

# Big match ticket dash

A QUICK-THINKING landlady saved the day when more than 50 guests left her country inn to attend the Rugby League World Cup final . . . without their big-match tickets.

Ray Hicks, Saddleworth's longest-serving landlord, threw a lavish breakfast at The Three Crowns Inn and Restaurant as a prelude to his 64th birthday.

With his happy guests, he set off by coach to the Australia v New Zealand showdown at Old Trafford on Saturday.

But Sue, who was tidying up after the breakfast blow-out, discovered four VIP guests had left their £60-a-head tickets behind.

Sue jumped in the car and eventually caught up with them — more than five miles away en route to the match.

## Memorable

Sue said: "If I hadn't found the tickets there would have been no way they would have got into the ground — it was a complete sell-out."

There was an extra bonus for rugby-mad Ray because his eldest son Robert (33), was one of the officials at the game.

Ray had a distinguished career as a top-flight professional rugby league player with Oldham and later Keighley.

And Robert, a solicitor, inherited his passion in the sport from his grandfather, Ken Fisher, president of Saddleworth Rangers.

Ray, who began his playing career in his hometown of Widnes said: "My birthday certainly was memorable!"

## Gavin Wheeldon

IN a feature article in the Chronicle (November 19) profiling local businessman Gavin Wheeldon, there was a reference to professional interpreters as being part of the "cosy and lucrative cartel".

We wish to apologise for the use of the term cartel and any inference that there was criminal activity in the price setting for interpreters working for HM Courts and Tribunal Service prior to take-over by Mr Wheeldon's Applied Language Solutions.

# Festive crowds gather as countdown to Christmas



VIP guest . . . Father Christmas joins Kenny Heaton at the Shaw switch-on



A FESTIVE Oldham Road, Royton



SHAW thing . . . crowds flocked to Market Street, Shaw



SPARKLING show . . . Grace Smythe and Roman Deblasio get ready to light up Royton's tree

# It's beginning to

THE warm glow of Christmas shone brightly over Oldham as festive light switch-ons took place across the borough.

Friday saw events in Shaw, Chadderton and Greenfield, with cere-

by **MARINA BERRY**

monies in Lees and Delph taking place on Saturday, and in Grotton and Dobcross yesterday.

**CHADDERTON** Prince and Princess Harry Wall and Heidi O'Keeffe turned on the lights outside

Chadderton Town Hall on Middleton Road, with the help of Father Christmas and mascot Chaddy the Griffin, following a Christmas market in the precinct.

Chadderton town crier David Smith heralded the event, and Mike Lawson, Chadderton standard bearer said: "It was wonderful, a great success, and we were very pleased with it."

"The market was well attended, it was a great procession, we were joined by characters from St Herbert's Church pantomime "Beauty and the Beast" and visiting princesses, and between 500 and 600 people stayed for the lights switch-on.

"Radclyffe School choir performed for half-an-hour in front of the town hall before the switch-on, and children from five primary schools — St Luke's,

Firwood Manor, Mills Hill, St Herbert's and Whitegate End — sang in the precinct."

**SHAW** had two bites of the cherry, with a switch-on, organised by the parish council, taking place at Wren's Nest, followed by a second event in Market Street.

The Salvation Army Band played at Wren's Nest as more than 50 people sung carols, and town crier Andrew Powell counted down as Shaw & Crompton Parish Council chairman, Councillor Dave Murphy, his chairman's lady, Councillor Diane Williamson and a group of local children switched on the lights.

In Market Street, thousands gathered to hear Kenny Heaton, the father of toddler Jamie who died in the Shaw gas blast, give an emotional thank-you for the incredible support

offered to his family following the tragedy.

A parade was led by Delph Youth Band as Father Christmas performed the lights switch-on and a great evening of entertainment followed under the direction of compere and Revolution radio DJ Big Al, from a stage facing Market Street.

Five local mascots, including Latics' Chaddy the Owl, roamed through the crowds, to the delight of excited children, as youngsters received prizes for the best fancy dress and lanterns.

Festive refreshments were handed out at the Shaw Salvation Army hall in Farrow Street.

In **GREENFIELD**, sub-postmistress Mandy Gorey helped Ellie Matthews, a Year 6 pupil from St Mary's School, read out her winning poem "The Christmas



ALL smiles . . . Ellie Matthews (left) and Mandy Gorey at the Greenfield ceremony

## WEATHER FORECAST

### OLDHAM READINGS (Yesterday)

Maximum temperature: 7.9C (46F) at 1.20pm  
 Minimum temperature: 0.9C (34F) at 6.59am  
 Maximum barometer: 1,037mb at 11.59am  
 Minimum barometer: 1,031mb at 3.33am  
 Maximum wind: 12mph (19km/h) NE at 11.41am  
 Rainfall: 0mm

### TODAY AT 8AM

Temperature: 5C (41F) barometer: 1,036mb (falling) wind: 1mph (2km/h) NW

### LIGHTING-UP TIMES

3.54pm to 7.47am



**Tonight:** It looks set to continue dry with clear spells and patchy fog forming. Gentle south-westerly winds. Frost in places. Min temp 1-4C (34-39F).

**Tomorrow:** Early mist patches will slowly clear to leave it dry, but rather cloudy with just the odd bright spell. Light winds. Max temp 6-9C (43-48F).

### WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam .. 9... 48...c	Paris .....	13... 45...c
Athens .....	19.. 66...sh	Rome .....
Barcelona .... 14.. 57...s	Sydney .....	20.. 68...f
Cape Town... 28.. 82...s	Venice .....	9.... 48...s
Los Angeles. 19.. 66...f	KEY: c=cloudy; dr=drizzle; f=fair;	
Miami .....	fg=fog; h=hall; m=mist; r=rain;	
New York..... 1.... 34...c	s=sunny; sh=showers; sl=sleet;	
	sn=snow; th=thunder.	

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