

## **RUSSELL HERITAGE**

**By Pat Neal**

1983 witnessed the signing of all rounder Russell Heritage who had previously had spells with Lascelles Hall and Bowling Old Lane and was a Northamptonshire colt and had played for the England colts on a tour of the West Indies.

Russell was a left arm spin bowler and right handed batsman and during his two spells at Mirfield (1983-1990 and 1993-1994) he played a major part in the success the club had during that ten year period.

In the five years between 1985-89 he won the Central Yorkshire League bowling award on each occasion his best season being 1988 when he took 66 wickets at an average of 7.07. In 1986 and 1988 he won the League all-rounder award.

He played in three Heavy Woollen Cup finals (all at Ossett), losing the first two to Kirkheaton (1985) and Batley (1989) but getting that winners medal in 1990 when he took 3 for 52 as Shepley were beaten.

He played in two Jack Hampshire finals both defeats to Batley (1989) and Gomersal (1993) and missed out on a winner's medal in 1994 when he was away on holiday when Methley were beaten.

He captained the side to the Second Division championship in 1988 and then the following year in the "unlucky" season of 1989 when the club ended up runners up to Batley on four fronts (League, Heavy Woollen Cup, Jack Hampshire Cup and Yorkshire Council). The following year though he starred in the Double winning team.

Russell enjoyed bowling on the big Memorial Ground with his lovely smooth action and fielders surrounding the bat and during his time at Mirfield took five wickets or more on 39 occasions, a feat only bettered by Clive Brook and Mohammed Asif. His best figures were 8 for 47 against Birstall in 1986.

On the batting side he was very stylish but but could also be very hard hitting. He scored four centuries and forty half centuries with a highest score of 128 against Ossett in 1989.

Russell gave the club ten seasons to remember travelling from his home in South Yorkshire. During that time he introduced one of his pupils from school to the club namely Lee Morrith who played an important role with bat and ball in that successful team and went on to be come a teacher at Castle Hall School Mirfield.