

# Spotlight on Mirfield CC

The new Mirfield team in 1952. (NS)



Civic dignitaries at the ground. (NS)

DOCTOR Peter Davies, senior lecturer in history at Huddersfield University, has been given a Heritage Lottery Fund grant to research cricket history in Kirdees. Here he tells us something about the history of Mirfield Cricket Club.

## Cutting reveals club's rich history



Mirfield stalwart Pat Neal, who produced a study of the first season. (NS)

AN early newspaper cutting - wedged in between items relating to Mirfield Prosecution Districts and Mirfield Cotton Districts Relief Fund - from May 9 1863 tells us that club membership stood at 66, the cricket field was being 'levelled and re-laid', and Gomersal Perseverance Club was soon to be challenged in a friendly fixture.

Mirfield Town Hall was the venue for one of the cricket club's big events of 1882 - a fundraising 'entertainment'. This sounds like an evening of variety and cabaret, with all proceeds going to a cricketing cause.

In 1896 the club's annual report revealed a Mr Ingham had paid £270 to build the club a new pavilion.

He had also come to the club's rescue when, at the end of season 1894, the club had been forced to re-locate due to the construction of Heaton Lodge and the Wortley Railway.

In this early period, the club

played in a variety of leagues: the Spen Valley, West Riding and Heavy Woollen.

But the Great War took its toll and in 1919 the 'old' Mirfield club was forced to disband.

The 're-formation' of Mirfield CC in 1952 was due to the efforts of a group of local businessmen and councillors.

They all saw the potential in a new Mirfield CC. They were also helped by the fact that there was a vacancy at the memorial ground.

For in 1951 the lease held by the Craven Gentlemen - another local cricket team - had run out, and new cricketing tenants were being sought.

And local folk were pretty confident that Mirfield CC mark two would be given the green light: the new club was admitted to the Heavy Woollen Cup on September 29 1951, prior to the official re-formation actually taking place!

The town was very enthusiastic about the re-formation and in

this formative period the club was particularly indebted to its female membership.

Thus, 1952 was a milestone year in the history of Mirfield CC - and on the club's 50th birthday, club stalwart Pat Neal produced a fascinating study of the first season.

Key personalities around this time included Charles Buckley - a public schoolboy who skippered the 1952 side; he was a right-hand batsman and off-spinner who dropped down to the second XI and then became a committee member and vice-president; outside cricket he was managing director at Buckley's Brush Works and was the son of the founder.

Wulf Barber, Yorkshire and England cricketer, joined Mirfield at the age of 51 from Halifax side King Cross; he averaged 41.18 and 45.89 in his two seasons at the memorial ground and won the division two batting award in both years. He scored 15,315 runs

for Yorkshire and gained two test caps. Ex-Holmfirth player Hurst Barber made his name as an excellent fielder and a fixture at the top of the order, scoring the new club's first-ever half-century (79 in the opening game); between 1956 and 1960 he led the first XI to a hat-trick of Central Yorkshire League championships and also starred in the 'double'-winning side of 1963; he went on to skipper the second XI, manage the under-18 side and become life vice-president.

In 1962 Mirfield won the Heavy Woollen Cup for the first time. In the same year the second XI won the championship under the captaincy of Cyril Spencer.

More silverware was accrued in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, and Mirfield also hired an array of impressive professional players including Indian Test batsman Ghulam Parizur.

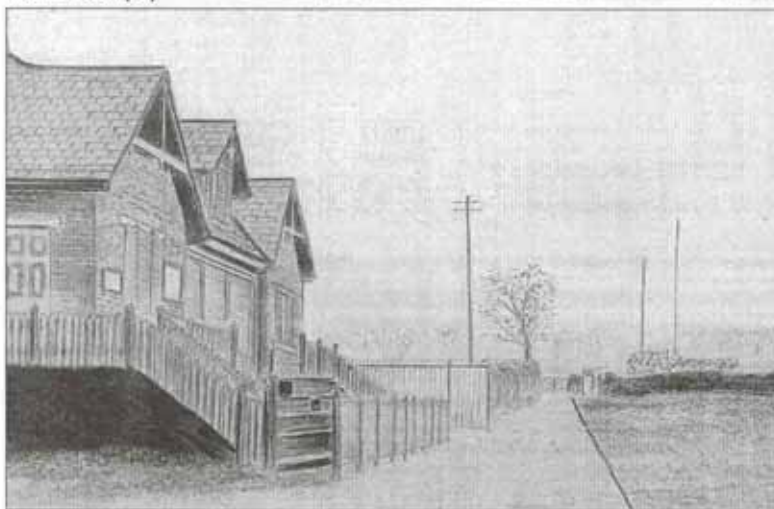
Between 2001 and 2004 the club locked horns in the Bradford League, but due to a financial cri-



An 'annual entertainment' bill from 1882. (NS)

sis, and an accompanying exodus of players, Mirfield were forced into a life-saving merger with Harry Lime CC in 2005.

The new club plays in the Huddersfield Central League.



A drawing of the ground. (NS)

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