

Frank Wade

Star bowler

Sam Patrick (all the strokes) was greatest of Booth batsmen

BOOTH CRICKET CLUB— Part II

BOOTH CRICKET CLUB, in common with many local sides, disbanded for the duration of the 1914-18 war. Just before the war, however, one player who was to play local cricket for every season between the two wars, ending his long career with the Illingworth club during the last war, had joined them.

That player was Sam Patrick and Booth followers believe, and refuse to argue the point, that he can be



BOB MIDGLEY
(his farm now takes his time)

included among the top 12 cricketers in ability ever to be produced in the Halifax district.

Under average height, he could well have achieved equal prominence as batsman, bowler or wicketkeeper, but he is remembered chiefly as a batsman and his neatness and quickness of footwork enabled him to use all the strokes

of the game on all conditions of wickets.

His first appearance for Booth was in 1908 at the age of 15 and although his career was interrupted by the war in 1919 his aggregate was 670 runs. Many of his batting exploits are legendary, but one innings of 100 not out against Mytholmroyd was scored after he had arrived late at the ground to find his team had lost five wickets for 21 runs. Walter Priestley scored nine at the other end while Sam made his hundred.

He had a spell at Tong Park opening the batting with Arthur Mitchell who was later to achieve fame with the county.

In the rough

After the first war, some players returned to the Booth club, some went to other clubs and some never played again, but in the meantime an era of local cricket had passed never to return. The pre-war days of bad wickets, uncut outfield and unco-operative farmers who were sometimes even hostile were gone. Previously fieldmen had to shout lost ball and forfeit six runs when the ball was lost in long grass to prevent batsmen from continuing to run and Eli Helliwell will no doubt recall a six for a lost ball more than 50 years ago at Booth.

Abraham Alderson of Booth chased a ball into mowing grass at Wadsworth Lanes and after being grabbed by an irate farmer the cricketer only managed to escape at the expense of his waistcoat (a man was a toff if he possessed a sweater). Abraham subsequently found himself in court at Todmorden and, accused of trespassing, was duly fined.

Unrelenting

When a nucleus of the old players returned, the club was formed again and they went into the Halifax Amateur League. In 1921, Bob Midgley played his first game on the Booth ground but it was for Barkisland. He later joined Booth and as is well known, served the club for many, many years and still does to this day in innumerable ways.

Remembered chiefly as an astute captain and a slow spin bowler, he

ROUND AND ABOUT IN LOCAL CRICKET

had three "hat-tricks" and numerous other performances of merit. Though he never scored a century, he is credited with two scores in the nineties. It was a proud moment for him when he received the Parish Cup in 1948.

In 1924, the club joined the Hebden Bridge League and there they succeeded in winning all the honours possible. Every game was a "derby" match and Booth were known for the unrelenting fashion



FRANK WADE
(best feat, nine wickets)

in which the game was played. It was in those days the partisan attitude of many of the spectators tended to give opponents a wrong impression of the true qualities of the club.

Men prominent in those days were Tom Nicholl, an all-rounder, Harold Boardall, a fine bat who has also done a lot for Booth cricket in many and various ways, and

Arthur Briggs, a wicketkeeper with a quiet and unobtrusive style who played for nearly 25 years. Thomas (Nigs) Ogden can be described as the last of the crack billet players and batted like one, although there was nothing crude about his bowling. He now looks after the ground with Fred Mitchell.

There were also the Patrick brothers. Arnold had the amazing distinction of knocking a middle stump out of the ground at Bridgeholme without removing the balls. There was a heated discussion with a spectator who insisted that the batsman could not be out if the balls were not removed.

In 1936, following ground improvements, Booth were accepted into the Halifax League and about this time Jack Corboy joined them from Sowerby. During succeeding years he became one of the personalities of Halifax cricket and his departure in 1956 to play for Luddenden Foot St. Mary's was a great loss to the Booth club. Now he has returned to Booth to help in the club's bid for the championship of Division I. Jack and Frank Wade came into the team about the same time, Frank soon to achieve fame as a bowler. His best performance was at Mytholmroyd in 1948 when Pugh and Wilcox bowled Booth out for 56. Frank Wade took nine for 18 and Mytholmroyd were all back for 29.

Parish Cup final

So to another war, the ploughing of the field and eventual loss of the ground, but they restarted in 1947. Owing to the new ground not being completed, all matches were played away.

This season is always recalled with great pleasure and gratitude to the other clubs in the league. On April 24, 1948, the first game was played on the new ground at Broadfold Park. Booth's opponents being Greetland. Before the match a short ceremony took place when Mr. R. H. Murgatroyd bowled the first ball to Bob Midgley.

In 1951, Booth had the unique distinction of playing in the Parish Cup final after being knocked out in the semi-final. Halifax were unable to play in the final because of

Yorkshire Council commitments and Booth took their place to lose against King Cross.

Since the war, players who have earned themselves places in Booth's annals are Leslie Summerscales and George Woodhead. Both have many good batting performances to their credit. Leslie Summerscales still hold the record for appearances in the Parish Cup final. With Booth and Mytholmroyd he has played in 10 finals.

Though as years go by, players famous in the Halifax League drop out of the Booth teams, most of



J. B. CORBOY
(now with Luddenden Foot C.C., formerly with Sowerby St. Peter's, Booth and Dalton)

them retain an active interest in the club. There are still old names in the present-day score books but they represent new generations of these families. There is a waiting list of young players whose fathers, grandfathers and even great-grandfathers helped to put the name of Booth Cricket Club on the cricketing map of Halifax.

To be continued.