

Introduction

This booklet was inspired by our current President, Clive Brook's address at the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 31st January 2002.

He drew attention to the fact that the club had been re-formed fifty years ago and had with him some photographs of the first match played by Mirfield CC at the Memorial Ground in 1952.

That evening we didn't know who the game was against but some of the players could be recognised in the team photograph. Inspired by this and being a historian I decided to do some research.

I managed to obtain some copies of seven photographs taken by the *Huddersfield Examiner* to commemorate the occasion and these will be displayed in the pavilion this summer. I also ascertained that the game was against Gomersal and from there decided to produce a history of the inaugural season the result of which is "Mirfield CC 50 Not Out" and I am now working on a complete record of results over the fifty years.

I referred to local libraries who have copies of local newspapers on microfiche including the *Yorkshire Post*, *Dewsbury Reporter*, *Huddersfield Examiner*, *Spenborough Guardian & Heckmondwike Herald*, the *Morley Observer* and *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*.

At times the research became frustrating. At one stage I had a complete record over every match with scorecards bar one game, Drighlington away. The *Dewsbury Reporter* had decided by August that soccer and rugby league were more important than the end of the cricket season. I also could not find a report of the meeting to re-form the club. I knew from Clive Brook that it was sometime in October but I could find no reports in the *Dewsbury Reporter*.

A visit to Cleckheaton library to look at the *Spenborough Guardian* for a report on the Drighlington game proved fruitless but lo and behold there were reports of the meetings in October. I later found a report of that game in the *Morley Observer*.

I then discovered that another game must have been played away at Scholes the week after all the games should have finished. No reports or scores could be found until, success ! a couple of lines in the *Huddersfield Examiner* filled the gap.

I would like to thank the following people who helped in this book. Firstly, Clive Brook for the inspiration and the help with the pen pictures of players; Stephen Carter, Library Manager at the *Huddersfield Examiner* ; Terry Neal for the proof reading and the staff of the following libraries for their help: Cleckheaton, Dewsbury, Leeds City, Bradford and Morley.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this booklet to the committee, members and players of 1952.

Patrick JA Neal
2002

Birth of the new Mirfield CC

Although evidence of a Mirfield Cricket Club existing in Mirfield between 1870 and 1919 can be found, the club we know based at the Memorial Ground was formed fifty years ago.

In 1951 the Craven Gentlemen's cricket team's lease for the use of the Memorial Ground ran out. It was at this time that a group of local businessmen saw the chance to reform the Mirfield Cricket Club.

It was in September 1951 that the first evidence appeared that a Mirfield Club was to be reformed for the first time in about thirty years in the town. The *Spenborough Guardian & Heckmondwike Herald* headlined "Mirfield Club next Season" on Friday 7th September. In a report of the Central Yorkshire League executive committee held on the previous Wednesday it stated that the League President, County Councillor Frank Morton had been invited to a meeting in Mirfield on Wednesday 12th September to discuss the matter of the club being formed and joining the Central Yorkshire League.

He commented that the introduction of Mirfield would have an effect on the fixtures and that only one team would be relegated and two promoted to give both divisions ten teams.

Mr J P Burnhill, representing Cleckheaton said he gathered that Mirfield Council had a scheme to put forward and a meeting had been arranged to discuss the matter of guarantors.

Mr C Sutton, the Wakefield representative had reservations over whether the club could take gate money in the public park and whether if the guarantors were to pull out was it worth bringing Mirfield in.

Mr Morton in reply saw no reason for this to happen as Mirfield having a population of over 12,000 and having a lovely ground would have a lot of local support. It was agreed to leave the matter until further developments had come about.

On 29th September the *Dewsbury Reporter* reported that the Heavy Woollen Cup draw for 1952 had been made and that " Mirfield would be admitted to next season's cup competition even though the Mirfield club had not been formed ".

At the Heavy Woollen meeting Mr Joe Burnhill commented that he had no doubt in his mind that a club would be formed and he would like to make formal application to enter the cup. Mr V Muff , the Liversedge representative proposed this and the vote was unanimous.

Ironically, the club was drawn away to play Joe Burnhill's previous club Cleckheaton in the Preliminary round set for 24th May 1952.

The re birth of the club occurred the following month when two meetings were held in Mirfield. On Friday 12th October *The Spenborough Guardian & Heckmondwike Herald* reported that a meeting had been held the previous Friday at which Mirfield Cricket Club had been formed. A well attended meeting of upwards of fifty people had met at the Trinity School rooms.

Mr John Hardy presided and reported that " a temporary committee had been set up and spent two long evenings in exploring the possibility of forming and what was quite important maintaining a town's cricket club in the future years. The opinion arrived at was that such a club could be successfully formed and successfully run". The Memorial Ground had been acquired but he continued: " hard work, continued enthusiasm and money were needed".

The temporary committee had looked hard at finance and set a figure of £500 as a sum necessary to launch the club on a satisfactory basis. John Hardy confirmed that " he had made very useful progress towards reaching that sum by means of personal approaches to many citizens of Mirfield".

Support was given to the venture by Mr Sykes, Chairman of the Mirfield Urban District Council: " he believed the time was ripe for the formation of a town's cricket club. It was certain that the District Council would be sympathetic to the scheme and helpful in material details".

Frank Morton, President of the Central Yorkshire League attended. He " strongly urged the meeting to form the Mirfield club" and confirmed that the League had given a favourable answer to entry to the League if and when the club was formed. He compared Mirfield to Heckmondwike which had a smaller population (9,000) but had a club holding its own in the top flight. " He knew there were doubters but hard work coupled to their advantages would ensure success. There must be several

good cricketers in Mirfield who were at present going out of the town for a game who would be only too ready to play one match in two at home". He concluded " advantages and opportunities like these before you don't recur. I therefore urge you to grasp them with both hands."

Mr HGB Wilson whilst in favour of the formation questioned the wisdom of entering the Central Yorkshire League. He thought the Dewsbury & District League to be more suitable as he deplored the many professionals playing in local club cricket.

Joe Burnhill urged the formation of a ladies committee to help with the social side and teas. He also stressed the importance of loyalty among the players.

It was decided to adjourn the meeting and call another meeting at the same venue for the following Friday 12th October when officials and committee could be elected.

At the adjourned meeting Colonel James Walker was unanimously elected the first President of the club and John Hardy Chairman.

Joe Burnhill was elected Vice-Chairman, S Furness Secretary, Stanley Milton Assistant Secretary and H Feeley Treasurer.

There was plenty of competition for places on the committee with eighteen standing for the twelve places. Charles Buckley topped the poll.

Frank Morton was elected Vice President " in recognition of his great help and valuable advice he had given in the formation of the club". (*Spenborough Guardian & Heckmondwike Herald* 19th October 1951)

The subscriptions were set as follows " Patrons a minimum of one guinea; ordinary members 10 shillings; Ladies and youths 15-18 5 shillings and schoolboys of any age 3 shillings."

Eric Williams has been a non-playing member of the club for all of the fifty years and can remember Stanley Milton coming round and collecting his 10 shillings.

The *Dewsbury Reporter* on 15th December 1951 reported a record attendance of 160 for the Central Yorkshire League dinner held in Cleckheaton. Frank Morton officially welcomed the Mirfield club to the League and the twelve representatives of the club present. "He knew they were proud of their beautiful ground and it was a great thing that a town ground should be used by a town club. The club's fine committee had done splendid work. He had attended the inaugural meeting of the club and had been very impressed by the enthusiasm that was rampant in Mirfield." He commented that in the space of a hectic two or three weeks John Hardy had collected £500 in direct giving to the club. " I bow my head to Mr Hardy for the work he has done", he concluded.

Henry Wilson, the *Dewsbury Reporter* cricket correspondent at the time commented in his preview to the season: " In the Dewsbury & District League the reforming of the Mirfield Club has had its effect. Unless there is a doubling of names the Mirfield trial match showed that members of the district league clubs were willing to try their luck in senior cricket. Both Whitley Lower and Mirfield Parish Church seem to be the chief sufferers. But I fancy that some of these players may find the pace too hot for them". He continued " a number of the first team players have experience of the Central Yorkshire League and Huddersfield League".

In the months after the meeting the committee had actively searched to put two teams together. Tommy Hyland had been recruited as player-coach after answering an advert. According to Eric Williams, Tommy met the committee at the Black Bull in Mirfield and after a long meeting walked all the way home to Halifax as all the buses had gone. He had brought with him ex-Yorkshire and England batsman Wilf Barber and other experienced players. A trial match had been played and plenty of local cricketers had shown an interest to play senior cricket.

By April the club was in a position to start their first season and everybody looked forward to the opening game against Gomersal on Saturday 26th April.

The Players

Charles Buckley

First eleven captain; right hand bat and slow off break bowler.

Public schoolboy cricketer who only played friendly cricket until Mirfield re-formed. He may have played a few matches with Craven Gentlemen who played at the Memorial Ground prior to ourselves.

He was Managing director of Buckley's Brush Works and was the son of the founder.

A committee member and Vice-President. He played only the first season with the first eleven and then several years with the seconds.

Wilf Barber

Former Yorkshire County player between 1926-1947 and Test cricketer who joined the club aged 51 from King Cross.

During his career with Yorkshire he scored 15,315 runs at an average of 34.36. He scored 27 centuries and two double centuries with a top score of 255 against Surrey. He still holds the second wicket record score for Yorkshire featuring with Maurice Leyland (189) in a stand of 346 against Middlesex in 1932. Wilf scored 162.

He played twice for England in 1935 making his debut at Headingley in front of 55,000 against South Africa scoring 24 and 14. In his second test also against South Africa he scored 44. But this game made him famous for taking a wicket with his last ball in Test cricket which was in fact only his second !

In the first two seasons of the club Wilf won the Central Yorkshire League first eleven Second Division batting award. In 1952 he scored 453 runs at an average of 41.18 and in 1953 scored 413 runs at average of 45.89.

Hurst Barber

A club legend ! Fifty years on still active member of the club and Life Vice President.

Right hand early order bat and very good and tough close fielder who earlier played for Holmfirth. Became first player to score fifty for the club with 79 in opening game.

Later became first eleven captain and led the club to consecutive Championships in 1958, 1959 and 1960. He also played in the League and Heavy Woollen Cup "Double" winning side of 1963. He later captained the second eleven. He was also under 18 manager for several years.

John Clough

Right hand bat who preferred to open the innings but batted three or four in 1952.

He came from the Huddersfield area and married a girl from Lower Hopton called Jenny Middleton. Later emigrated to possibly Australia and has relatives still living in Mirfield.

Cliff Dixon

Aggressive fast bowler who joined the club during the season after a committee man saw him playing for his college team.

Cliff was studying as an art teacher at Bretton Hall College. He played some matches in 1953.

Harold Dransfield

Right hand medium paced bowler who came to the club from local club Whitley Lower (now Hopton Mills).

He played for several years for the first eleven before finishing his career in the seconds.

Albert Dunderdale

A good all rounder, unorthodox right hand aggressive batsman and medium pace slinger type bowler. A good cover fielder.

Came from Mirfield Parish Church and after playing a few seasons returned there.

Tommy Hyland

Experienced all rounder, right handed defensive batsman and right hand slow off spin bowler.

He was engaged as the first professional after answering an advert for a player coach. He had been playing for King Cross in the Yorkshire League and would have played a major part in Wilf Barber joining the club. He had a very successful time at Mirfield later becoming captain. In 1952 he won the League bowling award with 37 wickets at an average of 8.97.

He left the club to join Halifax in the Yorkshire League but later returned around 1965 for one more year as captain.

Philip Jackson

Wicketkeeper and lower order bat.

Joined from Whitley Lower and played for one season before rejoining them.

Stanley Milton

Right handed early order batsman and first eleven vice-captain who scored 53 not out in the first match.

Another recruit from Whitley Lower. He was a local insurance agent and founder member of the club serving on the first committee as Assistant Secretary.

Jimmy Oates

Middle order batsman who also joined from Whitley Lower. He played intermittently with the first eleven but mainly with the second eleven.

Colin Peacock

Young 16 year old opening bowler in 1952. He was a former Mirfield Parish Church Choirboy League player.

Later became a fine attacking opening batsman who formed the "Mirfield Twins" partnership with Clive Brook.

He won the Central Yorkshire League First Division batting award in 1959, 1960 and 1963 and Second Division in 1968. In 1960 he shocked the League by becoming the first player to score 1,000 runs scoring 1,011 at an average of 72.21. This feat was not repeated until 1984.

Len Peckover

Slow left arm bowler brought from Halifax by Tommy Hyland. Played for two or three seasons before returning to the Halifax League.

Eric Senior

An all rounder__ right handed middle order bat and medium paced inswing bowler with unusual double action.

Joined from Ravensthorpe Congs in the Dewsbury League. Played several years in both First and Second elevens.

Saturday 26th April 1952

Luckily from an historical point of view the *Huddersfield Examiner* saw the new venture of Mirfield CC as a newsworthy event.

On the day of the game which had been switched by the league from Gomersal so that the first game was at the Memorial Ground the *Examiner* managed to get a picture and report of the pre-match speeches on their back page by teatime. The picture of Colonel James Walker speaking can be seen along with other photographs and reports in the pavilion.

Under the headline "Re-birth of Mirfield Cricket Club" the *Examiner* reported " Colonel James Walker performed the opening ceremony this afternoon and unfurled the club's flag in the presence of a large gathering".

He commented that he was very grateful to Mirfield Urban District Council who wisely seeing a demand for a Mirfield club had not granted the Craven Gentlemen CC exclusive use of the ground.

He continued that "the club was very grateful to all those who had given generously towards its re-establishment and to the Mirfield Council for its co-operation. He wished the club every success on that ground, where they had a great tradition to follow".

Councillor JH Sykes, Chairman of Mirfield Urban District Council tendered congratulations and good wishes of the local authority.

County Councillor Frank Morton brought the good wishes of the Central Yorkshire League and Mr N Stead Secretary of the Yorkshire Cricket Council congratulated the club.

On a cold early season day Wilf Barber and Tommy Hyland strode out to open the first innings of the new Mirfield Cricket Club.

All eyes were on the new opening pair but Hyland was soon run out on 19 when he slipped part way across the pitch and Barber was clean bowled by Spencer for 37 after being earlier dropped at square leg by Hinchcliffe.

Philip Jackson was bowled by MacKenzie for 8 but then Hurst Barber and Stanley Milton came together. The *Dewsbury Reporter* described how " with the wicket in their favour, these two batsmen displayed a splendid partnership". Hurst Barber went on to complete Mirfield's first half century "with outstanding batsmanship" making 79 and Milton also completed his half century making 56 not out . Buckley declared the moment Barber was caught on the long on boundary at 193 for 4 after two and half hours.

Gomersal went for the runs with 50 being scored in the first hour but during this time three wickets had fallen to Hyland and Peckover. After this Gomersal took a more cautious approach and held out despite Hyland taking 6 for 19.

The *Dewsbury Reporter* commented " had captain CW Buckley declared a little earlier - say with 160 instead of 193 - they could quite easily have had a win".

So the first game ended in a draw with Hurst Barber scoring the first half century and Tommy Hyland the first six wicket haul.

The second eleven triumphed at Gomersal making 154 all out and then bowling Gomersal out for 128. Unfortunately, this is only one of two second team games of which I could find a result for 1952. They were to finish bottom of the division winning four matches.

The other matches played on the opening day in the division were Chickenley v Drighlington; Dewsbury v Wakefield; Huddersfield ICI v Scholes and Thornhill v Liversedge.

Mirfield 193-4 dec H Barber 79, S Milton 56*, W Barber 37
Gomersal 105-7 T Hyland 6 for 19

Match Drawn - League record Played 1 drawn 1 Points 1

Saturday 3rd May Mirfield v Dewsbury

After the success of the batting the previous week it was the turn of the bowlers to impress, bowling Dewsbury out for 157. "They were not altogether disappointing..... fast bowler Dransfield gave little away in the way of runs and was responsible for two wickets. Milton proved an asset, claiming three wickets and the slow left arm bowler Peckover again helped his side by claiming two" wrote the *Dewsbury Reporter*. Dewsbury captain Williamson held their innings together with 52.

Mirfield went all out for victory after tea for an hour batting in drizzle Wilf Barber making 21. However, the rain was to be the victor at 7:00pm the stumps were drawn leaving Hyland 27 not out and Hurst Barber 17 not out.

Henry Wilson, the cricket correspondent of the *Dewsbury Reporter* noted " my own opinion is that Mirfield are not quite strong enough in bowling. The batting seems to be there, but are they going to be able to get the other side out in time to win matches ? A colleague tells me that neither the fast bowling or spin stuff is good enough". These seem strange comments after just two games and one in which they had bowled the opposition out for 157.

Dewsbury 157 S Milton 3 for 32, H Dransfield 2 for 39. L Peckover 2 for 29
Mirfield 65-1 W Barber 21, T Hyland 27*

Match Drawn - League Record Played 2 drawn 2 Points 2

Saturday 10th May Chickenley v Mirfield

Henry Wilson's comments may have been a week early ! The *Dewsbury Reporter* headlined "Mirfield tried eight bowlers".

Batting first Wilf Barber led the way with 49 before being caught by Flint off a bad ball from Stead. Dunderdale (26) and Jackson (29) "added quite a lot to Mirfield's moderate score so a declaration was made at 151 for 8".

With the weather again threatening Chickenley held out at 77 for 3 in 42 overs with captain Buckley ringing the changes. Dunderdale, Hyland and Buckley himself all took a wicket apiece.

Three League games still left the club looking for its first victory.

Mirfield 151-8 dec W Barber 49, P Jackson 29, A Dunderdale 26
Chickenley 77-3

Match Drawn - League record Played 3 drawn 3 Points 3

Saturday 17th May Mirfield v Heckmondwike - Yorkshire Council match

This local derby match was a Yorkshire Council match and did not count towards League points. Heckmondwike would be a test as they were a First Division side. The *Dewsbury Reporter* commented: "had the extra five overs been claimed over 700 hundred spectators would have been treated to a thrilling finish with both sides sharing the possibility of a win".

This match saw the debut of a 16 year old Colin Peacock who was to become one of the club's most successful players during the 1950's and 1960's. " Peacock showed promise his medium pace deliveries, forcing the batsmen to play defensively. He proved most dangerous of the Mirfield attack".

During the Heckmondwike innings Hurst Barber threw down the wickets to run out K Goddard (later to play for Mirfield). Heckmondwike declared on 154 for 7.

In reply Wilf Barber and Hyland took the score to 47 before Hyland was bowled by Burgin. Hurst Barber then received a first baller to be out lbw. Philip Jackson batted well "with some well placed shots to deep fine leg" to score 34. At the close Mirfield were 122 for 6.

Heckmondwike 154-7 C Peacock 2 for 29, L Peckover 2 for 46
Mirfield 122-6 W Barber 34, P Jackson 34

Match Drawn

Saturday 24th May Cleckheaton v Mirfield - Heavy Woollen Cup Preliminary Round

A first venture into the Heavy Woollen Cup against First Division opponents and the former club of Joe Burnhill.

The game was played in glorious sunshine and saw Wilf Barber and Hyland bat for two and a half hours. They each gave only one chance and when the innings was suspended at 5:00pm Barber was 76 not out and Hyland 62 not out.

Opening the Mirfield attack was a new signing Cliff Dixon, an art student at Bretton Hall College. The *Dewsbury Reporter* commented " Dixon's deliveries were certainly hostile and might possibly solve Mirfield's problem of a fast bowler". He took two wickets one in each spell and along with Peckover and Hyland bowled Cleckheaton out for 133. Parker top scored for Cleckheaton with 58.

Mirfield 153-0 W Barber 76*, T Hyland 62*
Cleckheaton 133 T Hyland 3 for 34, L Peckover 3 for 44, C Dixon 2 for 13

Drawn at home to play Staincliffe in Round One.

Saturday 31st May Mirfield v Scholes

This was the first of three games in four days over the Whitsun Holiday.

In this match Cliff Dixon really arrived taking 5 for 38 the first being a brilliant left handed catch by wicketkeeper Jackson. A heavy shower stopped play at 4:15pm but after the resumption the last two Scholes wickets fell as they were 87 all out.

Despite the early loss of Hyland for one Wilf Barber and Clough knocked off the necessary runs for the club's first League victory.

In the second eleven game Mirfield scored 175-9 declared but Scholes won with one wicket to spare at 177-9.

Scholes 87 C Dixon 5 for 38, L Peckover 4 for 42
Mirfield 89-1 W Barber 63*, J Clough 25

Match won League record - Played 4 Drawn 3 Won 1 Points 6

Monday 1st June Liversedge v Mirfield

The Bank Holiday derby saw the club's first League defeat in a very low scoring game.

Although bowling Liversedge out for 97, again Dixon starring taking 6 for 35 and Hyland three wickets Mirfield were soon 18 for 4, Wilf Barber being out hit wicket for 4. They were eventually all out for 61 with only Jackson and Peacock reaching double figures.

Liversedge 97 C Dixon 6 for 35, T Hyland 3 for 22
Mirfield61

Match lost League record - Played 5 Won 1 Lost 1 Drawn 3 Points 6

Tuesday 2nd June Mirfield v Wakefield

In this game again an early fall of wickets took its toll. At one stage Mirfield were 28 for 4 until Hurst Barber , Dunderdale and Milton pulled the score round to 110 all out.

The *Dewsbury Reporter* commented "the match had possibly one of the most thrilling finishes yet seen by Mirfield supporters". Wakefield lost their fourth, fifth and sixth wickets all at 53. However, Davies and Baker added 40 before Milton clean bowled Baker.

Captain Buckley dropped new batsman Storey which "may have turned the tables" if the catch had been taken. With the score on 108-8 Davies smashed a six straight in to the tennis courts , a treasured feat even at the club today.

Mirfield110 H Barber 21, A Dunderdale 25
Wakefield 114-8 T Hyland 4 for 45, L Peckover 2 for 12

Match lost League record - Played 6 Won 1 Lost 2 Drawn 3 Points 6

Saturday 7th June Thornhill v Mirfield

The following week Mirfield were involved in another close finish.

Wilf Barber scored ten boundaries in his 52 but "the real thrills came when Calvert came on for his second spell of bowling and in four overs claimed five wickets for one run " (*Dewsbury Reporter*). Calvert was to join Mirfield in 1954.

Thornhill needed 148 in two and a half hours " and so long as Meetham was in , they seemed to have a chance although he saw colleagues depart with depressing regularity". When the scores were level with nine Thornhill wickets down unfortunately Dixon dropped a catch and Thornhill won.

Two narrow defeats left the club with just one League win in seven games and seventh place in the table.

Mirfield143 W Barber 52, T Hyland 24
Thornhill 145-9 C Peacock 5 for 33, C Dixon 3 for 45

Match lost League record - Played 7 Won 1 Lost 3 Drawn 3 Points 6

Saturday 14th June Gomersal v Mirfield

On this day only two games managed to commence in the whole of the League; the game at Gomersal was not one of them.

Match abandoned League record - Played 8 Won 1 Lost 3 Drawn 4 Points 7

Saturday 21st June Mirfield v Staincliffe - Heavy Woollen Cup First Round

The *Dewsbury Reporter* headlined "Mirfield Mystery Continued" commenting that the club was putting "mystery into the already uncertain game of cricket. They lose three second division matches in succession but in the challenge cup beat first division clubs".

The game was played over Saturday and Monday evening as the weather intervened on Saturday evening. "Few outside the town gave Mirfield a chance but thanks to another Barber-Hyland partnership the critics were shocked".

Staincliffe batted first and at 5:15pm under cup rules their innings was suspended with them on 151 for 9. At one time three wickets fell in three balls, two to Hyland and one with the first ball of Peckover's next over.

In reply Mirfield passed the Staincliffe total with the loss of two wickets at 152-2, Wilf Barber being run out on 99 after being only part way down the wicket when Hyland called for two. Clive Brook recalls Wilf telling him that he was too tired to make the second run.

When Staincliffe returned to the wicket they reached 159 before rain stopped play so it was all back on Monday evening. Another 20 runs were added to their total as they were eventually all out for 179. Dunderdale and Hurst Barber saw Mirfield safely into the next round.

Staincliffe 179 L Peckover 6 for 69, T Hyland 2 for 32
Mirfield 180-3 W Barber 99, T Hyland 45
Drawn away to Hanging Heaton in Round Two
Saturday 28th June Mirfield v Huddersfield ICI

ICI batted first and recorded the first 200 plus score on the Memorial Ground making 206-9 declared. Peckover and Hyland were the pick of the bowlers with three wickets apiece.

In reply Mirfield held out for a draw after Wilf Barber (47) and Hyland (38) had made a good start.

ICI 206-9 dec L Peckover 3 for 41, T Hyland 3 for 40, H Dransfield 2 for 44
Mirfield 120-7 W Barber 47, T Hyland 28

Match Drawn League record - Played 9 Won 1 Lost 3 Drawn 5 Points 8

Saturday 5th July Hanging Heaton v Mirfield Heavy Woollen Cup Second Round

This was undoubtedly the biggest game of the season. Hanging Heaton were dubbed the "Invincibles" having won four trophies the previous season and being leaders of the First Division.

Henry Wilson in the *Dewsbury Reporter* reported on the game in full with the headline "Giant Killers win again - but how the giant fought!" and I am grateful to the editors of the *Reporter* for permission to relate the report in full.

"As the shadows lengthened at Bennett Lane so did the faces of Hanging Heaton supporters while those of the Mirfield followers grew as round and red, as jolly as the sun itself.

Excitement rose and fell and bubbled as lava in the crater of a most active volcano. Not because at any time of this bubbling excitement was the game really finely balanced, but because it was the rarely seen spectacle, the under-dog winning, or the little 'un beating the big 'un.

The giant-killers killed again - but how the giant fought. Just when David was ready to put his victorious foot on the chest of the prone Goliath and receive the plaudits of the crowd, the giant rose and the slayers were all but slain in a last flurry. But first things first.

The amazing feature of this match was not so much that Mirfield beat Hanging Heaton with bat, ball and in the field (oh, yes very much in the field), but they out generalled them. So we saw a team of old campaigners beaten in tactics, if not actually strategy by another team almost still in the cradle. Surely a case of teaching one's grandmother to suck eggs.

On occasions, Mirfield have been scoring well, and in a cup-tie they never need once look at the clock; even the calendar was not important. So Hyland and Wilfred Barber went to the wicket with one real object to take the razor edge off the Hanging Heaton fast bowling. At the end of 20 minutes not a run had been scored. Haigh and Blakeley had hurled themselves with fury into their task. But as neither was particularly accurate Hyland and Barber found the wearing down process going their way. The blue riband of the Atlantic was at that very moment being snatched from us - but why allow American "pep" to disturb the placidity of English cricket. If Drake could play bowls with the Armada off Plymouth, why should the United States in mid-Atlantic disturb Hyland and Barber? Suddenly Hyland scored two lovely fours, a cut off a rising ball from Haigh and then a sweep to leg that left the fieldsmen standing. The guns were firing - or at least one gun, because it was 45 minutes before Barber scored, and then it was a single.

But how it all paid. Haigh and Blakeley tired and both batsmen began to score freely, with Barber never really comfortable. Robinson brought the first bite into the attack when he had Hyland lbw; his was a good innings with some firm shots. Just when Barber gave promise of showing some cultured shots from his treasure chest of Yorkshire days, he was suprisingly caught and bowled by Shaw. The ball may have lifted a trifle as he played it. This looked like the beginning of the end - actually it was the end of the beginning, for there was plenty to follow. Helped by some slack fielding and a little luck in the slips - even McNair appeared to miss one that hit his ankle painfully - Mirfield were able to suspend at 158 for 7.

Few thought it enough. None expected the happenings that followed. McNair and Heppenstall appeared so comfortable that they borrowed no lesson from Mirfield but set about looking for runs. But Dixon and Peacock were bowling with great enthusiasm. Suddenly Heppenstall was beaten by a ball that swung and took the top of his wickets. Dixon produced another good one, and Haigh's promotion in the batting order was a short affair. Even so it looked a flash in the pan. It was more than this, for within minutes McNair and Stead had perished in the fire of attack. McNair pushed one round to leg with sufficient power to make Senior's catch a good one. Stead was bowled all over his wickets, hardly making a stroke. Four were down for 19.

Bowling figures then were : Peacock 5-2-8-1; Dixon 6-2-9-3. It was five for 20 when D Duckworth was completely beaten by Peacock's pace off the wicket. It was almost as though the rout was signed and sealed. Robinson came in to show what could have been done by earlier batsmen. He nearly earned the overworked phrase of a captain's innings. But not quite. For after taking all sorts of risks in making Dixon and Peacock retire into caps and sweaters, he continued to search for runs when he could have taken all the time in the world. But when he had gone, Shaw continued to play a beautiful innings - scoring runs against a field set with the precision of a chess-board. Now the Mirfield bowling had its limitations. Hyland bowled tightly enough but there was nothing to spread the devastation of Dixon and Peacock. And Shaw was not the end of this defiance. Stenson showed the straightest of bats and oldest of head of all. He stayed in for 90 minutes and with Blakeley put on 37 for the last wicket. If there was an error in the bowling it was when Milton brought back his two fast bowlers - but at opposite ends from when they opened. Dixon did not take kindly to bowling up hill. Eventually they were changed, but it was left to Senior to bring this vastly interesting last wicket partnership to an end.

So Mirfield had to bat again, needing 17 runs to win. If Hanging Heaton had had two medium bowlers of some accuracy they might have won. But as Haigh and Blakeley tried to remove Peckover and Peacock by sheer force and not accuracy, the batsmen hit off the runs with the greatest of ease - including some fours".

In his editorial Wilson commented " some Mirfield supporters had to bear the burden on a warm summer evening of two great satisfactions - the victory of their team and my confusion for having said that Hanging Heaton would win. And to put a little cream on their satisfaction may I remind them of something I said when the Mirfield club was formed. I said "I know what will happen if you meet say Hanging Heaton." But I didn't!"

Mirfield 170-7 **W Barber 21, T Hyland 27, H Barber 24, A Dunderdale 21**
Hanging Heaton 169 **C Dixon 4 for 54, C Peacock 2 for 35, L Peckover 2 for 38**

Drawn at home to Thornhill in the Semi-Finals

Saturday 12th July Heckmondwike v Mirfield Yorkshire Council

After the jubilation of the previous week Mirfield travelled to another First Division club for a Yorkshire Council match and again came away victorious.

On a very poor wicket opening bowlers Dixon and Peacock had balls rising head high and one of the Heckmondwike openers Ellison had to retire after being struck on the head by Peacock. Dixon and Peacock bowled unchanged. "The Heckmondwike batting - although the wicket helped the bowlers - was irresolute". Ellison returned to top score with 17 as Heckmondwike were dismissed for 69.

In reply " (Wilf) Barber drew on a wealth of scoring strokes Stanley dismissed Hyland with a brilliant one handed catch but Barber went on to make a polished 56 not out."

Heckmondwike 69 **C Dixon 7 for 34, C Peacock 2 for 30**
Mirfield 70-1 **W Barber 56***

Match won

Thursday 16th July Drighlington v Mirfield

This match was brought forward to Thursday from the Saturday as this clashed with the Heavy Woollen Semi-Final.

Drighlington innings was built around Ineson's 66 and 30 from tail ender Glossop. They were bowled out for 162 with Dransfield taking 3 for 36.

With Wilf Barber missing Senior and Hyland opened and after 45 were on the board for just the loss of Senior the Drighlington captain introduced one of their juniors F Aspinall who then turned the game.

The *Morley Observer* reported "He promptly took the wicket of (Hurst) Barber with the last ball of his first over, had Gates stumped and clean bowled Jackson in his second over, and claimed another victim, clean bowled, in his fourth. At that point he had taken 4 for 3 in 4 overs (3 maidens)."

Hyland was still there and with Dransfield added 24 for the sixth wicket. However, after that the innings collapsed as Mirfield were dismissed for 88. Hyland nearly carried his bat was ninth out for 41. Aspinall finished with 7 for 23.

Drighlington 162 **H Dransfield 3 for 36, C Dixon 2 for 23, C Peacock 2 for 50**
Mirfield 88 **T Hyland 41**

Match lost League record - Played 10 Won 1 Lost 4 Drawn 5 Points 8

Saturday 19 July Mirfield v Thornhill Heavy Woollen Cup Semi-Final

With Henry Wilson now tipping Mirfield to go on and win the cup caution would have to be taken!

Thornhill won the toss and batted. Wilson reported " Meetham and Cooper poked (literally) the score to 55 before Meetham was caught and bowled by Hyland". Peacock "the most accurate of the bowlers" dismissed Higson for 27. Thornhill reached 150-3 at the suspension.

A big shock was in store when Mirfield began their reply. Wilson reported " Enter Mirfield represented by (Wilf) Barber and Hyland; Calvert runs up easily, and delivers a beautiful ball. Exit Barber. Anyone having seen the face of a tom cat who has just licked the cream off the top of the milk has then also seen the faces of the Thornhill team at that moment. Mirfield never recovered from the shock".

Indeed they were soon 20 for 4 having lost Senior (4), Hyland (12) and Hurst Barber (1). Clough and Dunderdale brought the innings round until a foolish run saw Clough run out. Peckover and Peacock "ran well between the wickets to put on a sound 20 but after they went Pearson had captain Buckley caught after some brave blows and Mirfield 'babes' of the league had narrowly missed making cricket history."

Wilson in his editorial crowed " when I said Hanging Heaton would beat Mirfield and didn't, at the end of the match an excited Mirfield supporter came to the score box and shouted in a stentorian voice 'climb down! climb down!' - of course I did. I noticed the same gentleman at the Memorial Ground on Saturday at the end of Mirfield's defeat. But not a word from him this time."

Thornhill **150-3**
Mirfield **98** **J Clough 21**

Saturday 26th July Mirfield v Liversedge

A weakened side took the field in this local derby match. The *Dewsbury Reporter* stated "Mirfield were by no means at full strength. Player-coach Hyland, vice captain Milton, wicketkeeper Jackson and opening bowler Peacock were away and in their places were second teamers Oates, English (wicketkeeper), Richardson and the vice-chairman of the club JP Burnhill who made up the eleven."

Batting first Liversedge (champions elect) rattled up 199-9 in two hours 13 minutes, Senior being the pick of the bowlers with 4 for 52.

In reply, Wilf Barber was out in the third over for 13 "the burden being passed to the 'local lads'. Hurst Barber was one who made a valiant effort but only to throw away his wicket after scoring 33, with a bad shot straight into the hands of Porritt at mid off."

From 86 for 4 the batting collapsed to 90 for 8. Buckley and Dixon put on 18 for the last wicket as Mirfield were bowled out for 108. Joe Burnhill made 1. Broadbent took the last six wickets to fall to end with 7 for 38 in 14 overs.

Liversedge **199-9 dec** **E Senior 4 for 52, A Dunderdale 3 for 20**
Mirfield **108** **H Barber 33**

Match lost League record - Played 11 Won 1 Lost 5 Drawn 5 Points 8

An interesting footnote to this game is reported in the *Morley Observer* on 15th August. "The Central Yorkshire League committee have given a ruling on the question whether boundary hits should be sixes or fours. The ruling is that the visiting team shall conform to the custom of the home team. The Liversedge representative who brought up this matter said that in a match between Liversedge and Mirfield neither side could agree on the point. Mirfield wanted sixes and were quite obstinate about it.... the MCC laws also stated that before the toss for innings the umpires would be guided by the prevailing custom of the ground."

Saturday 2nd August Mirfield v Chickenley

After a stand of 117 between Wilf Barber and Hyland, Mirfield lost both of them and Hurst Barber all on the same score. Jackson and Dunderdale rallied the score round to 169-9 declared.

Chickenley needed 170 in two and a half hours. "The visitors never looked like getting the runs - Newbould (32) and Cooper (16) being the only batsmen to offer any resistance to the bowling of Peacock and Hyland"(Dewsbury Reporter).

However, the rain intervened between 6:30 and 7:00. Although the extra five overs were taken the game fizzled out into a draw.

Mirfield 169-9 dec **W Barber 37, T Hyland 51, A Dunderdale 30**
Chickenley 69-6 **C Peacock 3 for 19, T Hyland 3 for 10**

Match drawn League record - Played 12 Won 1 Lost 5 Drawn 6 Points 9

Saturday 9th August Wakefield v Mirfield

This game was rained off after Wakefield had made 53 without loss. All matches in the League did not finish.

Match abandoned League record Played 12 Won 1 Lost 4 Drawn 7 Points 10

Sunday 10th August Whitley Lower v Mirfield - Friendly

Henry Wilson had built this friendly up in the previous week's *Dewsbury Reporter*: "this game will be keener than are many league contests. Whitley Lower lost one or two players to Mirfield and there is a fairly keen rivalry."

He reported on the match accordingly "a disappointing affair. Both teams sadly below strength. Mirfield made 122. This was a two man show, Milton scoring 57 and Brook 40. Whitley made 26 for 2 before rain drowned whatever fire there may have been smouldering in the friendly match of near rivals."

This match saw one of the first appearances of our President, Clive Brook who scored 40. Clive had already signed for Lascelles Hall in 1952 and so didn't play his first season for the club until 1953.

Mirfield 122 **S Milton 57, C Brook 40**
Whitley Lower 26-2

Saturday 16th August Huddersfield ICI v Mirfield

Unfortunately, I have found no report of this game but a full scorecard was produced in the *Huddersfield Examiner*.

Mirfield batted first and due mainly to Hurst Barber (62) and Clough (48) scored 175 for 6 declared. Again the rain intervened with ICI 4 without loss.

Mirfield 175-6 dec H Barber 62, J Clough 48
Huddersfield ICI 4-0

Match abandoned League record - Played 14 Won 1 Lost 5 Drawn 8 Points 11

Saturday 23rd August Dewsbury v Mirfield

Again there is no report of this game. The *Dewsbury Reporter's* sports pages were being taken over at this time of year with football and rugby league.

Mirfield batted first scoring 159-6 declared thanks mainly to Hyland's fifty and good support from Hurst Barber (20), Milton (19) and Peacock (18 not out).

In reply Dewsbury struggled to 76 for 5 with Peacock and Peckover taking two wickets apiece.

Mirfield 159-6 dec T Hyland 56, H Barber 20
Dewsbury 76-5 C Peacock 2 for 25, L Peckover 2 for 23

Match drawn League record - Played 15 Won 1 Lost 5 Drawn 9 Points 12

Saturday 31st August Mirfield v Drighlington

Drighlington batted first and soon lost openers Booth and Pinfield to Peacock. Dixon then dismissed Ineson to leave them 19 for 3.

Only an innings of 31 by Lambert brought Drighlington's score round as Hyland claimed 6 for 21 in 11 overs as they were bowled out for 88.

The *Morley Observer* commented " Drighlington's innings had taken 40 overs, Mirfield got the runs in half that number.....Peckover and Clough opened the innings and put on 24 before Peckover was caught by Howard off Pitts. (Hurst) Barber was caught by Lambert off Glennon for 7, but Clough (28) and Dunderdale (29 not out) quickly put the side within reach of Drighlington's total. Both hit four fours."

This was only the second league victory of the season but was to be followed by two more.

Drighlington 88 T Hyland 6 for 21, C Dixon 2 for 15, C Peacock 2 for 21
Mirfield 89-3 A Dunderdale 29*, J Clough 28

Match won League record - Played 16 Won 2 Lost 5 Drawn 9 Points 15

Saturday 6th September Mirfield v Thornhill

Thornhill arrived at the Memorial Ground as Heavy Woollen Cup winners having beaten Mirfield convincingly in the Semi-Final.

Thornhill scored 100 all out with only J Senior (29) and Cooper (20) offering any real resistance. Dixon took the honours with 4 for 52.

In reply Peckover and Clough opened the innings in the absence of Wilf Barber. Both were back in the pavilion with 28 on the board. Hurst Barber and Dunderdale took the score to 69 before Calvert bowled Barber.

The *Dewsbury Reporter* stated "things looked a little shaky, for it could be seen that with a tightening up of the Thornhill attack the home side could lose the day. But Dunderdale baffled the attackers and lashed out to save his side. Jackson also added his contribution."

Thornhill 100 C Dixon 4 for 52, C Peacock 2 for 16, T Hyland 2 for 11
Mirfield 102-3 A Dunderdale 41*

Match won League record - Played 17 Won 3 Lost 5 Drawn 9 Points 18

Saturday 13th September Scholes v Mirfield

Finding the result of this match played a week after the official season ended gave me most trouble. No record in the *Dewsbury Reporter*, the *Spenborough Guardian* or the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*.

I managed to track down the match being played on 13th September as two League tables proved this must be so. However, success when Stephen Carter at the *Huddersfield Examiner* emailed me with the news that a very brief mention was given in the *Examiner* on 20th September.

I had thought that Wilf Barber might have scored the first hundred for the club as I knew how many runs he scored to win the League award and this all tied up. However, Wilf made 82 not out as Clough (55 not out) and Wilf saw Mirfield to a ten wicket victory. Scholes had been bowled out for 149. Unfortunately no bowling figures were given.

Scholes 149
Mirfield 153-0 W Barber 82 *, J Clough 55*

Match Won League record - Played 18 Won 4 Lost 5 Drawn 9 Points 21

Mirfield had established themselves in their first season. A good late run had seen them finish seventh in the table and they had shocked everyone with their Heavy Woollen Cup exploits.

Experienced campaigners Wilf Barber and Tommy Hyland had both won League awards, Wilf narrowly missing out on being the first Mirfield centurion - this feat fell four years later to George Curry when he scored 117 on 31st May 1956 in the Heavy Woollen Cup against Hanging Heaton.

Henry Wilson called a "Curtain on Cricket" in his column at the end of season. Of Mirfield he wrote "it has done rather better than I expected it to, but in one way the performance has substantiated all I said at the meeting that formed the club - local boys have not made good. Mirfield as other clubs in this area have had to import players and these players have been the backbone of the team.... but the team has had its moments. To beat Cleckheaton, Staincliffe and Hanging Heaton in the Heavy Woollen Cup was great going indeed. How much it has cost to run the club I do not know but I imagine it will have been a fairly expensive business becoming more expensive if promotion is gained and kept."

Fifty years later nothing really changes with local clubs having to pay good money for a few professionals to bolster the teams' needs but well supported by local lads.

League tables

The final league tables for First and Second elevens in 1952 were thus :-

Central Yorkshire League - First Elevens - Second Division

	PI	W	L	D	Points
1. Liversedge	18	11	0	7	40
2. Dewsbury	18	7	0	11	32
3. Chickenley	18	6	4	8	26
4. Huddersfield ICI	18	6	4	8	26
5. Thornhill	18	7	8	3	24
6. Wakefield	18	4	2	12	24
7. Mirfield	18	4	5	9	21
8. Scholes	18	4	7	7	19
9. Gomersal	18	2	9	7	13
10. Drighlington	18	2	14	2	8

Central Yorkshire League - Second elevens - Second Division

	PI	W	L	D	Points
1. Liversedge	18	11	4	3	36
2. Chickenley	18	11	5	2	35
3. Dewsbury	18	8	4	6*	31
4. Drighlington	18	8	8	2*	27
5. Wakefield	18	8	7	3	27
6. Thornhill	18	7	8	3	24
7. Scholes	18	7	10	1	22
8. Gomersal	18	5	9	4	19
9. Huddersfield ICI	18	5	9	4	19
10. Mirfield	18	4	11	3	15

* denotes tied match (2 points)

The Rest is history

The following year under the leadership of Squire Radcliffe promotion was achieved with ten of the eighteen league games won. Wilf Barber again won the League batting award with 413 runs at an average of 45.89.

The second eleven captained by Philip Squire had success in winning the Crowther Cup played at Hanging Heaton which still to date is the only time this has been achieved. East Ardsley made 195 with Mirfield winning by two wickets with Cyril Spencer (56), Len Peckover (52) and Eric Senior (35) being amongst the runs.

1956 witnessed the first century on the Memorial Ground by a Mirfield player when Albert Holroyd scored 100 against Hanging Heaton on 28th June. George Curry won the League First Division batting award with 458 runs at an average of 50.89.

1958 began the start of three great years when under the captaincy of Hurst Barber Mirfield ruled the roost with three championships on the trot. This was the first time this had been done in the history of the Central Yorkshire League.

Colin Peacock won the League batting award in both 1959 and 1960; in 1959 scoring 522 runs at an average of 32.62 and then in 1960 setting a new league record with 1011 runs at an average of 72.71.

In 1962 the club gained its first victory in the Heavy Woollen Cup when Clive Brook's side beat favourites Hanging Heaton by 19 runs. The second eleven won the League for the first time under the leadership of Cyril Spencer. Also in 1962 Bert Wilcock won the League bowling award with 59 wickets at an average of 7.45.

1963 brought about the first double of League and Heavy Woollen Cup. In the Final played at Savile Town, Batley were bowled out in 85 minutes for just 33. The League was won on the last day when Mirfield drew with nearest challengers Hanging Heaton. Colin Peacock once again won the League batting award with 720 runs at an average of 72.00.

The second eleven again won the League in 1964 and 1966 under Cyril Spencer's captaincy.

In 1968 after being relegated Clive Brook led the first eleven back to the First Division when they won the Second Division title. Colin Peacock led the way with the bat to take the League award with 713 runs at an average of 37.50.

The seventies saw the side yo-yoing between first and second division. In 1972 Stuart Nichols' side won the Second Division championship with Peter Wood claiming the League bowling award with 68 wickets at an average of 5.89.

In 1979 Clive Brook's team again regained First Division status winning the Second Division title, Richard Needler taking 46 wickets at an average of 8.89 to win the League bowling award and Andrew Bolt claiming the wicket-keeping award with 43 dismissals. Eddie Thompson also won the second eleven wicket-keeping award with 22 dismissals.

In 1985 the pavilion was improved with the opening of the lounge extension. The year witnessed the start of a remarkable run by all-rounder Russell Heritage in which he won the League bowling award for five years in succession (the fourth being in the Second Division). In 1985 he took 75 wickets at an average of 11.36; 1986 54 wickets at 13.59; 1987 54 wickets at 10.31; 1988 66 at 7.07 and 1989 61 at 13.27. He also secured the League all-rounder's award in 1986 and 1998.

1988 saw the first eleven regain First Division status after one season in the Second Division. Russell Heritage's side only lost two League games. Heritage won the league bowling award but it was the arrival of a young Indian from Bombay named Iqbal Khan that set the batting alight, Iqbal winning the League batting award with 815 runs at an average of 81.50.

The following year saw heartbreak on all fronts for the first eleven. They suffered at the hands of rivals Batley as they finished runners up in the League and lost three Cup Finals (the Heavy Woollen

Cup, The Jack Hampshire Memorial Trophy and the Yorkshire Council Play-off) all to the same Batley side. Iqbal Khan again won the League batting award with 855 runs at an average of 61.07.

In 1990 Derek Johnson arrived as captain and virtually the same side that had missed out in 1989 brought the League and Heavy Woollen Cup double to Mirfield for the first time since 1960. Shepley were beaten in the Final at Ossett and the League was secured with victory over Heckmondwike on the last day of the season.

1991 saw the second eleven win the Wheatley Cup beating Ossett at Birstall under the captaincy of David Paige. Eric Bell won the second eleven League bowling award with 40 wickets at 11.01. In this year Iqbal Khan became the first batsman to score a double century in the fifty three years of the Central Yorkshire League when he scored 201 not out on the Memorial Ground against Ossett. His innings included 12 sixes and he moved from 150 to 200 in 7 overs.

In 1994 it was very apt that Andrew Bolt should lead the first eleven to victory in the Jack Hampshire Memorial Trophy named after a great stalwart to both Mirfield and the League and a great influence on Andrew. Methley were beaten by 1 wicket at Ossett as Eric Bell's pads secured victory!

In 1995 Patrick Neal won the second eleven League batting award with 695 runs at an average of 49.64.

1997 brought about the second Wheatley Cup triumph with the second eleven beating Morley at Batley. Mohammed Asif won the first eleven League bowling award with 92 wickets at 8.13 and set a club record with 116 wickets in total at an average of 8.57.

In millennium year the first eleven again brought home the Jack Hampshire Memorial Trophy beating Liversedge at Ossett, Ibbi Latif scoring a match winning 113 not out. David Jackson's side also just missed out on the League title to Methley but won the Yorkshire Council Play-off final for the first time in the club's history beating Wickersley Old Village in the final at Methley.

2001 saw a new venture as the club joined the Bradford League, leaving the Central Yorkshire League for the first time in 48 years. The first eleven just missed promotion but the second eleven captained by Andrew Kaye won the Verity section to be promoted at the first attempt. They were beaten by Woodlands in the Championship play-off.