

Outright Champions!

'Walsden are known as the 'Cinderella' club and are content to stay that way. We don't want to have to work all season just to pay one star his wages.'

So commented Coucillor Fielden at the club's AGM of 1963, and it seemed that the rest of the league was, temporarily at least, in agreement.

Previewing the 1964 season, 'Matt', the whimsical reporter at the *Todmorden News and Advertiser*, commented: 'it seems that all the other clubs have answered "And so say all of us". Not one star name appears on the list. Gone are the names of yesterday – Cec Pepper, Gary Sobers, Sonny Ramadhin, Dattu Phadkar.'

Nor did he welcome an extension of Sunday cricket introduced in the early 1960s, as the Wood Cup faced the prospect of ten 'double headers'.

'For players' wives who are not interested in cricket there are going to be many lonely weekends and for reporters' wives who are not interested in cricket – well, my divorce proceedings begin next week.'

He felt, however, that the omens were good for Walsden.

'On the administrative side it is pleasing to see at long last an old player on the selection committee – for let's face it, in the past some of the selectors

would have been better suited to picking a tiddly-winks side. Jim Wilkinson is the older player in question and his knowledge of the game should help a great deal.'

With the pros all 'much of a muchness', the league would be a true test of amateur ability, and so it proved.

Walsden stayed with the leaders in the early weeks of the season and pulled away from the pack with six wins from eight games in June and July. With four matches to go, Walsden were six points ahead of second placed Werneth and nine clear of Ashton in third. Defeats to Heywood and Royton allowed Ashton cut the lead to one point and Werneth to two. A repeat of 1962's shared title was a distinct possibility, but Walsden held their nerve to beat Middleton by 36 runs on the final day of the season.

Matt's predictions had proved correct.

'... their outstanding season of triumph has at last proved that Walsden have some of the finest amateurs in the Central Lancashire League. Walsden's team has not greatly differed in the last ten seasons but whereas other clubs have had the big name professionals to pull them through Walsden have plodded along getting the best man possible at the price they could afford. Now when the stars have departed and the amateurs have come to the fore Walsden have at last proved themselves.

‘For instance, where in the league is there a better opening attack than Jack Coupe and Steve Boam? Where is there a better opening bat than Bill Barker, and where is there a finer wicket keeper than Sammy Connor?’

Averages 1964

Batting

(qualification 10 innings)

	Innings	Times Not Out	Highest Score	Total Runs	Average
W Barker	24	3	82	691	32.90
J Springall (pro)	25	5	56	413	20.65
A Connor	21	3	42	287	15.94
W Connor	23	1	58	323	14.68
A Stuttard	20	5	39	200	13.33
L Moss	17	0	37	213	12.52
G Pickles	20	3	53	202	11.88
A Sutcliffe	15	1	29	124	8.85
J Coupe	13	2	23	61	5.54
S Boam	12	9	8	16	5.33
P Green	15	2	14	59	4.53

Bowling

(qualification 10 wickets)

	Overs	Maidens	Runs	Wickets	Average
J Coupe	269.6	64	756	71	10.33
S Boam	195.6	48	643	54	11.90
J Springall (pro)	148.1	30	514	38	13.52
P Green	147.2	31	515	34	15.14
L Moss	63	18	217	13	16.69

Fielding

(qualification 10 catches)

	Catches	Stumpings
W Connor	30	1
W Barker	22	-
P Green	19	-
L Moss	11	-
J Springall (pro)	10	-