



no way through — Malcolm is well tackled

FRANK DYSON

SADLY, as this benefit booklet was being prepared, Frank Dyson, the former Huddersfield, Oldham, Yorkshire and Great Britain full-back, and H.C. & A.C. Ltd. director, passed away suddenly. Just before his death he wrote these few words of tribute to Malcolm.

Congratulations, Malcolm, on reaching your Testimonial Year at Fartown. I have known Malcolm Branch man and boy. It seems many years ago that he used to visit his grandmother next door to my home at Fartown, always carrying a rugby ball. At that time I don't think even he thought he would play for Fartown one day, let alone captain the first team.

I hope he will spend many more years at Fartown, and wish him every success for the future both in his rugby career and his joinery business.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Malcolm Branch wishes to thank John Huxley (Sunday Mirror) for his assistance in the preparation of this brochure, his Benefit Committee, the advertisers, and the many other people, too numerous to mention, who have helped in any way in the organisation of his testimonial.

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Youthful Malcolm Branch, back row second from left, with
Deighton C.Y.C. Under-18 team



Yorkshire 1979-80, with Malcolm pictured fourth from the left in the
top row. The picture was taken at Castleford before the match against
Lancashire which Yorkshire won

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GOLCAR THUNDERBOLT

FAST-MOVING Fartown forward Malcolm Branch is a Huddersfield-born man, but now he lives up in the Colne Valley at Golcar.

Since he married his attractive wife Barbara eight years ago Malcolm has lived in Station Road, Golcar, and has now become an adopted son of the valley.

Many of Malcolm's social activities away from Rugby League are in the Colne Valley area where he is a member of Golcar Cricket, Conservative and Liberal clubs.

Both his sons, Alistair (aged 6) and Andrew (aged 3), were born in Golcar and attend Golcar Infants School.

About the only non-Rugby activity that Malcolm takes out of the Colne Valley area is the occasional game of squash when he plays at Huddersfield Sports Centre.



One for the record book. Former Fartown prop Dave Weavill offers a hand to Malcolm who had just crashed over for a try against Barrow in 1974.

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WELL DONE MALC !

MANY professional people over the years have said that their greatest sense of satisfaction and achievement came when they were recognised by their fellow professionals. Here some of the big names in Fartown's life, past and present, pay their tribute to Malcolm Branch.

Messages for Malcolm come from H.C. & A.C. Ltd. Chairman Colin Wood, former player-coach Neil Fox, Yorkshire County secretary George Hirst, former coach Keith Goulding, present team boss Ian Brooke, ex "A" team coach Billy Gill, the late Frank Dyson, and the coach who signed Malcolm, Harry Street.

From COLIN WOOD

YET another testimonial year has been granted and it gives me great pleasure to see it happen for one of Fartown's "locals" who is also the Club's Captain — a fitting appointment in this very special year for Malcolm Branch.

Malcolm's development as a forward has been very remarkable in these last few years and he is recognised throughout the League as a very skilled professional footballer. His earlier years in the Back Division helped him to acquire some of the talents that enabled him to establish the try scoring record for a Fartown forward and it is a record that will not be easily beaten!

By any standards, Malcolm is a very good player and it is great to see that his talents have been recognised by Yorkshire. In this his Benefit Year, it is our task to recognise his service and I hope the final figure will be a fitting reward.

PLEASE GIVE YOUR SUPPORT

From NEIL FOX

IT gives me very great pleasure to be asked to pay tribute to Malcolm, although I have played against him several times during my career, it was not until I joined Huddersfield that I realised how good a player he was.

During my short, but happy, stay at Fartown, I don't think there was a more consistent player in the League than Malcolm. For a long time he was at the top of the try scoring list and he fully deserved it.

Justice was finally done when he won his county cap during that season for no one deserved it more. I hope the people in Huddersfield rally round and make his testimonial a bumper one for the service he has given to the club. Good Luck Mal.

From IAN BROOKE

I HAVE known Malcolm for a number of years as a player and from a coaching point of view. I have always found that he does everything to the best of his ability.

Malcolm has played at County level and although international honours have eluded him he has more than made up for that with club loyalty which is always a great asset

Training, according to Malcolm, is: "Just a part of the sport." He enjoys it and his willingness to at times fill other positions is more than appreciated as he always has the Club's interest at heart.

I wish Malcolm the greatest success possible in his Benefit Year. He has been a fine servant to Rugby League in general and Huddersfield R.L.F.C. in particular and I am quite sure all supporters who have followed his career will respond generously.

From BILLY GILL

IT GIVES me great pleasure to be afforded the opportunity of writing a few lines in appreciation of Malcolm Stanley Branch's service to the Claret and Gold, and I personally derive much satisfaction in the knowledge that I had a hand in persuading Malcolm to sign for the Club.

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Off the field he is quiet, modest and a non-trouble-giving sort of lad which I am sure, has been a great joy to the coach and club committee.

However, on the field, Malcolm still remains one of those 'quiet' type of players, always doing his part; more often getting through a little bit extra rather than less, and yet not always getting full credit for his efforts.

He has remained a very loyal clubman, for he has stuck with Fartown through the good times and the bad ones; has given sterling service to both his club and now his county.

He was signed on as a stand-off and later moved to centre; however, his success has been as a forward. Incidentally, it was I who moved him into the forwards at the expense of one of Fartown's more established players. I wonder if he remembers the trouble it got me into with the Football Committee at the following Tuesday night's meeting.

To conclude on a personal note, I would like to say, "It's been a great pleasure to watch you develop knowing that I had helped a little towards that development." I sincerely hope that the Branch Testimonial is as successful as your enthusiasm and spirit displayed on the park.

From HARRY STREET

ONE OF the great pleasures of signing and coaching young rugby league players is that at some time someone "very special" comes your way. While I was in charge at Fartown, Malcolm Branch, a tall, shy, promising centre three-quarter was signed, and over the past ten years, this man has been a credit to his club and to the game of rugby league football both on and off the field.

It gives me great pleasure in wishing Malcolm the bumper benefit, the "very special" deserve.

From GEORGE HIRST

I HAVE known the Branch family as Rugby League players for many

years. I remember well Malcolm's father "guesting" for the Leeds club at the end of World War II. I handed to him his wages which were 25/- for a win, and 15/- for a loss.

Branch Senior accepted these payments, but would willingly have played for nothing because he loved the game of Rugby League. He handed his affections for the game down to his son Malcolm and his loyalty to Huddersfield for more than 10 years speaks for itself.

He has answered the call for Yorkshire willingly, and often at very short notice. A former captain of Yorkshire and Fartown stalwart, Frank Dyson, said to me "I am pleased you have sent for Malcolm, he will always do his best, and never let you down."

I have certainly found those words to be true, and now it is the turn of supporters of Rugby League, and Huddersfield in particular, not to let Malcolm down, by making this benefit a rich reward for services unstintingly given.

From KEITH GOULDING

RUGBY LEAGUE professionals are peculiar creatures. You can never be sure just how they will react when you take over as a coach at a new club. But I should have had no fears about Malcolm Branch for he proved to be a model professional in all meanings of the name.

He never missed his training — an important asset for any professional sportsman — and maintained his personal fitness at the highest possible level.

In my first spell as Fartown coach I recognised Malcolm as a talented player and in my second term he was one of the players around whom I built what I believe to be the basis of a very good team.

Malcolm deserved his Yorkshire cap and I think he is going to be a very good captain for Huddersfield. I hope the Huddersfield public respond generously to his benefit.

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BRANCH-ING OUT

TEN YEARS is a long time in anybody's language. For a Rugby League forward a decade can bring great glory, satisfaction, disappointment and pain. Malcolm Branch has experienced them all and now it is his benefit year.

Clearly Malcolm richly deserves recognition for his loyalty to Huddersfield through what, it must be admitted, has been one of the most difficult spells in the club's history.

Now club captain and a Yorkshire county forward Malcolm has proved that the Fartown faith placed in him way back in 1969-70 season was fully justified. Little more can be asked of him on the field and as a professional he has lacked little.

Malcolm is a Huddersfield man in all senses of the word. Born in the town, he has his own business only a good drop kick away from the ground, lives in its suburbs and has his family roots still firmly in the area.

It would be great for the town's sporting fans to recognise his achievement for not many players stay 10 years with a club that has suffered as much as Huddersfield.

So, good people of Huddersfield and Rugby League, I give to you Malcolm Branch, Huddersfield rugby player. Please give generously just as Malcolm has given so freely for Farown.



HAPPY FAMILIES. Malcolm lines up with his family
(left to right) Alistair, Andrew and wife Barbara

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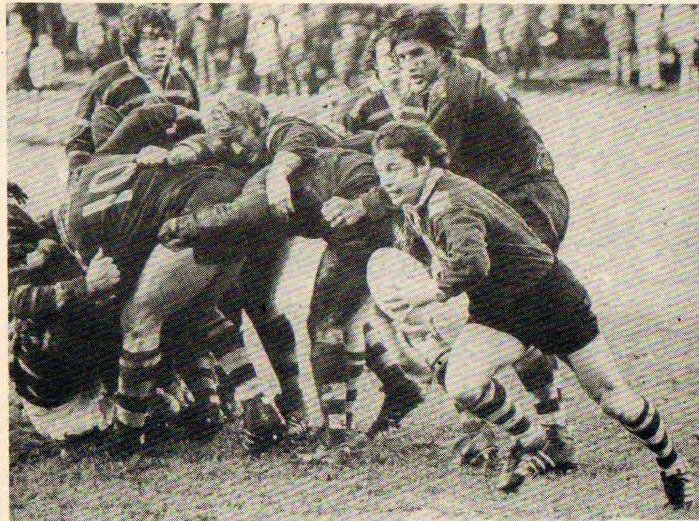
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Malcolm Good Luck in his
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Backseat driver. Malcolm watches helplessly as the Australian tourists set up another attack at Fartown

FROM THE PRESS BOX

By JOHN HUXLEY, SUNDAY MIRROR

THERE was never any question that Malcolm Branch would not end up as a Rugby player. It was simply a problem of how good he could be.

His father Dennis was a war-time professional with Leeds and his brother Duncan a Rugby Union player. So rugby was in his blood. Now Malcolm has emerged in his own right as a player of distinction.

A Yorkshire county player, a record-breaker and Huddersfield captain. Besides becoming an international what could he achieve in this wonderful game of Rugby League?

But it nearly didn't happen. Malcolm almost abandoned Rugby League in favour of water sport. An accomplished freestyle and backstroke swimmer, he seriously considered devoting his time to a sport in which he had represented Huddersfield.

It was not to be, however, for the shadow of Fartown was already falling over Malcolm's life.

One of his teachers was former Huddersfield star Don Devereaux and he gave Malcolm the following advice: "Stay with Rugby lad, it'll be worth more to you later."

And, how right he proved to be. Malcolm continued to play Rugby and went on to captain Huddersfield Under 13, Under 15, Under 17 and Under 19 teams and play for his county.



Cap that E. Proud Malcolm receives his treasured Yorkshire cap at Fartown

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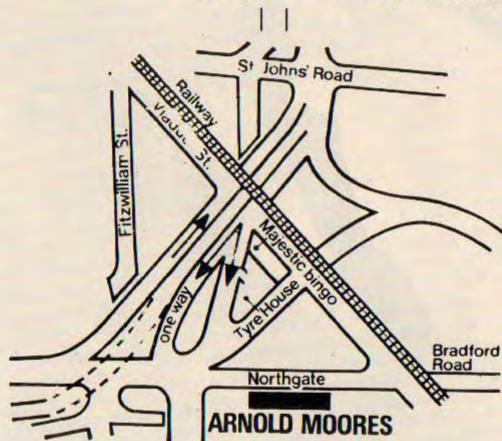
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Malcolm says: "I was within an ace of throwing it all away for swimming. I had my heart set on a new sport but Mr. Devereaux had a good talk to me and I've got a great deal to thank him for."

Besides schoolboy football Malcolm was trying his hand in the amateur game. He first played for Birkby C.Y.C. Under 17 team and among his team-mates there were Halifax and former Bradford Northern star Mick Blacker, Fartown coach Martin Calvert and mighty Huddersfield brothers Vic and Ian Van Bellen.

He then switched to Deighton C.Y.C. and played alongside Brian Doyle and Peter Martin, who were both on Huddersfield's books at one time.

Malcolm, playing at stand off or centre, was clearly a gifted player and he finally achieved his ambition to become a professional on 11th September, 1969, when he signed for his home town club.

And Huddersfield wasted no time in bleeding their new young star. The following day he made his debut in claret and gold as a professional when Huddersfield "A" played Keighley "A".

Huddersfield won the game but, more to the point, young Branch distinguished himself by scoring the second try for Fartown.

Unlike some Rugby League players these days Malcolm had a fairly lengthy apprenticeship in the second team and he had to wait until 15th August, 1970, before making his first team debut.

The big occasion was in a friendly match against Oldham at Watersheddings. Huddersfield won that match 18-4 and the only other survivors still playing for Hudders-



Malcolm in action with former Fartowners Tom Davies (left) and Mick Smith (right) looking on

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Ouch! That hurt. Malcolm gets a dab of physiotherapist Bob Widdowson's magic sponge in a First Division encounter against Wigan. Referee Ken Spencer does not look very impressed while Huddersfield-born Wigan prop Bob Irving (far left) looks on with interest

field from the match, besides Malcolm, are Ken Senior and Dave Heppleston.

But Malcolm's days as a flying back and half-back were numbered. He was maturing into a usefully built player, more suited to life among forwards and in Autumn, 1970, he was switched to play at loose forward.

He has since made that position his own, despite various periods in the second row.

Life in a Rugby League is like life in general. You have to take the rough with the smooth and Malcolm has had his differences during his ten-year career at Fartown.

He was transfer-listed at his own request for £1,000 in February, 1973, and he says humourously: "I don't remember being taken off. I wonder if they still value me at the same price?"

And, again in September, 1975, after a Yorkshire Cup thrashing at Bradford Northern, he had a period in dispute. And that is where I come into the story.

In October, 1975, I joined the "Examiner" sports staff as Rugby League writer and much to everybody's amazement life was beginning to look better at Fartown.



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Under coach Brian Smith, Huddersfield had bought hooker Tony Miller from Castleford and he, together with stand-off Glen Knight, had transformed the Fartowners into a powerful Second Division unit.

Malcolm took more convincing than most and it was not until November that I had the pleasure of meeting him for the first time.

"Ask Branchy what he is doing at Fartown tonight," came the helpful whisper. And that was when I discovered that Malcolm had patched up his differences with the Football Committee and was back in training.

His value to the team became more clear to me one memorable night up at Barrow.

Huddersfield needed just two points to assure themselves of promotion to Division One and the tension was beginning to show in their play.

One of the second row forwards dropped out at the last minute and a late dash round to Malcolm's workshop at Birkby by Frank Dyson brought Branch back into the first team fray.

He was not match fit but his power running and graft helped tremendously to put Huddersfield on the road to a 19-11 win at Craven Park and in the top flight again.

In a way Malcolm has been unlucky. Only once, during Neil Fox's brief reign as Huddersfield player-coach, has he shown his full potential. He has always played in a side that has been struggling for survival and that is a great shame.

Malcolm is a very talented player and, while on his own admission he does not like the "physical" side of our game, he has never shirked his responsibilities as a forward and a professional.

I like Malcolm Branch as a player and a man. He gave me great pleasure as a player during my three years as Fartown correspondent to the "Examiner" and I can only hope that these few words will inspire some of you to support his well-deserved benefit.

Cheers Male!!

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ODE TO MALCOLM

The Fartown forward try scoring record
Contributed in one full season's play
Is held by Malcolm Branch, a just reward
For an outstanding year's work in "the fray."

This was set up in seventy-seven to eight
When Fartown were down in Division Two
The pack were more than thankful for his weight
And for the many things he could do!

The signing of Neil Fox as Fartown's coach
Had had a great effect on Malcolm Branch.
Neil's skills and passes brought a new approach,
And many well earned tries — an avalanche!

Those shrewd and timely passes opened gaps
And Malcolm would be somewhere near at hand,
To back him up with speed and then, perhaps,
The try would more than likely come, as planned.

Mal's early efforts brought him fourteen tries
During a spell of eight successive games.
To Fartowners it came as no surprise
That he became one of the 'wanted' names.

This busy spell took Malcolm to the top
Of Rugby League's revered try scoring list.
Those scoring bursts of his were hard to stop,
When not around his breaks were badly missed.

The weekly rivalry commenced forthwith
With many well known wingers of repute.
Green Vigo, Terry Morgan, David Smith
Or someone else up to the top would shoot.

Selectors had already taken note,
Although their views were always very strict.
However, Malcolm soon received their vote
And for the Yorkshire side was quickly picked.

His Yorkshire County Cap he'd won at last
As Fartown followers had thought he should.
This treasured cap to him was later passed
By Huddersfield's new Chairman Colin Wood.

One record discussed in the National Press
Was that of Bob Haigh when he was at Leeds.
But Fartown's games that season were far less
So forty tries would call for mammoth deeds!

The Fartown forward scoring record stood
At twenty tries for one full season's play.
It had been thought that one day someone would
Exceed this total in their own sweet way.

This total was set up by Douglas Clark
In season ending May Nineteen Thirteen.
The famous Cumbrian had made his mark
And three cups were at Fartown to be seen.

This total Malcolm reached in the New Year
When Batley came to Huddersfield to play.
This early try received an extra cheer,
But left him hurt — an early bath that day!

This injury had dealt a cruel blow.
He missed the Huyton and the Batley game.
And when he got the 'Physio's' word go,
Neil Fox had left, those passes not the same.

Two more were added ere the Season's end
A season, for his part, second to none.
And Malcolm's record was enough to send
The Fartowners up to Division One.

By BRIAN DONALDSON

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MALCOLM — the inside Story

By MALCOLM BRANCH

It is 20 years since I started playing Rugby League and during that time many people have helped me in a game which has given me honours together with endless hours of enjoyment both on and off the field.

As a nine-year-old Fartown fan I joined the Supporters' Club which met on Wednesday evenings. It was decided to try to form a Rugby team and we started training on Sunday mornings in a field at the back of the posts. We were taken by Norman Bower, Stanley Rockett and the late Frank Dyson.

When I was eleven I went to Fartown Secondary school and I was surprised to find the Rugby teacher was the Fartown forward Don Devereaux. He was in charge of the school team for the next four years, before returning to Wales, and during those years he got me into Huddersfield Schools' Under 13 and Under 15 teams.

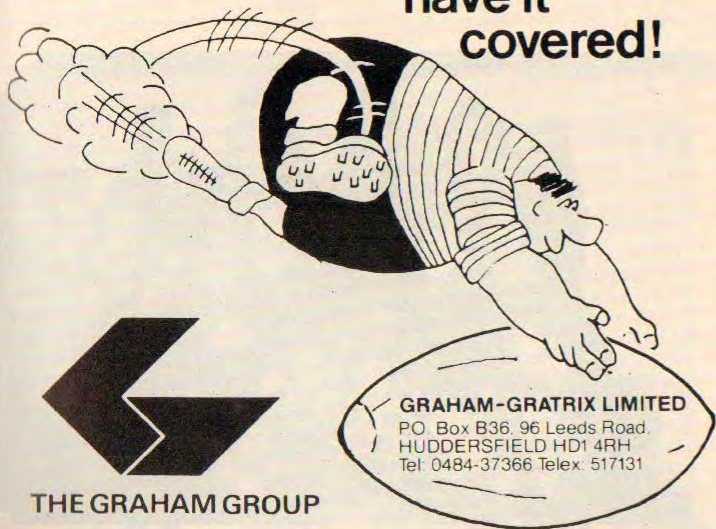
When I left school I joined Deighton C.Y.C., who were coached by Garry Graham, the former Batley scrum half. I stayed there for four years, playing at Under 17 and 19 levels. During the first three years I played in the Town teams, and in the fourth I was chosen to captain the representative team who were coached by Neil Whittaker.



Early days at Fartown. Malcolm, pictured next to coach Jack Scroby, shares a joke with his teammates

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During that year I trained twice a week with Deighton and twice a week with Neil at Bradley C.Y.C. At the end of that season came I suppose the biggest disappointment I have had in rugby. I had trained hard and built up to getting in the county side — at that time I was playing scrum half — the team was picked and I didn't even get into the reserve team. I thought that all my efforts had been wasted.

A short time after a committeeman from Oldham came to see me. He offered me three trial matches with them. I played the trials and they offered me terms. The night I was going to sign for Oldham I was also offered terms by Fartown.

I had got to know all the players at Watersheddings and was going to sign there, but my father persuaded me to go to Fartown. I was lucky because there were such players as Raymond Haywood, Leo Booth, Brian Dobson and Austin Kilroy all about to finish senior football and they were helping younger players through the "A" team.

After a short while Billy Gill was taken on as "A" team coach and built up a good team based on local lads. I was playing stand-off or centre, and playing the occasional game in the first team.

Then we played at Bradford and we weren't doing very well. At half time Billy moved me to loose-forward. After a storm with the management about the switch he was asked to meet the committee the following Tuesday. But peace eventually prevailed. I played at No. 13 the following Saturday and have been in the forwards ever since.



Player of the Year! Malcolm receives his player of the year award from Amsterdam Bar proprietors Phil Colloby (left) and Kes Van-Dermervre (right)

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Going down. Malcolm prepares to hit the deck in a match against Blackpool Borough

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Smiles all round as club directors Roy Brooke, Colin Wood and Rugby League secretary David Oxley (left to right) present Malcolm with the first goblet in a series to mark the Centenary of Huddersfield C. & A.C.

I became a regular first-team performer but, after several seasons, I felt I should be playing better. Then Keith Goulding arrived at Fartown and I grew in confidence. Keith's departure hit us hard but a few months later there was even more change.

A board of directors was formed and Neil Fox, a player I admired and respected all my life, took over as player-coach. I thought my first team place had gone when he told us he was going to sign about another three forwards, but he told me I would get a chance to retain my place.

After two months I had scored 14 tries, earned my county cap and, later, broke the Fartown try-scoring record for a forward.

Fickle football then dealt another strange hand. Neil left Fartown and Keith Goulding returned. He made me club captain — a job that I am still enjoying.

Now Ian Brooke is coach and building a team that should put Huddersfield back where it belongs — in the First Division.

I would like to thank all the people that have helped me with my game, the supporters who have been tremendous, and to my benefit committee who have proved invaluable to me in my benefit organisation.

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Where is that line? Malcolm in full flight looks for yet another Huddersfield try



Pensive Malcolm sips a cup of tea after another Fartown encounter. Dave Heppleston (background, right) has plenty to say for himself

MY MATE MALCOLM

VERY FEW people at Fartown have known Malcolm Branch for as long, or as well, as assistant coach Martin Calvert. They were brought up together in Huddersfield and are now close friends and neighbours in the Colne Valley.

"I remember Malcolm as a very small boy," recalled Calvert, "but he has filled out to become a really big fellow."

Martin had been on the Fartown professional staff for two years when a very skinny Branch signed. Calvert said: "I had watched Malcolm develop as a player. Although we had never actually played together at Birkby CYC, Malcolm had been on the verge of forcing his way into the team.



Watch out. Castleford's Tony Fisher (left) looks for a way out as Huddersfield's Ian Yan-Bellen and Malcolm Branch close in for a tackle

"I have always rated Malcolm as a very good footballer. I never thought that he would become a loose forward, but having seen him in action over the last few seasons I now believe he has been better than a number thirteen than he could have been at six."

Calvert, who started his first team career at Huddersfield when he was sixteen and had a short spell at Batley before taking up his coaching post, added: "Malcolm is a fine player and has certainly lived up to the potential I always believed he had when he first joined Huddersfield.

"I wish my old friend all the best for his benefit year and hope that the Huddersfield Rugby fans will dig deep to give him the kind of benefit he so richly deserves."

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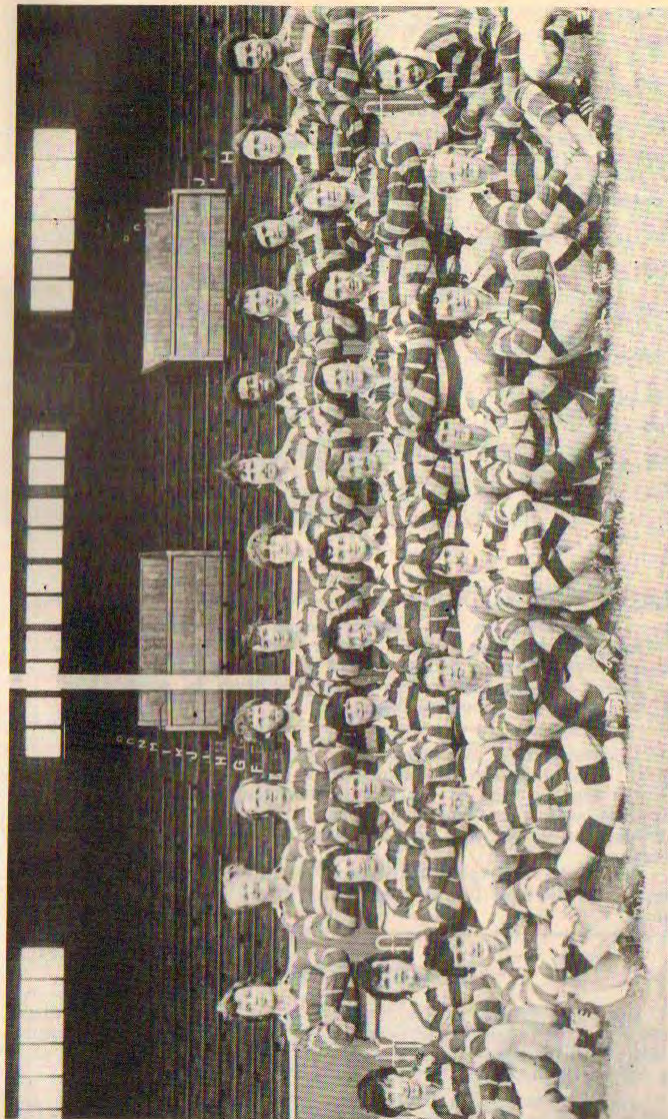
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Huddersfield 1977-78 with Malcolm pictured back row fifth from left. These were the players that helped Malcolm to his try-scoring record

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Malcolm Branch — a younger version

**MALCOLM
BRANCH
1969-79**

BY IAN LAYBOURN
HUDDERSFIELD DAILY EXAMINER

THE "EXAMINER" heralded the arrival of Malcolm Branch at Fartown with two short paragraphs headed with the words "Youngsters signed at Fartown."

One was a 20-year-old stand-off from Deighton W.Y.C. and the other Chris Leese, a 20-year-old winger from St. Joseph's.

And when Malcolm began his Huddersfield career in the No. 6 jersey he would have been the last to believe that he would go on to break the club's try-scoring record — for a forward.

He made his first senior appearance at scrum-half in 1970-71 and kicked three goals from his nine games that season.

Eight years later the Fartown half-back was being tipped for a Great Britain tour place as a back row forward. He had already gained Yorkshire representative honours and was playing so well that a trip to Australia was a distinct possibility.

When Malcolm began adding to his 12 stones it became obvious the pack was the place he belonged. He started season 1971-72 as a centre and ended it by playing the last eight matches at loose forward.

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It was an inspired move. The next season Malcolm made 29 first team appearances, mostly in the second row, and scored eight tries.

Before the start of this season he had made 192 senior appearances and scored 67 tries . . . plus those three goals he kicked in his first season.

The highlight of his career so far has, of course, been his four appearances for the County side — one last season, two in 1977-78 and one in 1979-80.

It was in 1977-78 that he embarked on that fantastic try-scoring feat, which was largely responsible for Huddersfield's successful promotion campaign.

He had already passed Ken Bowman's tally of 18 tries (season 1961-62) by December and equalled Dougie Clark's total of 20 when playing against Batley on January 8th.

Unfortunately he was injured in that match and missed four of the next five games before returning in time for Huddersfield's memorable victory over the star-studded Red Devils of Salford in the second round of the Challenge Cup.

And he marked his comeback in the best way possible — by scoring his record-breaking try at the end to rub salt into once-proud Salford's wound.

Injury again dogged his attempts to keep up with the pacemakers, wingers and all, but he still finished the season with an outstanding 22.

His powerhouse running is still a strong feature of his play but last season he took on a new role — that of captain and he is now hoping to inspire his colleagues to another promotion-winning season.

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