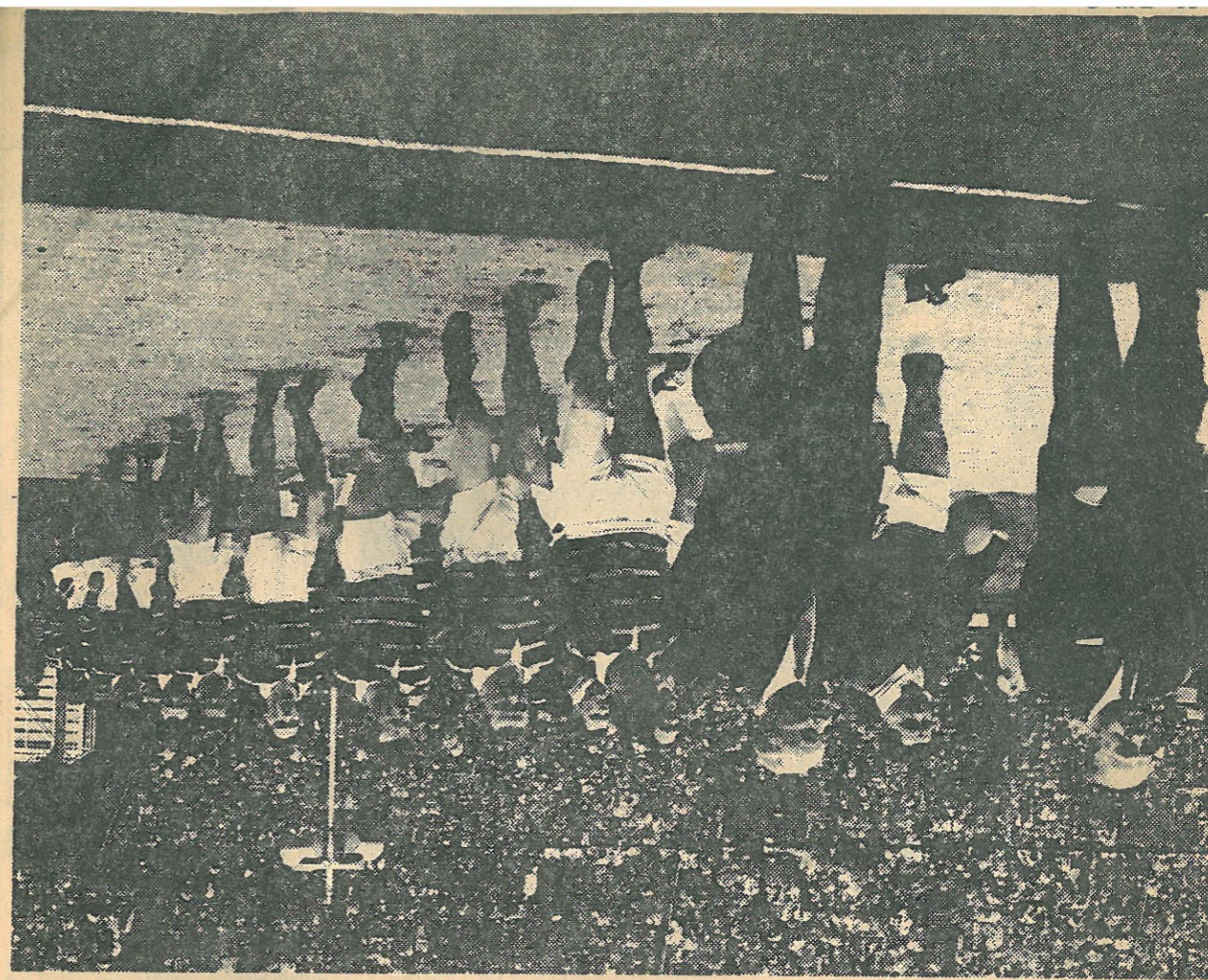
Huddersfield Old Boys played Sale to raise funds for a Waterloo ground.

Minority sports, too, can lay claims to being part of the Fartown ground centenary. A girls' basketball match was held there in 1923 and two teams of American soldiers played an exhibition baseball match on the pitch during the second world war. Lawn tennis was one of the early attractions at Fartown.

There was even an attempt in 1927 to introduce greyhound racing but the idea was

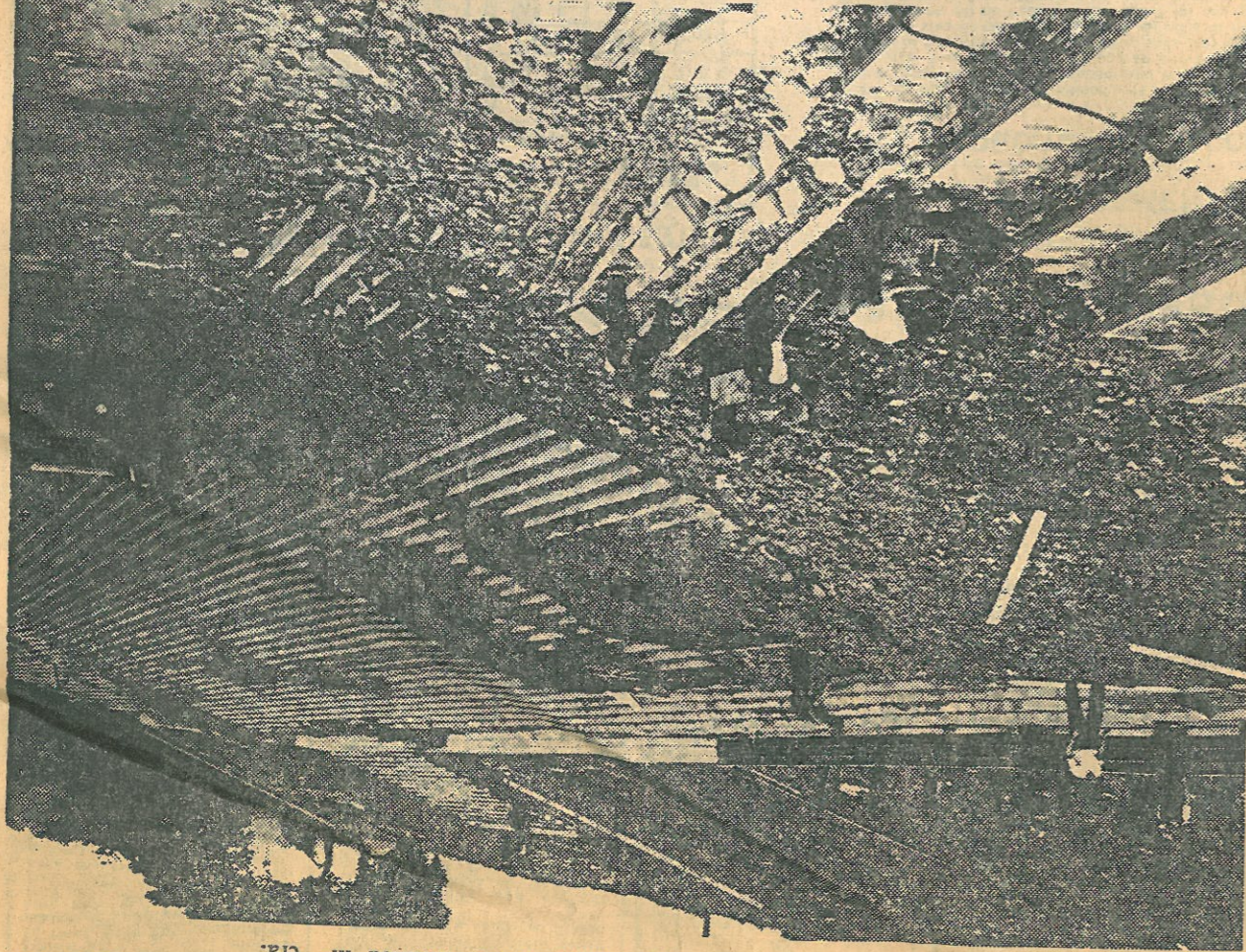


Captain Russell Pepperell holds the Cup aloft after Huddersfield's Wembley win over St Helens in 1953. Also chaired is Peter Ramsden, the Lance Todd Trophy winner.



Square to welcome them runs on the lips as easily as Tom, Dick and Harry. Hunter stayed on a little longer before following up as do the chances of emulating the magnificent achievements of the past. But they probably said that after the 1911-1919 era.

The big crowds at Fartown in the immediate post-war years caused doubts about the capacity of the ground and in 1951 the terrace side was re-constructed to provide accommodation for bigger crowds and better viewing.



# Smirk leads to near riot

THEN there was the time and the Medical Officer stationed outside the ground while the game took place in front of a handful of members.

FARTOWN played a major role in the formation of soccer in the town.

An Association section of the HC and AC was formed on August 31, 1895 — just two days after the Northern Union was founded at the George Hotel — and played its first game at Fartown on October 19.

Regulation goal posts and nets were fixed in front of the rugby posts for the match against Sil-bramley and Rochdale and warned that siffier action would be taken against clubs who followed suit.

Huddersfield's match with Dewsbury shortly afterwards then took the formation by a local company to run a first-

The first refusal to run of the HC and AC was formed on August 31, 1895 — just two days after the Northern Union was founded at the George Hotel — and played its first game at Fartown on October 19.

Regulation goal posts and nets were fixed in front of the rugby posts for the match against Sil-bramley and Rochdale and warned that siffier action would be taken against clubs who followed suit.

Huddersfield's match with Dewsbury shortly afterwards then took the formation by a local company to run a first-

Huddersfield's match with Dewsbury shortly afterwards then took the formation by a local company to run a first-

chions were drawn and the police charged the mob. Nothing was seen of Mr Smirk until six o'clock when he emerged from the dressing rooms in a policeman's uniform. Unruly behaviour by spectators was common in the early years of the Fartown ground was closed for three weeks after disorderly scenes in 1903.

On that occasion the visiting Salford players were molested and the referee had to escape by a back entrance. That was like a vicar's round of the Yorkshire Cup in 1941. Castleford held the Fartowners to 3-3 after eighty minutes but, instead of playing extra time, left the field because some of their players could not continue.

There was then the extraordinary sight of Captain Fiddes kicking off against no opposition and Belshaw picking up to score a try.

There was then the extraordinary sight of Captain Fiddes kicking off against no opposition and Belshaw picking up to score a try.

There was then the extraordinary sight of Captain Fiddes kicking off against no opposition and Belshaw picking up to score a try.

There was then the extraordinary sight of Captain Fiddes kicking off against no opposition and Belshaw picking up to score a try.

There was then the extraordinary sight of Captain Fiddes kicking off against no opposition and Belshaw picking up to score a try.

There was then the extraordinary sight of Captain Fiddes kicking off against no opposition and Belshaw picking up to score a try.

There was then the extraordinary sight of Captain Fiddes kicking off against no opposition and Belshaw picking up to score a try.

There was then the extraordinary sight of Captain Fiddes kicking off against no opposition and Belshaw picking up to score a try.

There was then the extraordinary sight of Captain Fiddes kicking off against no opposition and Belshaw picking up to score a try.

There was then the extraordinary sight of Captain Fiddes kicking off against no opposition and Belshaw picking up to score a try.

There was then the extraordinary sight of Captain Fiddes kicking off against no opposition and Belshaw picking up to score a try.